

Our Story.

BARBARA STREET.

A FAMILY STORY OF TO-DAY.
BY THE AUTHOR OF "OUR NELL," "A SAILOR'S DAUGHTER," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIV. (Continued.)

FOUR days after the funeral they left Barbara street for Martenhoe, and Waterhouse betook himself to the Langham Hotel. In what frame of mind was he as he departed from the dingy suburb which had been the scene of such vicissitudes of emotion as make sacred ground to us thereafter of any place, be it as common or unclean as it may? Ask, rather, how had Grace behaved to him before this moment of parting, for it had lain in her power by a word or a look to make him the most wretched or the happiest of men.

Five minutes before he left he was neither the one nor the other, but hovering rather between the two extremities. For Grace had been gracious; she had refrained from remonstrance, though Waterhouse had rendered service after service; she had discussed arrangements with him: he had had the happiness of knowing himself to be the instigator of a scheme which had left her dark eye and reanimated her small quick frame. He had suggested, on the authority of some friends who knew it, Martenhoe as the right place for the expedition, and had seen the blood mantle in Grace's olive cheeks as she heard of the gorse and the rich June meadows. And nothing had she said or done by which she betrayed even the remembrance of that unfortunate episode which had caused him so much misery.

It was evident he was forgiven. What he had dared scarcely to hope for was his. But was he contented? Far from it. Having what he desired, like other mortals, he immediately desired more. What he had was too neutral and pale-tinted to be called happiness. He was even so unreasonable as now in secret to chafe under this obnoxiousness of his past offence. Did he want her to forget his lapse from this brotherly friendliness, after all? By no means. But in spite of chafing he was not so foolhardy as to risk incurring Grace's anger again. Just before the general exodus, however, one little impulse came which he did not resist. No word had been said concerning his return, but he had observed with keen satisfaction that Mrs. Norris had implied it more than once in speaking to him. Therefore in speaking to her he cunningly implied it also—but Grace, she was the arbiter of his destiny. Would she forbid or consent? She was just now a sphinx, though a smiling and a gay one.

While ruminating thus, with a countenance unusually shaded by anxiety, he encountered Grace in the front passage as she was strapping up shawls and umbrellas. He relieved her of the task, and as he stooped over it, with his face conveniently hidden, he risked the remark (his sense of temerity rendering his tones somewhat uncertain)—

"Dear old Barbara street! It's not at all pleasant leaving it. When shall I come back again?" To his very great surprise, there was no reply to this, no tones saluted his ears, neither offended nor bantering. Instantly he raised himself. Some instinct seemed to endow him with assurance, and he looked full at Grace. In her face was the warrant of it, for she had hoisted the maiden's flag of surrender. A vivid blush suffused her cheeks. She had lost her self-possession, and was striving to look unconscious of the loss. Some one came out of the parlour adjoining, whom she addressed, and made use of to cover her retreat.

Waterhouse remained with an extraordinary sense of victory. His heart beat high, he trod with a conqueror's step, and his elation accompanied him to his hotel. Yet all Grace had done was not to answer him! This was what she told herself, to relieve a certain uneasiness, which accompanied her, and which was so unfounded and absurd. As if encouragement could be conveyed simply by stupidly failing to convey discouragement at the right moment!

One morning, about ten days after their arrival, Grace, as usual, came down first to breakfast. Through the open casement of the cottage parlour came the scent of musk, the hum of bees, and the morning wind fresh from the sea and the gorse. The view from this window generally engaged Grace's attention immediately, and especially on such a morning as this, when the white horses were out, and the sea was made up of fitting purple shadows and spaces of translucent green.

But on the small table on which was displayed Mrs. Inchcar's unique collection of breakfast-ware were also to be seen letters—letters whose superscription stirred up sufficient feeling in Grace to preclude any interest in the aspects of the sunny morning. There was one addressed to her mother—did not Grace know that frank free hand, and the size of the envelope, seeming both to symbolise the sender's large careless notions? Besides this, there were two for Hester—one in Miss Denston's peculiar hand-writing, the other in the same hand as that which had a short time back penned her own release.

Mr. Waterhouse had written to her mother—well, that was right and proper enough, she supposed—in fact, she knew her mother had written to him. She turned the letter over, since there was nobody by, and would like to have seen inside.

