

mantelpiece, and my favourite. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths," is placed right above my sewing-machine.

Our kitchen is very full of furniture—in fact too full—but our house is so small that we have no other place for the superfluous articles. There is, of course, a bed in the recess covered summer and winter with the invariable patch-work quilt, and a valance of cretonne stretched along the top of the recess next the ceiling takes away its otherwise bare appearance. Father's armchair always stands in front of it, and likewise our little round table, folded perpendicular when not in use. The big kitchen table stands where all such tables usually stand, in front of the window, and is kept spotlessly white with soap and water. Like the table, the chairs are all of plain deal, but unlike it they are old and rickety and of antique shape, for they were my grandmother's and it may be, her mother's before her. Our clock is an heirloom too, of considerable value I understand, for it is one of those so much sought after for halls nowadays. It has a very handsome brass face, and notwithstanding its great antiquity it never thinks of playing pranks with old Father Time but can be thoroughly relied on, year in, year out.

The next piece of furniture I am about to describe, a chest of drawers, is not usually considered part of a kitchen's furniture, but, believe me, it is by no means uncommon to find either drawers or a clothes press in the kitchens of homes such as I am describing. Ours stands low and contains many curious little drawers (wh) and recesses whose contents speak of a bygone day, but alas! it has seen its best days and the veneer is chipping off

bit by bit. Piled up on the top is quite a miscellaneous assortment of literature, the religious section represented by mother's favourites, Boston's *Fourfold State*, James' *Anxious Enquirer*, Baxter's *Saint's Rest*, Spurgeon's Sermons and the like, and the secular by one or two of Scott's Novels, *The Pickwick Papers*, *Lorna Doone*, Longfellow's and Burns's Poems, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, a few bound volumes of *The Sunday at Home* and some pamphlets and treatises of a nondescript character. In front of the books stands a looking-glass with the usual elaborate arrangement of white netting round it, just as one would see it in dozens of similar homes, and alongside of it what one does not often see in such homes as ours, a number of priceless old china bowls and plates which are the admiration and envy of every visitor who is anything of a connoisseur in such matters.

Our little corner-cupboard fitted high up in the angle of the wall contains some more exquisite "bits" of old china, which mother treasures solely for the old associations that cling to them. The same corner lower down is occupied by my sewing-machine, the most modern thing in the room, and a "kist" or wooden trunk cushioned on the top to form a comfortable settee and decked round with red hangings.

The description will be complete, I think, when I add one or two characteristic details which I have omitted. First as regards the mantelpiece. At each end there is a quaint old tea-caddy and a handsome old brass candlestick. Two Italian irons ("tallies" we call them) which mother uses for "setting up" match borders, is the next item. A box of

matches, one or two cocoa tins, a pair of big foreign shells, and father's spectacle case, placed so as to be reached from his arm-chair, make up the sum total. Next I must speak of the ceiling which is furnished with half-a-dozen stout hooks, from which hang various articles, a basket, the brass jam-pan wrapped up in brown paper, and, most important of all, also wrapped in paper, a huge piece of ham or bacon which gradually wanes until it disappears and its place is taken by another piece of similar size. The window and its contents I have left to the last, though in its direction a stranger would first turn his eyes on entering our kitchen. My mother is always very successful with her flowers and has a pretty show at all seasons. Even in winter she has often a monthly rose out. Not only is the window-sill filled but one or two hang down from above and twine along a cord stretched across the window. To tell the truth the whole street is enthusiastic on the subject of flowers and there is quite an extensive exchange of slips and cuttings when the proper season comes round, and much friendly jealousy as to whose window looks bonniest. Such then is our kitchen, a very ordinary room with nothing very attractive about it except to its inmates, but to them "Be it ever so humble there's no place like home," and I must say I think with the poetess that

"There's nought to compare wi' ane's ain fireside."

"EILEEN."
Langholm
Dumfriesshire.

This has been written entirely without help or assistance of any kind.

"EILEEN."

"IF LOVING HEARTS WERE NEVER LONELY—";

OR,

MADGE HARCOURT'S DESOLATION.

By GERTRUDE PAGE.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.



MIST had gathered over Elsie's eyes as she sat silently listening, while Madge told of all that was in her heart, and when she finished, she clasped her hands in silent prayer for strength to help this young struggling heart.

Getting up from her low chair, she knelt down beside Madge, and taking her hands in hers, kissed her white face.

"I am so sorry for you, dear," she murmured, "I can't tell you how sorry, nor how much I long to help you. I know so well what you have gone through and how sometimes it has seemed to crush the very life out of you."

"I think you have helped me already,"

said Madge, in a low voice. "You are so good not to be horrified at me. I felt sure that you would not judge me harshly."

"God forbid that I should judge you at all," she answered fervently. "What are we, the very best of us, that we can judge a fellow-creature. No one can judge except God, because no one else knows the strength of the temptation. And oh, Mrs Fawcett! He is so good and so loving, a God of Infinite compassion. Men's hearts are so hemmed in and weighed down, with ceremonies and vain reasoning, that they cannot grasp the meaning of Infinite Love, and yet it is so simple. They confuse their minds with endless controversies, and get all mixed up because they have not first grasped the meaning of Father and child. They think this thing and that thing is necessary to salvation, but often the poor uneducated man, who has learnt to look up and say 'Father' is nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than they. I wish I were clever and eloquent that I could help you. I know so well what I believe, but it is hard to explain and convince. I don't think either that anyone can be convinced by mere words, they must feel things for themselves."

She paused, gently stroking Madge's hand and looking away from her into the night.

Her eyes shone with a steady light of love and worship, one could almost fancy a halo round her sweet pale face.

Madge gazed at her with hungry yearning to know of the content and rest that evidently filled her heart as she said, "Please go on talking to me, I don't want you to reason, I will not interrupt you; only go on talking and let me listen."

Elsie fixed her eyes on the now star-lit heavens and continued in a low soft voice. "Mrs. Fawcett, if you had a little child that you loved very dearly, and it climbed on to your knee and asked you certain questions that you knew it was better for your child not to know, what would you say to it? Suppose your little one wanted to know why you did various things that it could not understand? Suppose it asked reasons and explanations for your treatment towards it and its brothers and sisters?

"Don't you think you would gently tell the child that it must not ask those questions; that if you answered them its little mind would only be bewildered; that it was not old enough to understand these things yet? You would say