

How They Were Reconciled.

(Mary Sweet Potter, in the 'Morning Star'.)

'Let's see—it's two years this month since we spoke to Hetty Cline—two years ago last Friday.'

'I guess you're right, Selina. 'Twas the day before I was fifty, and I was fifty-two last Saturday. A pretty long time to go without speaking to our nearest neighbor, Selina.'

'Well, I know, 'Liza, but Hetty was dreadful aggravating and I couldn't stand it another minute.'

'That's so, Selina. Still I don't know as 'twas of quite so much account as we thought 'twas then. I declare I can't think just what 'twas that made the fuss, can you?'

'Well, I rather guess I can!' was Selina's prompt reply. 'She would keep chickens and they kept coming into our garden and some of 'em got drowned in a shower one day and she said our Peter caught 'em, and everybody knows he's been so stiff and blind for the last three years that he couldn't catch a snail, let alone chickens.'

'Oh, yes! I remember now.'

'And she threatened to have Peter killed, and then we had words and we haven't spoken together since.'

'Yes, yes,, I remember it all now, well enough. Words was all there was of it; our cat didn't kill her chickens, nor she didn't kill our cat, but for two years we have been sulking at each other, just as if we had good reason for it.'

Eliza was potting her geraniums and Selina sat just inside the doorway, shelling sweet peas for next year's seed. Eliza's tone and manner cause her sister to look up with great surprise.

'Seem's to me something's come over you, Eliza. You was jest as bitter as I was at the time it happened.'

'Well, it's time something come over me, an' you too, an' we both professors! Did you know she's sick, Selina?'

'Who? Hetty Cline? No, I didn't know.' Selina arose from the border of the geranium bed to look over into the yard of the neighbor who was the subject of their conversation.

'It looks awful quiet over there,' she said. 'There isn't a soul stirring—oh, yes, there is. There's Kitty, the hired girl. Eliza Jane! She's just hung crape on the door-knob, as sure's you're alive!'

Eliza's whole collection of seed peas were allowed to drop to the floor and roll into various hiding-places while she eagerly craned her neck to see the dreadful symbol of which her sister had spoken. Both having beheld the mournful sight, they turned and looked into each other's eyes.

'We've let her die without ever making up friends,' almost whispered Eliza.

'I'm afraid so,' replied Selina. 'What on earth's Kitty doing? Looks as if she was taking up plants or gathering seeds.'

'I guess not, with a death in the house,' Eliza said, trying to collect her scattered peas, but with little success, for her eyes were full of tears. 'What have we been thinking of all this time, Selina?'

'The land o' pity knows, I don't,' she answered. 'I wouldn't have been hard towards Hetty for all the world, any more'n you would have.'

Then they went into the house and sat down in their little dark parlor with folded hands as if already attending the funeral of Hetty Cline.

'I suppose we might as well try to be a lit-

tle like human folks, and go over,' Eliza said at length. 'There might be something we could do. It must have been a very sudden death. Mr. Andrews said she was sick, but I thought it was a cold or something of that kind. I don't think she even had a doctor.'

In a short time the Lane sisters were walking up the path that led to Mrs. Cline's front door, their minds filled with thoughts of regret and self-blame.

At the distance of a few feet from the door they stopped short and looked in each other's faces.

That which they had taken to be crape tied upon the door knob was simply a black worsted hood carelessly hung there, the owner of which now appeared with a smiling face, her hands filled with flower seeds of various sorts. It was Kitty, Mrs. Cline's maid of all work.

'How do you do?' she said. 'I'm gathering flower seeds. You'll find Mrs. Cline right in there. Throw my old hood down on the floor or anywhere; I thought as the wind was a little chilly I'd need it, but I didn't, so I hung it there.'

For a moment Eliza and Selina Lane stood irresolute, but soon deciding that they could not retreat they went forward, and shortly found themselves in Mrs. Cline's sitting-room feeling like bashful school girls. Mrs. Cline in her astonishment appeared quite as ill at ease as they when she greeted them, but quickly regained self-possession and showed her delight at seeing them very plainly.