But this from Mr. Denston was a more serious matter. It would probably convey the refusal or the acceptance of Hester's offer. It would agitate Hester, and generally disturb the serenity of the atmosphere, and Grace would have liked to tear this letter to pieces, and deliver it to the brisk sea breeze. As that scheme could not be entertained, she made the tea, with a preoccupied air, and wondered how soon Hester would come down—Hester was always the last-comer in the morning, and was generally late for breakfast. Perhaps it would be kinder to run up with her letters. She would turn very pale when she saw that one lying there. Yes, the poor girl might at least be spared that; so she went up and delivered the letters into Hester's hand, and ran down again. They had finished breakfast, and Mrs. Norris had read her letter aloud before Hester made her appearance downstairs. This was the letter Mrs. Norris had received—

MY DEAR MRS NORRIS,—I have attended to your commissions in Barbara street. I looked in upon Sarah unexpectedly, in order to take her oil her guard, which I had an idea was the right thing to do, in case of policemen installed on the premises, or undue festivities of any kind. You will be glad to hear that, on the contrary, she appeared more low-spirited than ever, and the house wore the most cheerless aspect that ever a house could

wear. I had been apostrophising it as "dear old Barbara street," and longing to behold it again, for I candidly confess the last ten days have appeared to me more like ten months. I had expected No. 47 to greet me with the smiling face of a friend, but lo! I found it a stony mask. How was it that it seemed to me the dingiest and dreariest of dwellings? Pan gave me a welcome—barked and wriggled himself into next week, but he wistfully sought and sniffed for his little mistress, who is doubtless enjoying herself without a thought of him.

Denston, I am happy to say, has come to his senses. He now sees fit to oblige me and benefit himself at the same time. The sort of proud stomach that would induce a man to hold out against doing the former because it involved the latter seems very queer to me. I don't understand it at all. It seems hardly Christian. He looks a mere shadow, and I am anxious to get him off as soon as possible.

I emphatically don't like this hotel life—can't endure it. I shall go a-travelling to get through the time till you come back. I am glad you like Martenhoe. You are not condemned to solitude. You must be very happy down there, all of you together. You can talk to each other, and have sympathy in smiles and sighs.

With my kindest regards to all of you, ever yours sincerely,
JOHN WATERHOUSE.

"Poor Pan! dear little doggie!" was Grace's only spoken comment on this letter.

"Oh!" cried Kitty, indignantly, "it is poor Mr. Waterhouse, I should think—so lonely, and all by himself! I wish I was his sister."

Grace, though she tried to avoid it, caught her mother's eye, which shed a mildly humorous ray. And what must she do but blush?

"His sister, indeed! you absurd little thing!" she cried, frowning upon Kitty. "And what do you think he would do with a little mouse like you running after him? I am used to it, and can put up with you very well, but it would be a nice thing for you to be tied to a great selfish man."

"Oh, Grace! he is not a great selfish man. I think he is as unselfish nearly as a woman, for all you say. And he would not think me a trouble. He is very kind to me, and he likes me very much."

And Kitty maintained undaunted her air of solemn complacency.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LETTERS.

WHEN Hester took her letters from Grace, and saw what they were, she turned pale, and trembled very much. She was grateful to Grace for bringing them up-stairs, and appreciated this proof of thoughtful consideration. When Grace came in, she was just colling round her mass of light-brown glossy hair; but she let it fall again, and it spread over her shoulders as she sank into a chair by the window, with the letters on her lap. After turning them over once or twice, she let them lie there for a few moments, and looked out on to the fields and the sea. To open them would be to learn her destiny. She hesitated. She scarcely knew what she hoped or feared, but she knew a rush of strong feeling of some kind or other would sweep over her when the contents of these letters became hers, and she strove to fortify and compose her soul. First she opened Miss Denston's. It was a long letter, beginning with address, "My own Hester," and ending with the signature, "Thy friend for ever, Georgina." But between the two, from the midst of much that only served to express the writer's confidence and affection, or to entreat her dearest Hester's sympathy, Hester learned that Philip had accepted Mr. Waterhouse's offer. After explaining the terms of the offer, as to one who had heard nothing of it, the letter ran thus—

"On hearing of it from Philip, which came about almost accidentally, I immediately urged upon him the desirability of accepting it, and I am happy to say, succeeded in producing the effect I desired. My own sacrifice I could think nothing of. Indeed, when he pressed upon me the impossibility of living alone, in my feeble condition of health, I ventured to hint at the possibility of a certain promised arrangement with a certain dear absent friend, which, if carried out, would give me companionship dearer than any other. Was I wrong, Hester?"

