

Wedgeton, being a healthy, peaceable hamlet, one of each profession only, was needed. One physician would have sufficed for the spiritual needs of the people, but the barriers were still high. The ministerial school boys, still shied stones at each other over the walls that separated them. The people, (though they could not have told why for the life of them) still wrapped their Sectarian cloaks around them and passed by each other on opposite sides. The song which the angels sang to the shepherds had not yet penetrated their souls. The Sectarian cloaks, however, were getting ragged and underneath could be seen the pulsations of warm hearts. The glasses of bigotry were breaking, and behind them, one caught glimpses of loving Christ-like souls, looking through blue, brown and gray eyes.

On this afternoon the village and country for some miles around, are stirred by one common sentiment. Dr. Markham, the friend of all, and enemy of none, is dying. Everything is forgotten, business and pleasure, cares and grievances, loss and gain, for the while sink into insignificance, before this greater question. "Is there any hope?" The villagers stand about in little groups on the street, or gather in the stores, anxiously waiting for the verdict of the two doctors, from a neighboring town, who are with the sick man. Before night, while the leaves are still dancing to the music of the wind, and the clouds are hurrying across the sky, the people know that Dr. Markham's days are numbered, know that the kind voice and quick step of their friend will be heard no more in their homes or on their streets, know that the earth will soon lose, what it can ill afford—a good man. The men go back to their work with sad faces, the women weep silently in their homes, while the little ones, cluster together, and talk mysteriously of the "putting in the ground" of the one who always had a smile or a sweetmeat for them. In the sick room lies Dr. Markham. The physicians have done all that man's skill can do. The fever, caught from a patient, has run its course, and the system is too weak to rally. He is sinking every moment.

"I want my wife," he whispers, as Dr. Trager tells him he has not many hours to live. She hears his voice, for she has been sitting in a low rocking chair, her youngest child in her arms, waiting for words of hope. As she comes to the bed the two men withdraw. She bends over him in tearless agony.

"Kate," he puts out his hand, what was it we promised, till death us do part?"

"Yes, John," she takes his white hand in hers, "But death will not part us, my wife?"

"No, dear."

"No time, no space, Kate?"

"Nothing, John."

"Then I'll wait for you up there, it will seem long till you come, kiss me, wife."

She kissed him on cheeks, brow and lips.

"Now," he whispers, "the children."

"Mr. Dart, is waiting to see you, shall I bring him to you?"

He nodded his head.

After a few moments, they come, the five children and Mr. Dart, the Rector.

The children gather round the bed.

"Papa, oh, papa," sobs little Ethel, "don't leave us, it'll be so lonely."

"Father," cries Harry, his eldest boy, in a broken voice, "forgive my waywardness."

"Oh my dear, dear father," is all that Maud says, as she buries her face in the pillow.

"Pray," comes from the dying man, for his strength is going fast. Mr. Dart reads the beautiful prayer for the dying.

"Give my love to the people, my people, tell them we will meet again."

"God bless you children, sing 'our evening hymn.'"

As the last words

"For without thee, I dare not die," are sung, he turns to his wife,

"Katie, I cannot see you."

"I am here dear, my arms are around you."

"Ah," he smiles, "the light is coming, but 'tis not of earth."

"Good-bye Katie—children, we'll meet in the morning, spend Eternal-day together," and Dr. John Markham, husband, father and friend is dead.

## CHAPTER II.

"Thus to the Father, prayed the Son  
One may they be, as we are one."—MONTGOMERY.

After two days Dr. Markham is buried. Six of his people are his pall-bearers, while the three ministers officiate. As they stand together at the grave, after the people had gone to their homes, and the last clod of earth has been smoothed down, Mr. Gray, the Methodist, speaks, "a good man has gone."

"We'll ne'er see his like in Wedgeton," answers Dr. Lanton, the Presbyterian.

"A fine example," says the Rector of the Apostle's Words. "Instant in season and out of season, he was ever alert in the cause of truth."

"Are his family well provided for?" enquires Mr. Gray.

"Pretty well," answers Dr. Lanton, "he owns the place and he has some twenty thousand in stocks, besides a life insurance of about five thousand."

"A very good provision," sighs Mr. Gray, as he thinks of his eight children and only one thousand insurance to keep the wolf from the door, if he were taken away.

Then these three men glide into a practical strain.

"How is it that the ministerial profession is the least remunerative?" asks Mr. Gray, "it is impossible to lay up anything for a rainy day, with the small pittances, the people give so grudgingly," and he thinks again of his sickly wife, and eight children, who are so healthy and wear out so many shoes.

Mr. Dart, who is an Adventist, and thinks the world must grow a great deal worse before it will be any better, replies sadly.

"It is the growing apathy and indifference of the world to Divine things, it must be so in these last days, until Christ shall appear in righteousness."

Dr. Lanton smiles

"Then," he cries, "every parson will reap his ten thousand a year, and the people will be glad to have it, so verily that will be the Millennium."

The old grave-digger, Mike O'Reilly, who always spoke his thoughts in the richest of Irish brogues, had been leaning on his spade, listening to the conversation.

"Arrah, bedad, your rivrence, but its moighty aisy to see why yes are all scramein the sowls out o'ye for a few coppers. It's too many there are o'ye. Sure, the three o'ye riz up in yer poolpits ivery blissed Sunday marnin' and talk till ye're sweatin' to a handful o Gospel-hardened sinners, ivery mother's son o' them. Now, axin yer pardin' for makin' so bowld, but if ye would bile your religion down, so that one dish could howld it, and make it swate and good as yer Master would, it would'nt take so many o'ye to dale it out to the people. Shure, its a shame that the blissed religion has got to be made up into a