

Childrens' Department

LADDIE.

CHAPTER IV.

"It is too late to think of that," she said, with a little coaxing laugh; "too late, for you asked me to be your wife a week ago. Yes, John,"—the name came still with a little hesitation,—"a whole week ago, and I will not let you off. And then I have no mother of my own; she died before I can remember, and it will be so nice to have one, for she will like me for your sake, won't she? And what does it matter what she is like, you silly, old John?—she is your mother, and that is quite enough for me. And don't you think I love you more ridiculously than ever because you are so good and noble and true to your old mother, and are not ashamed of her because she is not just exactly like other people?" And she laid her soft cheek against his sleeve, by her clasped hands, as she spoke.

But he drew away with almost a shudder. "Love me less, then, Violet; hate me, for I was ashamed of her; I was base and cowardly and untrue, and I wanted to get her out of the way so that no one should know, not even you, and I hurt and wounded her—her who would have done anything for her 'Laddie,' as she calls me—and she went away disappointed and sad and sorry, and I cannot find her."

He had sunk down into Violet's low chair, and covered up his face with his hands, and through the fingers forced their way the hot, burning tears, while he told of his ineffectual efforts to find her, and his shame and regret.

She stood listening, too pitiful and sorry for words, longing to comfort him; and at last she knelt down and pulled his hands gently away from his face, and whispered very softly, as if he might not like to hear her use his mother's name for him. "We will find her, never fear; your mother and mine, Laddie." And so she comforted him.

What an awful place London is! I do not mean awful in the sense in which the word is used by fashionable young ladies, or schoolboys, by whom it is applied indiscriminately to a "lark" or a "bore," into which two classes most events in life may, according to them, be divided, and considered equally descriptive of sudden death or a new bonnet. I use it in its real meaning, full of awe, inspiring fear and reverence, as Jacob said, "How dreadful is this place," this great London, with its millions of souls, with its strange contrasts of riches and poverty, business and pleasure, learning and ignorance, and the sin everywhere. Awful indeed! and the thought would be overwhelming in its awfulness if we could not say as Jacob did, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not," if we did not know that there is the ladder set up, reaching to Heaven, and the angels of God ever ascending and descending, if we did not believe that the Lord stands above it. It seemed a very terrible place to the old country-woman as she wandered about its streets and squares, its parks and alleys, that November day, too dazed and stupefied to form any plan for herself, only longing to get out of sight, that she might not shame her boy. She felt no bitterness against him, for

was it not natural when he was a gentleman, and she a poor, homely old body?

In the early morning, when the streets were empty, except for policemen or late revellers hurrying home, or market-carts coming in from the country, with frosty moisture on the heaps of cabbages, she got on pretty well. She had a cup of coffee at an early coffee-stall, and no one took any notice of her; some of those that passed were country-people too, and at that early hour people are used to see odd, out-of-the-way figures, that would be stared at in the height of noon. But as the day went on, the streets filled with hurrying people, and the shops opened, and omnibuses and cabs began to run, and she got into more bustling, noisy thoroughfares, and was hustled and pushed about and looked at, the terrors of the situation came heavily upon her. She tried to encourage herself with the thought that before long she should get out of London and reach the country, little knowing, poor old soul, how many miles of streets, and houses, and pavements, lay between her and the merest pretence to real country. And then, too, in that maze of streets where one seemed exactly like another, her course was of a most devious character, often describing a circle and bringing her back through the same streets without the old woman knowing that she was retracing her steps; sometimes a difficult crossing, with an apparently endless succession of omnibuses and carts, turned her from her way—sometimes a quieter looking street with the trees of a square showing at the end enticed her aside. Once she actually went up North Crediton Street, unconsciously and unnoticed. She reached one of the parks at last, and sat down very thankfully on a seat, though it was clammy and damp, and the fog was lurking under the gaunt, black trees, and hanging over the thin coarse grass, which was being nibbled by dirty desolate sheep, who looked to the old woman's eyes like some new kind of London animal, not to be recognized as belonging to the same species as the soft, fleecy white flocks on the hill-sides and meadows of Sunnybrook. She sat here a long time resting, dozing, and trying to think. "I don't want to trouble no one, or shame no one, I only want just to get out of the way." She was faint and tired, and she thought perhaps she might be going to die. "It's a bit unkind to die all alone, and I'd liefer have died in my bed comfortable like; but there! it don't much matter, it'll soon be all over and an end to it all." But oh! that would not do either; and the old woman roused herself and shook off the faintness. "Whatever would folks say if Laddie's mother was found dead like any tramp in the road? He'd die of shame, pretty near, to hear it in every one's mouth." Poor old soul! she little knew how people can starve, and break their hearts, and die for want of food or love in London, and no one be the wiser or the sadder. It was just then she found out that her pocket had been picked, or rather that her purse was gone; for she did not wonder where or how it went, and, indeed, she did not feel the loss very acutely, though, at home in the old days, she had turned the house upside down and hunted high and low and spared no pains to find a missing halfpenny. It