Not a word was added as to the effect this suggestion produced upon Philip. But the key to the remaining problems lay at hand. Hester folded up this letter, and took up the other, but could with difficulty surmount her dread, her shrinking, sufficiently to open it. But opened at last it was. At a glance it proved to be longer than Hester had expected. As she read, the dread at her heart, which had almost stopped its beating, gave place to a flood of interest, emotion, joy, which set it throbbing full and fast. It ran thus—

DEAR MISS HESTER,—I am sorry to have kept you so long in suspense. Again I have to apologise for delay. But, though my mind was made up on the main question, there has been much to deliberate upon and to mature. I have had to wait for a favourable opportunity on which to open the matter to Georgina. I have had also to arrange certain decisive interviews with Waterhouse. It is now settled that I sail in the *Spartan*, which leaves in three weeks' time. This is sharp work, but it is better so.

You have perhaps already learned that it is easier for me to feel than to express gratitude. But I have never so regretted my unaptness as now. Your sisterly goodness when I saw you last I shall never forget. I was in a state bordering on distraction, and I had lost the power of forming a sane judgment as to my course of action. But my senses returned to me as you spoke, the confusion subsided, and from that time my mind has been quite clear on the matter.

As to that part of my course of action which concerns you, there has naturally been a struggle. The sacrifice which you offer is a great one—the acceptance of it could not but be a questionable one. But the remembrance of our interview has made that acceptance easier. Before the matter is finally settled, however, let me remind you of what I think you must be already aware—that medical opinion declares my sister's life to be a most precarious one. Dr. Black tells me that any seizure, such as she is liable to, may be fatal. Do you accept such a trust as this? Do not hesitate to draw back if the self-imposed task, as it may well do, seem too great. If you accept, I go with even graver responsibilities and more pressing obligations to get well as soon as may be.

You will not be returning to Barbara street before I leave. You must say "Good-bye!" for me to your mother, the remembrance of whom will always go with me; and to your sisters. As for yourself, am I not justified in feeling that I leave two sisters behind in place of one?—Believe me, faithfully yours,
PHILIP DENSTON.

Half an hour after Hester had read this letter there came a knock at her door, and Kitty cried—

"Hester, your egg is boiled, and is getting quite cold, and we are just ready to go down to the sands. Aren't you coming?"

"Yes, I will come directly, thank you," was the reply Kitty received, but the voice in which it was given had that subdued tone which suggests recent tears. And Kitty went down again more slowly, and with a wondering expression on her face; and when her sister came into the little parlour, soon after, she glanced at her apprehensively, with a mingled sense of awe and of resentment evoked by this untimely depression. For Kitty had never known, throughout her short dull life, such delights of holiday-making as these with which the summer days were filled. And yet here was Hester coming down for breakfast with uncouraged tardiness and red eyelids.

Soon they were all on their way to the sands. All the world of land and sea was glowing with colour and sunny warmth, fanned by a dainty fresh breeze blowing from over the salt waves. Kitty could not refrain from many a hop, skip, and jump to relieve the pressure of happiness; and Grace's enjoyment was scarcely less patent in the intense vitality that inspired her look, and speech, and movement. When the sea was reached, quivering with small sunlit waves, that the outgoing tide tossed gracefully over on to the glistening brown sand, to bathe in it seemed the first necessity of the hour. Hester alone preferred to remain on dry ground, but that was because the first necessity with her just now was to be alone and at liberty to muse and dream. She sat down under the sea-wall, and heeded nothing of what was going on before her eyes, neither hearing the playful cries of the bathers, nor observing their gambols as they sported themselves in the water. In vain Kitty waved her hand to her, eager to direct her attention to the progress she was making in the art of swimming. Hester did not see.

"Why, Hettie," cried Grace, when at length they issued from the bathing-machines, "how cruel of you not to reward Kitty's exertions with even one bravo. I am not sure, but I believe that at one moment she had both feet off the sand at the same time!"

"Oh, Grace," cried Kitty, aggrieved, "you know I had for two or three minutes at least. I can swim perfectly now!"

"Perfection depends upon the standard, I am afraid, Kitty."

"Oh," said Kitty, "you are cross this morning, I am afraid."

"It is Kitty who is cross, I think," said Grace; and Kitty walked away in a huff, and pretended to be deeply absorbed in picking up shells. Hester had coloured. She was sufficiently changed from the old Hester to feel, not vexed with Kitty, but with herself for having disappointed her little sister through her own self-absorption. Grace looked at her rather anxiously. She walked on a little way by her side.

"I am afraid you are not cross, but unhappy," she ventured to say.