'We heard you was sick—'

'We thought you was dead!' said the Lane sisters, in ungrammatical concert, and then Hattie Cline laughed outright for she understood the situation perfectly, or thought she did.

'Well, I'm a little sick, but I ain't dead,' she replied. 'It seems too bad that we three who used to be such good friends should have become such enemies that only death could bring us together in peace.'

'That's so,' responded Selina heartily.

'And all about nothing, too,' added Eliza. 'It's a burning shame, and I was just saying so to Selina—'

'When we saw Kitty hanging crape on the door—'

'Or we thought we did, and then we started right off. I'm so glad you're alive, Hetty!'

'And so am I,' said Selina, and the duet ended and was succeeded by a flow of tears quite as profuse as if the occasion had really been one of death instead of reconciliation and happiness.

Happiness, indeed, for the three friends realize more and more each day, as their latter years are passing, how much of quiet happiness they lost during those two bitter years when they were estranged, and they try by all the simple means they possess to atone to themselves and each other, finding, however, that spite of all they can do they can never bring back the golden time they spent in thinking and saying bitter things.

Prizes Easily Earned.

The result of the second week's competition in the gold competition is announced in this issue. It would appear that the boys and girls do not realize what an opportunity is open to them to secure \$200.00 in gold or at least one of the weekly prizes of either \$10.00 or \$5.00, which are offered up to Dec. 24. Full particulars of the competition will be found in this issue.

Steadfast or Stubborn?

There was a man who thought he was so steadfast and persevering, when he was only stubborn. When anybody opposed him he was unyielding, but when there was a long road to travel, or a hard piece of work to be done, he very soon grew tired.

'When I start out on any new venture,' said a young man, proudly, 'I never give up or make any changes till I carry it through.' But when an engine is off the rails, the farther it goes the more damage it does.

If we refuse to change our methods when more light shows them to have been wrong, it is not loyalty, but stubbornness. Sometimes conditions change, and we must change our methods to meet the new conditions. But underneath all changes, and greater than all knowledge, are the eternal principles which God has revealed to men. In loyalty to these we may be defeated, but they will triumph at last, and if we stand true to them God will strengthen and establish our work for him.

This is steadfastness, not stubbornness—steadfastness that is sure of its reward.—'Christian Age.'

Life a Plan of God.

(The Rev. James Learmont, in the 'Examiner'.)

There is a story told by Andrew Fuller of an incident in his early days. He says: 'My father was a farmer, and in my younger days it was a great boast among the ploughmen that they could plough a straight line across the ridges or furrows of the field. I thought I could do this as well as any of them. One day I saw such a line, which had just been drawn, and I thought, "Now I have it." Accordingly I laid hold of the plough, and, putting one of the horses into the furrow which had just been made, I resolved to keep him walking in it, and thus secure a parallel line. By-and-bye, however, I observed that there were what might be termed wriggles in this furrow, and when I came to them they turned out to be larger in mine than in the original. On noticing this, I threw the plough aside, and determined never to be an imitator.' And I think he came to a wise conclusion.

I have heard of a frog that was hunting for flies one day in a meadow. Close by a cow was quietly grazing. The frog said to himself, 'I should just like to see whether I can't be as big as that cow if I like.' So he puffed out his sides until—he burst! So the frog wanted to be something greater than he was, really meant to be. A great many people are very uninteresting to-day because they try to copy somebody else, instead of being themselves.

I want to say a word or two to you about this. If you copy others you will usually fall short of the copy; in fact, the tendency will be to copy the worst in others. The best plan is to live your own life as inspired and helped by God.

The Rabbis used to say that before the stone and timber were brought to Jerusalem for the Temple, every stone and piece of timber was marked, so that before they started for Jerusalem the architects knew where every stone should be placed. It is like that in life. We are all made by God to fit into some one place in the world. And it is only by going on doing the next duty that comes to us and trusting in God that he can lead us into our right place. Only God knows where and what that place is.

Let me tell you a story. I don't know whether it is true, but it is good enough to be