

## PROBABLE SONS.

By the author of 'Eric's Good News.'

## CHAPTER I.—AN UNWELCOME LEGACY

'Children! They are a nuisance to every one—my abomination, as you know, Jack. Why on earth they cannot be kept out of sight altogether till they reach a sensible age is what puzzles me! And I suppose if anything could make the matter worse, it is that this is a girl!'

The tone of disgust with which the last word was uttered, brought a laugh from Sir Edward Wentworth's companion, who replied, as he took his cigar from his mouth and gazed critically into the worried, perplexed face of his host, —

'My dear fellow, she is not of an age yet to trouble you much. Wait till she gets a bit older; when her education is finished, and she takes possession of you and your house, will be the time for you to look to us for pity!'

'Look here, Sir Edward,' said a bright-looking youth from the other side of the room, 'I'll give you a bit of advice. Send the child straight off to school. Has she come to-day? Good. Then pack her off to-morrow, and keep her there as long as is needful. Then I will go down and inspect her, and if she grows up to be a moderately decent-looking girl, I will do you a good turn by taking her off your hands. She will have a nice little fortune, you informed us, and if you will give her something in addition, out of gratitude to me for relieving you of all responsibility concerning her, upon my word I think I should not do badly!'

But Sir Edward was not in a mood to joke; he looked gloomily round upon his friends, as they gathered round the smoking-room fire after a hard day's shooting, and remarked, —

'I know what is before me. I have seen it in my sister's family, and have heard something of all her toils and troubles. How thankful I was when she and hers were translated to Australia, and the sea came between us! It is first the nurses, who run off with one's butler, make love to the keepers, and bring all kinds of followers about the house, who sometimes make off with one's plate. Then it's the governesses, who come and have a try at the guests, or most likely in my case they would set their affections on me, and get the reins of government entirely into their hands. If it is school, then there is a mass of correspondence about the child's health and training; and, in addition, I shall have all the ladies in the neighborhood coming to mother the child and tell me how to train it. It is a bad look-out for me, I can tell you, and not one of you would care to be in my shoes.'

'What is the trouble, Ned?' asked a newcomer, opening the door and glancing at the amused faces of those surrounding Sir Edward, all of whom seemed to be keenly enjoying their host's perplexity.

'He has received a legacy to-day, that is all,' was the response; 'he has had an orphan niece and nurse sent to him from some remote place in the Highlands. Come, give us your case again, old fellow, for the benefit of your cousin.'

Sir Edward, a grave, abstracted-looking man, with an iron-grey moustache and dark, piercing eyes, looked up with a desponding shake of the head, and repeated slowly and emphatically, —

'A widowed sister of mine died last year, and left her little girl in the charge of an old school friend, who has now taken a husband to herself and discarded the child, calmly sending me the following letter:—

"Dear Sir,—Doubtless you will remember that your sister's great desire on her death-bed was that you should receive her little one and bring her up under your own eye, being her natural guardian and nearest relative. Hearing, however, from you that you did not at that time feel equal to the responsibility, I came forward, and volunteered to take her

for a short while till you had made arrangements to receive her. I have been expecting to hear from you for some time, and as I have promised my future husband to fix the day for our marriage some time early next month, I thought I could not do better than send the child with her nurse to you without delay. She will reach you the day after you receive this letter. Perhaps you will kindly send me word of her safe arrival.

"Yours truly,  
"ANNA KENT."

Now, Lovell, what do you think of that? And sure enough, this afternoon, whilst we were out, the child and nurse appeared, and are in the house at this present moment. Don't you think it a hard case for such a confirmed bachelor as I am?'

'I do indeed,' was the hearty reply; 'but I think you will find a way out of it, Ned. Take a wife unto yourself, and she will relieve you of all responsibility.'

There was a general laugh at this, but in the midst of it the door slowly opened, and the subject of all this discussion appeared on the threshold, a fragile little figure, with long, golden-brown hair and a pair of dark brown eyes that looked calmly and searchingly in front of her. Clad in white, with her dimpled hands crossed in front of her, she stood there for a moment in silence, then spoke:—

'Where is my Uncle Edward?'

'Here,' replied Sir Edward, as he looked helplessly round, first at his friends and then at his small niece. The child stepped up to him with perfect composure, and held out her little hand, which her uncle took, undergoing all the while a severe scrutiny from the pair of dark eyes fixed upon him. There was dead silence in the room; Sir Edward's companions were delighting in the scene, and his great discomfiture only heightened their enjoyment.

'Well,' he said at length, rather feebly, 'I think you know the look of me now, don't you? Where is your nurse? Ought you not to be in your bed? This is not the place for little girls, you know.'

'I was thinking you would kiss me,' and the child's lips began to quiver, whilst a pink flush rose to her cheeks, and she glanced wistfully round, in the hope of seeing some sympathetic face near her.

But Sir Edward could not bring himself to do this; laying his hand on the curly head raised to his, he patted it as he might his dog, and said:—

'There, there! Now you have introduced yourself to me, you can run away. What is your name? Millicent, isn't it?'

'Milly is my name. And are all these gentlemen my uncles too?'

The tone of doubtful inquiry was too much for the little company, and Milly's question was answered by a shout of laughter.

Again the child's face flushed, and then a grey-haired man stepped forward.

'Come, Wentworth, this is a severe ordeal for such a mite. I have grandchildren of my own, so am not so scared as you. Now, little one, is that better?'

And in an instant the child was lifted by him and placed upon his knee as he took a seat by the fire.

Milly heaved a short sigh. 'I like this,' she said, looking up at him confidently. 'Does Uncle Edward really want me to go to bed? Nurse said it wasn't time yet. Nurse wanted her supper, so she sent me in here while she had it.'

