

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

(St. Luke xvi. 1-10.)

See where the Steward, worldly wise,
With wicked cunning in his eyes,
Shows his lord's debtors how to cheat
His master of his oil and wheat.

"A hundred measures dost thou owe
Of oil? My friend, 'tis scarcely so;
Here take thy quill and quick indite
Fifty: that puts the matter right."

"A hundred measures is thy debt
Of corn? My friend, thou dost forget:
Here take thy bill, and write fourscore;
Surely thou owest nothing more."

Thus wickedly he would provide
Houses in which he might abide,
When, for his former acts unjust,
He from his stewardship was thrust.

And when his master heard, he smiled,
Thought of his goods he was beguiled;
Nor did he even forbear to praise
The crafty foresight of his ways.

The children of this world, alas!
The children of the light surpass,
In planning methods to provide
For ills from which they cannot hide.

And so our Master bids us take
The money which He gives, and make
Friends with our riches for the day
When earthly treasures flee away.

That when we leave our house below,
And into unknown regions go,
Through Jesus, we may find above
An everlasting home of love.

Do I my little store expend
For such a wise and prudent end;
Or only think of my own gain,
And not of others' want and pain?

Lord, by Thy Spirit, make me wise
Above my selfishness to rise,
And something daily give away
To find again in Thy great day!

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OUR NEW NEIGHBOR.

CHAPTER IX.—(CONTINUED.)

Her visionary musings were disturbed. Into that vacant space upon which she gazed—it was really one of the window-panes—a figure entered. She saw it for one moment only, and got up, rubbing her eyes, and declaring *otto voce* that if she indulged herself perpetually in waking dreams, she would become imaginative, and see more than there was any necessity to see. For the figure that, for a moment, entered into her vision wore all the strangeness of an unreal appearance. It was a face, young and soft, but white, large-eyed, eager, and it looked in furtively, as if, in the act of gazing, the soul behind the face were conscious of folly, and dreaded discovery. Moreover, when the eyes met hers, there was a sudden retreat from the window.

Mrs. Darrent went to it, and threw it open.

"Is that you, Sibyl?" said Mrs. Darrent; and the girl turned round. "What is the matter, dear? You look tired and out of sorts," she went on, when, without speaking, but with a miserable effort to smile, Sibyl put out her hand.

"Oh, I have been rushing about all day," was the answer. "Mamma thinks I am not looking strong. She wishes to take me to the sea-side, and—and—I wanted to say good-bye to you all first. You are well—all of you?" she added, looking into her friend's face, searchingly.

"Yes, all well. Little Beatrice has a cold, but it is nothing serious. Will you not come in, dear?"

"May I stay?" asked the girl, following Mrs. Darrent through the open window. "Mamma has gone to Mrs. Vernon's; it is the district visitors' meeting this evening."

"You are a good child to have come

to us," said Mrs. Darrent, with her own hands taking off Sibyl's hat and gloves.

She did not look into her face. With a kind of terror, she was realizing that the disturbed face she had seen was real; and when Sibyl said, with insistence, "Really well—all of you?" she answered, with a quietness of intonation and manner that had immediately a soothing effect—

"Yes, all well; only we are a little afraid that Uncle James is overdoing it. He has set his heart, my husband says, on publishing his book very soon. The necessary work will be prodigious."

Sibyl's brow cleared perceptibly. She said, looking down, absently, on her ungloved hands—

"I was afraid he was ill. He did not go with us yesterday, and Maggie said he was up all night. Mrs. Darrent, he ought not to be allowed to work so hard."

She blushed charmingly as she spoke; indeed, she looked almost herself again; and when, with a light laugh, she added, "Now this is absurd! to think of my attempting to lecture you!" Mrs. Darrent felt greatly relieved, and was ready to hope that no deep-seated mental disturbance, but only a temporary indisposition or fatigue, had caused that pale rigid look, as of stifled pain, in the face of the young girl she loved. That evening she watched Sibyl closely.

James Darrent appeared at supper-time, but only for about half an hour. Sibyl, she observed, when no one seemed to be noticing her, cast upon him swift glances of startled inquiry. It was as if a problem were put before her which she must solve.

And there could be no doubt about it. Those few days had wrought a marvellous change in the traveller. Sibyl, no less than Mrs. Darrent, though her motive was very different—if, poor child, she could be said to have any motive at all—longed to discover a reason for this change.

CHAPTER X.

Now the fact was that Sibyl had been passing through one of those dangerous cycles of surprised discovery and stormy feeling which only too often accompany the transit from girlhood into womanhood.

She was at Miss Harcourt's "at home;" but no gossip concerning Mrs. Rosebay was repeated in her hearing. One detail of the story had reached her mother's ears, and she said innocently to Sibyl, when they were on their way home—

"Isn't it strange? I was only saying yesterday that I thought James Darrent had a tenderness for Mrs. Rosebay, and this evening I hear that they know one another formerly. This accounts for the confidences between them when they met at our house the other day. It surprised me, I must say, to see them on such intimate terms, all at once. Are you tired, darling?"

Sibyl had thrown herself back in the carriage, and closed her eyes.

"Only sleepy," she answered, in a low voice.

"Ah, well! we shall be at home directly," said the little lady, cheerfully. "But wasn't it curious of James Darrent to tell no one?"

"Why should he tell any one?" flashed out Sibyl, in a tone which showed that she was wide awake.

Her mother knew that over-fatigue always made her contradictory, and she answered soothingly. But she was very much surprised—not a little startled, indeed—when Sibyl followed her into her room, dismissed the maid, and said, having closed the door carefully—

"Is this mere gossip, mamma, or do you really believe that they love one another?"

