

THE WINSTALLS

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A TALE OF LOVE AND MONEY

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CHAPTER X.

A JOYFUL SURRENDER.

On the Sunday morning following Jerry's unfortunate break the whole Winstall family drove to church. We say the whole family, for the two younger members of the family had returned home the previous evening. These two were Grace, now aged fifteen; and Alfred, aged six. They had been on a visit to their grandfather in the country for the past two weeks. Grace was not so tall as her sister, and evidently not destined to be so tall; but she had a strong frame, and was stouter. She had her mother's brown hair and eyes, and her father's rattling gay humor. She was strong, healthy, and full of life; given more to romping than to study. But she had a serious—even a spirituelle—cast of countenance withal, suggestive of great possibilities of development. In the meantime her free, romping, rattling spirit was in the ascendant.

Alfred had never been strong. He had been the one anxiety of the family. He would have occasional spells of increased strength, but these would be followed by times of weakness and languor unusual for a child of his age. There was nothing that seemed to excite the father's solicitude so much as the health of his youngest born. The child seemed to inherit the delicacy of his mother in her later years. He resembled her too, in appearance and manner more than either of his sisters. He had a far away look at times, that strongly recalled the mother's, and when the father would perceive this look it would smite him as with a sudden pain. Would little Alf go the way his mother went? Ah, how parents feel the impending blow, and the chill of the coming shadow.

As soon, then, as the season at all justified the step, Grace and Alf were sent out to grandfather's for a change. Now they had returned, and Alf seemed stronger and more buoyant than he had been all the winter months. Thus the whole family drove to church on Sunday morning.

When Jerry beheld the scene of his humiliation and defeat a few evenings ago, he was smitten with a renewed feeling of regret and shame; and this feeling was not mitigated when three or four of the small boys of the street began to hoot at him, and give imitations of his late harangue. But with Jerry's regrets there was now mingled a strong feeling of thankfulness and hope that wonderfully sustained him. "Even that disgrace," thought he, "will be a blessing if I take it as a warning not to fall again."

It was a fine Sunday morning, and the church was almost full. And it was a wealthy, fashionable congregation. Both Miss Winstall and Miss Pearce were mentally contrasting the appearance of the congregation this morning with that of Wednesday evening last. Why didn't more of these people turn out for the week night service? Wasn't Mr. Stuart just as interesting and instructive then as now? The fact was, they were not generally interested in Mr. Stuart's talks on social topics. Some of his people thought it was not his business to touch such questions at all. Why didn't he preach the

Gospel? Others were opposed to his views. They thought him too socialistic. They were wealthy, and any recognition of equality in any sense between themselves and less fortunate people they did not desire. Others had no interest in such subjects whatever, because they had never felt the pinch of any hardship or injustice. Thus Mr. Stuart's week evening audiences were small. There were few, if any, who went so far as to show Mr. Stuart any opposition. They were too well bred for that; and besides, they liked him; therefore they simply let him alone. Some of the more kindly disposed allowed that a man must be a bit of a crank in some way, and that Mr. Stuart's peculiar views would do no harm.

This easy-going, luxurious disposition on the part of the people had one result which perhaps not one of them was aware of. It had the effect of inducing Mr. Stuart to give them a very clear, straight, urgent Gospel on Sunday. Whatever socialistic opinions he then expressed, he did not call them by that name, to scare anybody away; but he preached the same earnest truths many a time on the authority of some very evangelical text. We have seen how a week ago he sought to arouse his people from their selfish slumbers by an appeal for work. The most rabid socialist could desire no better text. To-day Mr. Stuart took a very simple and short statement of truth which went to the foundation of character. It was this: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

It was a very simple, earnest, Gospel sermon. The preacher dwelt first on the graciousness and freedom of the invitation. Then he named various classes of people that ought to accept the invitation, and the certainty of their receiving what they needed. Every one of us, he said, needed to come for pardon. He showed how by virtue of the atonement pardon could be received; and, he gave instances both from scripture and secular history, of very wicked sinners and very moral sinners who had been saved. Then the preacher invited all who were carrying heavy burdens to come, and showed how Christ could make their burdens light. He invited the sorrowful to come, setting forth Christ as the 'One that comforteth the mourners.' He invited all who were seeking the truth to come. Him who is the very Truth personified. He invited all who wanted to live more useful and noble lives to come to Him who lived the ideal life, and who could give wisdom and strength to walk in his steps.

Such lines of thought as these the preacher followed with growing earnestness and intensity. That he held the attention of the congregation there could be no doubt. The tense interest was sustained to the close. The rustle of relief that followed the last word was more impressive than the heartiest burst of applause.

Mr. Stuart could not help feeling that the truth had told somewhere. We may hope it had its effect upon many, but there was one especially to whom the word came that day with power. That was Miss Winstall. For some time her heart was being prepared to receive the good seed of the word. To-day she had been touched deeply with the

scripture lesson that preceded the sermon. Mr. Stuart had chosen that pathetic account of the sinful woman who, in her penitence came to the Saviour's feet, washed those feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. As the Lord spoke the word of pardon and peace to that penitent woman, Miss Winstall prayed that he might speak the same word to her. When, therefore, in the sermon the invitation was given to come just now to him for pardon, Miss Winstall's heart was very full. Surely, she thought, this is the accepted time for me; this is my very day of salvation. She bowed her head, partly to hide her emotion, and partly to lift her heart in prayer; and she asked the same pardon for all her neglects and sins. But there was more to follow. When Mr. Stuart later on invited all to come who were not satisfied with their frivolous, useless lives, Miss Winstall was deeply moved again. Surely this sermon was for herself. How did the preacher know her case so well? She had never given him any hint that she was ill at ease. But now she recognised that it was the Saviour Himself who was speaking through the preacher, and speaking directly to herself. Would she listen to His voice? Would she respond to His call? Yes, she would listen, and respond, and obey. In faith she came for the light and guidance she needed, and she realised that she was not disappointed. The joy of the new life entered her heart. She had found the two things she wanted—pardon for the past, and grace for the future. Surely indeed, this was her day of salvation.

It may be hoped that other hearts also responded that day to the truth so faithfully proclaimed. At any rate there seemed to be a marked and unusual solemnity on the congregation in the singing of the closing hymn:

"Just as I am! Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

"Just as I am! Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down,
Now to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

As the Winstall family drove home from church their manner was for the most part subdued and thoughtful. Miss Pearce and her new friend Grace were chatting about the church, and the preacher, and the people; but there was no flippancy or hilarity in their manner. If Mr. Winstall was at all affected he did not show it; in fact the Sunday service never seemed to affect him beyond giving him a little relaxation. Alfred talked little, as his manner was, only asking his father some questions about things that interested him on the way. As for Miss Winstall, she spoke but rarely. She was glad that Grace was present now to entertain Miss Pearce, for she herself wished to commune with her own heart. So she was left very much alone, but she was not lonely; deep spiritual communings were going on within, and she had a light in her eyes that was neither of the land nor sea.

To be continued.

Paul hadn't forty aims; if he had, you would never have heard of him. He threw his whole life into one channel.—D. L. Moody.

A majority of persons take years off their lives through eating too much, while all the time they are under the impression that they are indeed being strictly moderate.