"No," said Hester; "on the contrary, Grace, I am very happy." The two looked in each other's eyes. Hester did not volunteer more, and Grace though wondering much, was satisfied to wait. She went in search of Kitty, whose ill-humour soon melted under the sun of Grace's blithe spirits, and they prosecuted together a search for rare sea-weeds and shells with an ardour which deserves better success than it met. By-and-by, when it was getting towards the time for returning home to dinner, the two were far out upon the slippery weed-covered rocks in which the retreating tide had left clear pools filled with treasures for the toy-pail which Grace carried. Grace, rising from one of these, and shaking back from her eyes her long black hair which had been left down to dry after the fashion of the place, turned to look back to the sands for her mother and Hester.

"Can you see them?" asked Kitty, but Grace did not answer. She was gazing as one astonished, and a flush had risen in her olive cheeks.

"There they are!" cried Kitty, "but they are talking to some one, a gentleman—how funny! Why, it looks like—it can't be—yes it is! It is Mr. Waterhouse! Oh, how delightful!"

"Nonsense, Kitty!" returned Grace, speaking slowly, and in a low voice. "Why, we heard from him only this morning."

But it was very evident that it was Mr. Waterhouse. He had caught sight of them, and was coming to meet them. There was no mistaking, even at that distance, the well-knit, vigorous frame, and the brown beard.

"There must be something the matter at Barbara street," said Kitty. "Oh, I hope Pan is not poisoned!"

But Grace was silent; not even the allusion to her well-loved doggie brought any exclamation to her lips or quickened her steps. She picked her way over the stones deliberately, and Mr. Waterhouse met her, about half-way to shore. He was not at all ashamed; on the contrary, he looked radiant and well-assured. As for Grace, she looked rather wild than beautiful as she poised, cleverly and lightly, on the slippery rocks, with her black hair streaming, and a very odd expression on her face, as if she wished to be angry but could not quite succeed. Either this expression or something else made Waterhouse very bold.

"You look as unearthly as usual," he exclaimed, when they met. "Are you a mermaid, or what?"

"And what are you, pray? An apparition?"

"Not at all; take my hand over these slippery stones, and you will find me perfectly solid."

"No, thank you, I find it best to trust to my own footing."

"Ah, that is always your principle, as some of us find out to our cost. Does it apply to the carrying of the pail also?"

"You may take it, if you will not upset it, and don't mind those nursemaids laughing at you."

"I am too used to be made ridiculous by you."

Kitty was almost too amazed to retain her equilibrium. She had never heard such queer talk when two people greeted each other after an absence. Why did not Grace ask him why he had come? And how was it that Mr. Waterhouse had never spoken to her, Kitty, nor even seemed to see her, although they had been such friends? And, indeed, the utter vanishing of ceremony, and the strange sense of buoyancy which characterised the unexpected meeting of these two, were very odd. But when they joined the others the explanation, such as it was, of Mr. Waterhouse's appearance ensued. He had suddenly made up his mind to go into Germany, to see some friends whom he had known in his boyish days, and, "of course," he could not go without saying good-bye. He was going to stay at the hotel, but Mrs. Norris said he must come home with them for some luncheon, and he said, "Of course I shall!"

(To be continued.)

Sabbath School Work.

LESSON HELPS.

FOURTH QUARTER.

JESUS CRUCIFIED.

LESSON IV., October 24th John xix., 17-30, memorise verses 17-19.

GOLDEN TEXT. It is finished John xix. 30
TIME.—Friday, April 7, A.D. 30, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

