

But oh! what a quick wave of light flooded the face of this earnest-hearted Christian girl, — who had relinquished personal plans for the summer to serve her friends in bereavement—when, as the first hymn was being sung, a quietly arrayed youth entered the pew and, taking a place beside her, accepted the book she proffered, and with her joined in the service. And yet she strove to hide her gladness for fear it might tell too much of the anxiety she had at times felt concerning this self-same youth, so well endowed by nature to stand high among his fellow-men, yet, alas! easily led into what seemed to Louise, with her Christian training, wrong doing.

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"They have both gone—Tom and Aunt Lou—and you said we were going for a ride, papa. Aren't we to go?" It was little Elsie's voice, and Mr. Hampton standing in the midst of the green world without, unconsciously weaving a mind's picture that the words of his sister-in-law had brought before him, turned in answer to it. As he looked down into his little daughter's face like a flash it came to him that if he were sure the years would make the child before him strong, and sweet, and earnest—as strong and sweet and earnest, in fact, as was his sister-in-law Louise—he would ask for little else. Some women were—well—he sighed and slipped his hand protectingly over the slender one of his child. She had no mother to watch her now, poor dear!

His heart was very tender as, fitting his step to Elsie, he walked back to the house through the Sabbath stillness, saying at last, "I think, Elsie, we will not ride to-day."

When the church-goers returned, they found the side balcony strewn with books and magazines. But it was not until later that either of them knew the horses had not been taken from the stables, and only one then wondered as to the cause, and that was Louise.

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The grapes were hanging in rich clusters on the vines, and the soft haze of September hung over the landscape. Again the church bells were summoning God's people to worship, and Mr. Edward Hampton, looking out upon his beautifully rolled lawn, seemed noting the yellow leaves that now and then fluttered from the elms on to the greensward below, but his thoughts were far away.

There was the sound of a firm tread upon the polished oak stairs, and his son was beside him.

"I trust, father, you are not displeased with the step I purpose taking this morning in uniting with the church." His tones were hearty and had a genial ring that told somehow of satisfaction.

His father turned, and with a slightly amused look stealing into his gray eyes, said, gazing at the young man earnestly,—

"Perhaps, my boy, I have hardly been frank with you, but—well," he cleared his voice, "you see, Tom, I cannot have you getting ahead of me." There were tears now in the father's eyes and a huskiness in his tone as he reached and laid his hand upon his son's shoulder.

A questioning look came into the youth's eyes, as he said,—

"I do not exactly understand, father."

"No? You will not take the step alone, Tom. I intend joining you. I have acquainted Dr. Barrows with my wish, and should have told you—"

"Father!" broke in the youth, as leaning slightly forward, he gave his parent a quick, eager look.

"Sit down, Tom;" and the father pushed a chair towards his boy, taking another him-self. "I do not know whether it's your angel mother, or you, Tom, or your Aunt Louise that has led me into it. But things do not look the same as before your mother went from us." His voice was too tremulous now to admit of going further, and he passed his hand lightly over his face, and looked out again to the yellow leaves on the lawn.

Tom reached out his hand and clasped his father's.

"I understand, father, You feel as I did—as though with mother yonder, we must get there ourselves." And the young man arose. "I cannot tell you how glad you have made me. Does Aunt Louise know?"

"I have said nothing to her. She will be glad—we know that. As I have said, I hardly know whether it was your mother, or you, or your Aunt Louise, who has led me to change my views. But there is Elsie—she has no one but us now, Tom."

Tom nodded assent, and the two made their way from the room.

In all the wide world over it is doubtful if there was a happier girl than Louise Sydney, as an hour later, bowing her head in the further end of the pew, she let the silent tears flow as she recognised that two had left the pew and were now standing at the church-rail plighting their vows for Christ, when she had expected but one to take that step.

Little Elsie, in the place her father had just vacated, looked on, wondering what it all meant. When her father was again beside her, she drew his hand towards her and stroked it lovingly. But when, looking up, she saw traces of tears upon his face, she reached, and drawing his head down to her, whispered, "I love you, papa."

And many of the worshippers who viewed the scene, felt tears upon their own lashes. Very near indeed seemed Christ to his people in that hour.—*Young People's Weekly.*