did not contain all her money, for with good, old-fashioned caution, she had some notes sewed up in her stays; but still it was a serious loss, and one she would have a great moan over in old times. She did not know that the sight of her worn old netted purse, with the rusty steel rings, had touched a soft spot in a heart that for years had seemed too dry and hard for any feeling. It had lain in the hand of an expert London pick-pocket, it was mere child's-play taking it, it did not require any skill. There was a bit of lavender stuck in the rings, and he smelt and looked at it, and then the old woman turned and looked at him with her country eyes; and then all at once, almost in spite of himself, he held out the purse to her. "Don't you see as you've dropped your purse?" he said, in a surly, angry tone, and finished with an oath that made the old woman tremble and turn pale; and he flung away, setting his teeth and calling himself a fool. That man was not all bad,—who is? and his poor act of restitution is surely put to his credit in the ledger of his life, and will stand there when the books shall be opened. The old woman got little good from it, however, for the purse was soon taken by a less scrupulous thief.

To be continued.

Coughing, with interludes of wheezing and sneezing are heard in all public places. Everybody ought to know the remedy; and that is Hale's Honey of Horehound and Tar—an absolute and immediate cure of all pulmonary complaints. For sale by all Druggists at 25c., 50c. and \$1.

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THE GOOD SON.

Anthony was apprentice, and his father clerk, in a merchant's house of some importance. Now the father had to make a voyage over the sea on the merchant's business. The sad intelligence arrived that the ship had been seized by pirates; and it was impossible to ascertain what had become of Anthony's father.

Anthony served out his apprenticeship truly and faithfully, became himself clerk, and earned a property of his own by industry and ability. At last he heard that his father was a slave in Turkey, and immediately formed the resolution to obtain his freedom. He therefore collected all the money that he had saved, sold his best clothes, and everything that he had of any other kind that could be turned into money, made a bargain to serve out the price of his passage over the sea as cabin-boy, reached the residence of the rich Turk whose slave his father was, and offered to buy his freedom. But the Turk demanded such a large sum of money, that all that Anthony had brought with him did not amount to half.

"Well, then," said Anthony, "take me as your slave, instead of my father: I am young, and can perform more service for you than my father, who is already old."

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At the command of the Turk his father came, fell in amazement on his son's neck, and both shed tears of affection. But when the father heard that his son wished to be a slave in his place, he cried more bitterly still, and would not at all consent to it. But the son said, through his tears, "Oh, my dearest father! I am not only ready to wear the bonds of slavery for you, but to give up life itself. Take the ransom money, which I have brought with me, for the expenses of your journey, and farewell!"

At this the Turk was moved to tears, and said to Anthony, "You are indeed a faithful, noble son! I give your father his freedom without ransom, and present you with sufficient money to set up an establishment of your own. For you, excellent Anthony! have acted as a good son should conduct himself towards his father according to the will of God."

"A dutiful son will freely give
His life, to let his parents live."

AN EXTENDED EXPERIENCE.—Writes a well-known chemist, permits me to say that Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor never fails. It makes no sore spots in the flesh, and consequently is painless. Don't you forget to get Putnam's Corn Extractor, now for sale by medicine dealers everywhere.