"They—who? My dear child, what in the world is the matter with you?" said Mrs. White, pausing aghast in the middle of the room.

"With me? nothing at all," replied Sibyl, turning red; "but you know I am romantic;" she spoke gaspingly. "I have read love stories. I should like to see one acted, and this," looking down, "would be a pretty one, just like an old romance."

"Oh, if that is all!" said Mrs. White, much relieved, for she was not penetrating; "but would not to-morrow do, dear? You look so tired."

"Tell me to-night, like a darling mother. I should like to dream about happy people," said the girl, coaxingly.

"But there is so little to tell," Mrs. White answered, sitting down before her glass, and beginning to take off her ornaments.

Sibyl, however, continuing expectant and eager, she told her what she knew, and the girl went to her room certain that what she had already vaguely suspected was true. James Darrent was in love with Adeline Rosebay.

If that had been all! But it was not. Suddenly, in the lurid glare of a feeling she knew to be evil, but which had sprung up so unexpectedly, and with such large and fearful growth that she could not resist it, the secret thoughts of her own heart were brought to light; and she knew that it was not admiration, not reverence, not hero-worship, but something nearer, deeper, more intimate than any of these which moved her when, in the innocent unconsciousness of a happy girl, she had pleased herself with forming dreams by the myriad about her hero.

Of all those dream-castles he was the monarch. He was to have money to pursue his scientific discoveries, he was to increase the sum of human knowledge, and to astonish the world. Men would speak of him as they spoke of Sir Isaac Newton. But he was also to be made happy. And here had crept in the self-feeling, here she had made for herself a niche in his temple. Maggie, or one of the others, had said that Uncle James scarcely ever smiled, except when Sibyl was by—a dangerous admission, upon which our thirsting heart seized eagerly. The world would give him fame; she would give him happiness.

And now what had changed? There was no reason why she should not continue to dream about her hero; he might still be great, he might still be happy. Yes, but her own niche in the temple was gone, or, rather, it was filled by another.

The poor spoiled child set her teeth together, and we dare not deny that some bitter, even wicked thoughts filled her mind. No more than Miss Harcourt was she accustomed to be crossed. Besides, during these past days she had not been able to avoid a certain placid satisfaction in the dream, now so cruelly blurred. Sibyl never actually compared herself with the devoted woman whom history has made famous; but in that curious under-current of feeling which, little conscious as we are of its presence, more or less colors our thoughts, she was aware of being good and interesting. And this helped to form a distinct and unpleasantly sharp ingredient in the pain from which now she suffered. Sweeping, like most young girls, both in approval and condemnation, she said to herself that night, "I have been a selfish idiot. I thought I was thinking of other people. I was not," and at this awful reflection she broke down, and sobbed bitterly. Yes, she was selfish; she did not wish to be anything but selfish. All she knew was that her heart was aching, that the future looked very desolate, and that she would never, never believe in friendship again; for if Mrs. Rosebay had told her at once that she had known Mr. Darrent before, nothing of this would have happened.

Fortunately for Sibyl, sleep surprised her in the midst of her indignant reflections. In the morning she was able to look at things a little more rationally, and to feel ashamed of her midnight terrors. Still, however, a soreness against Mrs. Rosebay testified to the fact that

her wounded self-feeling was alive and vigorous.

Such, then, was the young girl's frame of mind when from Mrs. Green, who drove over to see them a few days later, she heard the story, by this time finely embellished, of Mrs. Rosebay's deception.

"I thought I must tell you at once," said Mrs. Green to Sibyl's mother; "you know I only called upon her because you did. I believed you would have made all necessary inquiries."

"Oh!" said Mrs. White, "how foolish it is to act upon impulse! But are you perfectly certain?"

"Positive. The story is in everybody's mouth. I expect she will have to leave the neighborhood. It seems that the Andersons—you know the Andersons—were creditors on the Cockburn estate. It's curious, isn't it, how things come about? They talk of taking it up, but that would be useless.—I hope Sibyl is not ill."

For at this moment the young girl, who had been listening intently to Mrs. Green's story, had got up abruptly and left the room.

"I suppose your story has vexed her," said Mrs. White; "the poor child takes such enthusiastic likings. She is passionately fond of our new neighbor."

"Who cannot be a very good friend for young girls," filled in Mrs. Green. "No doubt she is taken aback. Young people always suffer when their idols are dethroned; however, she will get over it, and perhaps be more sensible for the future."

(To be continued.)

GOD'S REST.

It is the evening hour,
And thankfully,
Father, thy weary child
Has come to Thee.
I lean my aching head
Upon Thy breast,
And there, and only there,
I am at rest.
Thou knowest all my life,
Each petty sin;
Nothing is hid from Thee,
Without, within;
All that I have or am
Is wholly thine,
So is my soul at peace,
For Thou art mine.
To-morrow's dawn may find
Me here or there;
It matters little, since Thy love
Is everywhere!

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN.

Some Indian shawls are made of hundreds of pieces, some so small as to be only an eighth of an inch square, others of various sizes, none larger than a square half-yard. Each piece, even the smallest, forms a complete bit of the pattern, and the right side, being the under one on the frame on which it is woven, is not seen by the weaver until the piece is finished. The pieces are all so beautifully joined together that it is impossible to find the joining.

How often we are "discouraged because of the way," because we can only see the wrong side of the pattern our daily life is weaving. We forget that "the Lord knoweth them that are His," and that "all things work together for good to them that love God." And should we not try to remember also, that, though our place in the work may be a very small one, the great fabric, the Church of God, would be incomplete if that place were not filled.

There is another point of similarity; each thread is bleached perfectly white before being re-dyed for the shawl; so we also, before becoming a part of the church, must be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, "that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing;" but that it should be holy and without blemish.