'The reign of the nurse has begun,' said Sir Edward. 'Well it may be a very fine joke to all you fellows, but if I don't make my authority felt at once, it will be all up with me. Lovell, be so good as to ring that bell.'

Sir Edward's voice was irate when his old butler appeared.

'Ford, take this child to her nurse, and tell her that she is never to appear in my presence again unless sent for. Now, Millicent, go at once.'

The child slid down from her seat,

but though evidently puzzled at the quick, sharp words, she seemed to have no fear, for, going up to her uncle, she slipped her little hand into his.

'Are you angry, uncle? What does "presence" mean? Will you say, "Good-night; God bless you," to me?'

With the baby fingers clinging to what could Sir Edward say?

'Good-night; good-night, child! Now go.'

'Say, "God bless you!"' persisted the little one; and it was not till her uncle muttered the desired words that she relinquished her hold and followed the butler sedately out of the room.

(To be Continued.)

## DISCIPLINE.

'I don't understand it at all,' says a young Christian, murmuring over her lot in life, which is not to her mind. 'Why should disappointments come so early? Why should circumstances be so hard in the beginning? After one is older, one may expect them to be trying, but while one is young, why should things be so grievous?'

This Christian girl forgets what her name is, and what it means. She has taken her Saviour's name upon her and is enrolled as his disciple. A disciple is a learner, and a learner must have lessons. He must not only be taught, but trained. Discipline is 'treatment suited to a disciple, or learner.' It is development, education, culture, correction.

When should the disciple be disciplined? Not till years have passed and the suppleness of youth is lost? Not till habits must be broken in order to be re-formed, and all life has taken its set? Are all students middle-aged or old? Surely not. Youth is the beginning-time for everything, and in its pliant years the disciple must be trained.

It is resistance that makes friction, and in the heat of youthful resentment the impetuous spirit cries out against the training.

'Be willing, and the work is half done.' 'This is the will of God concerning you, even your sanctification.' Who does not wish it too?—'Wait.'

## 'MESSENGER' ARMENIAN FUND.

Here is one of the brightest little bundles of missionary offerings we have had yet to acknowledge. One manly little fellow writes:—

'I have been collecting for the Armenian Fund. I have collected \$5.55 and enclose the same. I am eight years of age and am a subscriber to the 'Messenger.' I hope you will send this as soon as possible. Yours,  
Lorne B—'

## NORTHERN MESSENGER.

## A JOURNALISTIC TRIUMPH.

## A Twelve Instead of a Four Page Weekly.

## THE CHANGE TO TAKE PLACE NEXT WEEK.

As announced in our prospectus two weeks ago, the next number of the 'Northern Messenger' will inaugurate its great change from a four to a twelve-page weekly. It will be full of the most entrancing stories, and yet the Sunday-school lesson and pictures will not be crowded out. It will be almost an ideal paper, being nearly three times as large as any other Sunday-school paper for the money. If you like the new form try to get it introduced into your Sunday-school. If you like it tell

A father and mother write jointly as follows:—

Dear Sir,—Enclosed you will please find Post-office order for five dollars for the Armenian Fund. We have long desired to send something, and the good Lord has opened up the way so that we can help a little. May God bless you in your noble work. Our children have taken the 'Messenger' ever since they could read. Please acknowledge in 'Northern Messenger' relief fund. Yours truly,  
Mr. and Mrs. Williams.

Colborne, Aug. 5.

But to give all the letters would take too much room. The following sums have been received since our last issue:—Victoria Epworth League and M. M. S., \$15.50; 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me,' \$10; For the Armenians, from Marquette, \$5; Blackheath W. F. M. S., \$3.35; collected by three girls from Tupperville, \$3.25; M. W., Canaan, 15c; Reader of the 'Messenger,' 45c.

## 'MESSENGER' CLUB RATES.

The following are the club rates for the 'Northern Messenger':—

10 copies to one address	.....\$ 2.25
20 " " " "	..... 4.40
50 " " " "	..... 10.50
100 " " " "	..... 20.00

Single copy, 30c. When addressed to Montreal, Great Britain and Postal Union countries, 20c postage must be added for each copy.

Sample package supplied free on application.

JOHN DOUGALL & SON,  
Publishers, Montreal.

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

**HOME STUDY.** A thorough and practical Business Education in Book-keeping, Shorthand, etc., given by MAIL, at student's home. Low rates. Cut free. Trial lesson 10c. Write to Bryant & Stratton, C 72 College Bldg., Buffalo, N.Y.

**BABY'S OWN**

**PILES** Instant relief, final cure in a few days, and never returns: no purge; no salve; no suppository. Remedy mailed free. Address C. J. MASON, Box 519, New York City, N.Y.

In ordering goods, or in making enquiry concerning anything advertised in this paper, you will oblige the publishers, as well as the advertiser, by stating that you saw the advertisement in the 'Northern Messenger.'

THE 'NORTHERN MESSENGER' is printed and published every fortnight at the 'Witness' Building, at the corner of Craig and St. Peter streets in the city of Montreal, by John Redpath Dougall of Montreal.

All business communications should be addressed 'John Dougall & Son,' and all letters to the Editor should be addressed Editor of the 'Northern Messenger.'

two of your neighbors about it, and so secure your own and their subscriptions for twenty-five cents each, and this not only for one year but for every year, as, if you get them to subscribe with you once they will be sure to do it again.

The rates of subscription are:—  
One yearly subscription, 30c.

Three or more subscriptions to different addresses, 25c each.

Ten or more subscriptions to the same address, 20c each.