

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

MINE.

I closely held within my arms
A jewel rare;
Never had one so rich and pure
Engaged my care.
'Twas my own, my precious jewel,
God gave it me.
'Twas mine: who else could care for it,
So tenderly?

But the dear Master came one day
My gem to take.
"I cannot let it go," I cried:
"My heart would break"
Nay, but the Master came for it,
To bear above.
To deck his royal diadem—
He comes in love,

"But, Master, it is *my* treasure,
My jewel rare!
I'll safely guard and keep it pure
And very fair."
"If thou keep'st my gem," he said,
"It may be lost:"
The threshold of My home no thief
Has ever crossed.

"And where the heart's rich treasure is
The heart will be;
Your jewel will be safe above,
Gone before thee."
The Master said these words and gazed
With pitying look,
While in the early hush of morn
My gem he took.

Close to my heart, that morn, I held,
Tears falling fast,
An empty casket; the bright gem
Was safe at last.
Yes, Master, Thou may'st keep my own,
For it is Thine;
Safe in the house not made with hands,
'Tis Thine and mine.

—The Church Chronicle, Kentucky.

"THAT IMPUDENT RUTH."

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER.

[Continued]

Then she took up the glass and, turning it upside down, put it on the table. At the same instant she drew out her watch and looked at the time. "I'll sit down here awhile, and see how the glass acts," she thought. So she sat down with the watch and the egg-boiler before her.

Lying open on the table was a Bible. The fly-leaf showed it was Ruth's—a prize awarded her at Sunday school.

"I wonder if she read the fifth chapter of the Acts," thought her mistress, turning the pages over aimlessly. A small Christmas card caused the book to fall open where it was placed as a marker. Miss Golightly saw it was in the Epistle to the Ephesians. At the fifth and sixth verses of the last chapter a thick pencil-mark attracted her attention. She read the words: "Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." Then scrawled on the margin she read: *Lord, help me to be a Christian servant.*

The old lady took off her spectacles and rubbed them—they had become dewy. She had for the moment quite forgotten the egg-boiler. The spectacles were soon on again, and half mechanically she continued reading where she had left off. She read as far as the ninth verse:—"And ye masters do the same thing unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him."

Again the spectacles required rubbing. But

suddenly, during the process, Miss Golightly caught sight of the sand-glass. It was still running. She looked at her watch. Surely she must have mistaken the time! It was *five* minutes since she had last looked at it, and still the sand was running! She held the watch near the candle to make sure she had not made a mistake. No; now it was *six* minutes. She took the glass up and shook it. Still it ran on. Dear, dear, how very strange it all was! Now more than *seven* minutes had passed, yet the sand ran on! The old lady sat shaking her head and rubbing her spectacles for nearly six long minutes more, and then at last, in despair, she looked again, and found the top of the glass was empty. Eleven minutes and a half had the sand taken to run through. The young man in Nason and Jebb's had sold them the article under false pretences. That was bad; but worse, far worse, Miss Golightly had judged Ruth without a hearing, and had accused her of falsehood. She rose, replaced the egg-boiler on the dresser, then, candle in hand, she went upstairs to her bed-room.

When Miss Heloise returned from church she found the parlour unoccupied, except by the cat, who was warming her paws on the fender.

According to invariable custom, Miss Golightly read family prayers that evening. Miss Heloise sat on her own chair by the fire; Ruth, very upright, on the edge of another by the door. Miss Golightly always read in clear, decisive tones, as became her character; but, strange to say, there was a slight hesitation in her voice to-night. Her mind appeared pre-occupied.

The Lord's Prayer and the Grace were ended, the last *Amen* said, and Ruth—murmuring, "Will you require any more ma'am?"—was just about to leave the room, when Miss Golightly made a slight gesture with the hand, and stepped towards the door.

"Ruth, I wish to speak to you before you go," she said.

The girl trembled; she felt something awful was about to follow.

"I wish to tell you, Ruth," continued Miss Golightly, "that I am sorry I did not take steps to find out whether the sand-glass acted properly *before* I accused you of falsehood. I am an old woman, and perhaps a proud one, but, by God's grace, I am not too old or too proud to learn a lesson. I trust in future my judgments will be more just."