PLACE.—Calvary (Golgotha), just outside the walls of Jerusalem on the north-west.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. xxvii. 32-50, Mark xv. 22-37; Luke xiii. 33-46.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—(1) On the way to the cross (v. 17). And he bearing his cross: each victim was accompanied by four soldiers. Jesus bore his cross as long as he could, and then Simon from Cyrene in Africa was compelled to help him. A great multitude followed. *Golgotha*: Hebrew for "skull." Calvary is from the Latin for skull. The place was a knoll in the shape of a skull. (2) The crucifixion (vs. 18-22). Jesus was nailed to the cross so that his feet would be but a short distance from the ground. 20. *Hebrew*, etc.: the three chief languages there spoken. (3) The first of the seven words spoken from the cross. "Father, forgive them," spoken while Jesus was being affixed to the cross (Luke xxiii. 34). (4) The four soldiers divide the garments of Jesus among themselves (vs. 23, 24). Soon after nine o'clock. 23. *His coat*, a long tunic, or undergarment. 24. *The scripture fulfilled*: Ps. xxii. 18. (5) Mockeries around the cross (Matt. xxvii. 39-44): nine to twelve o'clock. (6) Conversion of the penitent robber (Luke xxiii. 39-43): toward noon. (7) The mother of Jesus and other women (vs. 25-27): Towards noon. 25. *His mother's sister*: Salome, the mother of John. *Clophas*: rather Clopas, the same as Alpharatus, the father of James the less. (8) Darkness over all the land (Matt. xxvii. 45) from twelve to three o'clock. (9) The closing scenes (vs. 28-30): about three o'clock. 28. *All accomplished*: the same word as finished (v. 30.) His whole work was done; all that the scriptures had foretold; all necessary for redemption. *Scripture*: Ps. li. 21. 29. *Vinegar*: common sour wine for the soldiers to drink. (10) Accompanying signs: earthquake, veil of the temple rent, and graves opened.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Crucifixion.—Calvary.—The title.—The women around the cross.—John and the mother of Jesus.—It is finished.—Accompanying signs.—The atonement.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did we leave Jesus in our last lesson? In what other Gospels are the scenes of to-day's lesson recorded? Have you read them?

SUBJECT: THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

I. THE CRUCIFIXION (vs. 17-19). Where was Jesus crucified? What is its common name? Give some of the incidents that took place on the way? (Matt. xxvii. 32; Luke xiii. 26-32.) Give an account of the method of crucifying. Why must Jesus die such a terrible death? At what hour was he crucified? Mark xv. 25.) What title was placed over the cross? In how many languages? Why? Was this title a truth? Who were crucified with Jesus? Relate the story of the conversion of one of them. (Luke xxiii. 39-43.)

II. THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS.—What did Jesus say while they were nailing him to the cross? (Luke xxiii. 34.) What to the penitent robber? (Luke xxiii. 43.) What to his mother and John toward noon? (vs. xxvii. 27.) What was the fourth word, toward three o'clock? (Mark xv. 34.) What was the fifth word? (v. 28.) What was the sixth? (v. 30.) What was the seventh? (Luke xxiii. 46.) What lessons can you learn from these seven words?

III. THE WATCHERS AROUND THE CROSS (vs. 25-27).—What did the soldiers do near the cross? What scripture was fulfilled by them? (Ps. xxii. 18.) What did the crowd do? (Matt. xxvii. 39-44.) What friends were around the cross? How many are named? Why did these remain, while his disciples feared to approach? What touching scene took place in regard to his mother? What lessons does this teach us? Would you have been one that watched near the cross? How can you prove whether you would?

IV. THE CLOSING SCENES (vs. 28-30).—What took place at noon? (Matt. xxvii. 45.) At what hour did Jesus yield up his life? (Matt. xxvii. 46.) What were his last words? (v. 30; Luke xxiii. 46.) What was finished? What took place immediately after his death? (Matt. xxvii. 51-54.)

LESSONS FROM THE CROSS.

I. Calvary is the centre of the history of the world.

II. Even by those who have no interest in it, the scripture is being fulfilled.

III. There is one death-bed repentance in the Bible, that all may hope; there is only one to prevent presumption.

IV. The cost of our salvation should make us feel its worth, and take great pains to obtain it.

V. The atonement on the cross (1) shows God's hatred of sin. (2) It shows the terrible evil of sin. (3) It shows that we cannot enter heaven unless cleansed from our sin. (4) It shows the forgiving love of God. (5) It shows the value of our salvation.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole school in concert.)—15. Where was Jesus crucified? ANS. On Calvary, called Golgotha, near Jerusalem on the north. 16. When? ANS. On Friday, April 7, A.D. 30, from nine to three o'clock. 17. What did he say? ANS. He spoke seven times, called the seven words from the cross. 18. What were the last words? ANS. "It is finished"; Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." 19. Why was he crucified? ANS. To make atonement for our sins.

REV. G. B. GREIG, Paisley, Ont., who is leaving Canada to fill an appointment in Australia, preached his farewell discourse Sabbath morning and evening, Sept. 26th, to large congregations. He took for his text in the morning Acts xx. 25-27. In the evening he discoursed from Rom. viii. 38-49. There are now on the roll of Knox church 356 members—174 have been received during Mr. Greig's ministry; 75 have been removed, eight of these by death during the same period, making a net gain of 99 in the two and a half years; that he remained, which is ample proof of the faithfulness with which he ministered to his charge. We wish him abundant success in his new field of labour.