What a strange girl was Ruth! at this point she stifled a suppressed sob. It was Miss Heloise's spectacles this time which became dewy and required to be immediately rubbed.

"Heloise, my dear," said Miss Golightly, turning towards her sister, "while you were at church I tried the egg-boiler. It took very nearly thirteen minutes for the sand to run through. So, you see, I was wrong to accuse Ruth of untruthfulness so hastily."

Then the old lady turned and held out her hand to the girl. Her demeanour showed a strange mixture of its wonted stateliness, added to which was a touching softness in the expression of her face.

"Ruth," she said, "I trust you will continue to pray *Lord, make me a Christian servant*. I, on my part, shall pray, from this night, *Lord, make me a Christian mistress*."

The old lady had placed her thin wrinkled hand in the girl's stout red one; and Ruth, with a sudden impulse, bent and kissed it. Then she bolted suddenly out of the room; her feelings were beyond restraint, and, once in her own kitchen, she threw herself on to a chair to enjoy a good cry.

A few moments later the two old ladies, each with her silver candlestick, mounted the stairs to their respective bedrooms. On the landing, as was their wont, they bade one another good-night. Miss Heloise, with her hand on her sister's shoulder, pressed her withered cheek against her own, hardly less withered, and kissed her twice. This was an unusual demon-

stration of affection, for as a rule the sisters only interchanged one kiss. Though neither spoke to the other, they understood its meaning. Miss Golightly meant: "I have had a sharp fight, but I gained the victory." And Miss Heloise meant: "Sister, to my love and respect for you has this night been added veneration."

How well the old ladies slept that night, and how peculiarly good the eggs were the next morning!—just cooked to a turn. But directly after breakfast Miss Heloise, whose mission in life seemed to be making excuses for other persons' delinquencies, disappeared into the kitchen. "Ruth," she said, "I'm going to put that egg-boiler down into the fender for a good long while. We must not scold Mason and Jebb till we are sure they deserve it. You see, now watches are so cheap, no doubt this glass has been in their shop a long while, and has got damp—so damp that the sand *sticks*, and doesn't run through evenly."

Miss Heloise's theory was correct, and thus Mason and Jebb were saved a scolding.

Of course Ruth did not leave at the end of the month, in fact, she stayed several years in the service of the Misses Golightly. Then she proved to all the world how well Miss Golightly had judged her—for she did a very flighty thing—*she got married!*

Let us hope her successor boils the dear old ladies' eggs exactly three minutes and a half.

THE BIBLE AND A GUINEA.

Men who have risen in the world are often fond of looking back to see what circumstances gave them their first push up the ladder of life.

A gray haired old admiral used to tell of a piece of very good advice which he received in his youth, and which made such an impression on him, that to it he ascribed his steady advancement in life. As a lad, just before joining his ship, he occupied an humble lodging for a few nights, the landlady, a respectable, motherly woman, at once taking a strong interest in the young fellow.

"When I went to bid her good by," he said, "the kind creature pressed a Bible and a guinea into my hand, saying:

"There, my lad, take those, and God bless and prosper you. As long as you live never suffer yourself to be laughed out of your money or out of your prayers."

It was a word in season; the young midshipman never forgot it. To keep the resolution he made then required no ordinary firmness and courage, for let me tell you that fifty, or seventy years ago, religion on board ship was a thing to suffer for.

But the boy stood firm. Alone amongst a crowd of careless ones, he said his prayers, trying to shut his ears to scorn and mockery, and even disregarding actual personal ill-usage as much as he could.

On shore he did not recklessly fling away the money he had earned, in "treating" and folly, as did most of his shipmates. So, by degrees, becoming known to his superior officers as a steady, well-conducted young fellow he merited the promotion he afterwards obtained.

We need just this sort of bravery nowadays—not the bravery which keeps a man staunch in the face of the enemy's cannon, we have plenty of that in the land, and we are glad of it; but the bravery of the soul that dare keep its place when the devil's ugly weapons are directed towards it—the bullet hail of scorn, laughter and mockery.

Try to lead good lives, lads of to-day! And next, do not be ashamed of being seen to do so. It is as wicked to pretend to be worse than you are as it is to strive to be thought better than you are.

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