

A Story of Two Thanksgiving Days.

(By Sarah L. Tenney, in 'Christian Intelligencer'.)

'This, then, is your final decision?' 'This is my decision, Harvey, and it is final,' was the unfaltering reply, but the sweet lips that uttered it grew white with anguish, and the beautiful gray eyes were blinded with tears.

They were standing together, these two, Harvey Bertram and his affianced bride, in the drawing room of the latter's beautiful home. Evidently some serious point was at issue, for the young man was pale with anger, and the young girl, though calm in outward appearance, showed plainly the effort it cost her to restrain her emotion. In the brief silence that followed her emphatic words, she drew from her finger the sparkling diamond, the seal of her betrothal, and placed it in Harvey's hand. But the young man, with an exclamation of wrath and disappointment, threw it far from him, saying bitterly, 'You have destroyed all my faith in womankind, fool that I was ever to believe in you! Whatever I may become in the future, you may charge all to yourself, for you might have saved me had your love been a reality instead of a mocking pretence.' Leaving her no opportunity for reply, he strode angrily from the room and left the house.

Mabel listened almost with suspended breath to the echo of his retreating footsteps until they were no longer audible, then sitting down by the large centre table, she bowed her head upon it, and broke forth in unrestrained sobs.

The door softly opened and a tall, stately-looking lady entered. One glance at the grief-stricken form before her, and she hurriedly gathered the weeping girl into her arms and tenderly sought to comfort her.

'Oh, mamma, mamma,' she cried between her sobs, 'I have followed your counsel, but it has broken my heart.'

'Better so, my precious child, than that your whole life should be made miserable. If Harvey truly loves you, you will yet live to bless this hour that has brought you so much suffering. But if he prefers his cups to my own darling daughter, who would be a blessing in any man's life, better a thousand times, Mabel, the sharp anguish of this hour, than a lifetime of untold wretchedness—the unspeakable woe of the drunkard's wife!' Tenderly she sought to soothe her and with motherly love calm the sorrowing girl.

When the engagement of Harvey Bertram and Mabel Underwood was first announced, society cordially approved, and even Dame Grundy, for a wonder, had no objection to offer. It was pronounced in every way a most suitable match. Both were of excellent family, and fine personal appearance, both had wealth and commanding position in society. Both were loved and admired by their numerous friends, and both were very much in love with each other, which seemed to stamp the final seal upon the proposed compact. For a year or more the course of their love had run very smoothly, when suddenly appeared the cloud, at first no bigger than a man's hand, which gradually was to increase in size till it should darken the whole horizon for one of them at least, and totally obscure the brightness that had flooded her life.

It was only lately that Mabel had noticed with growing uneasiness her lover's fondness for wine in the social parties to which they were often bidden.

Herself a total abstainer and a firm advocate of temperance, she would never have set anything of the kind before any young

man, or have encouraged it by her example; much less him whom she had honored with her fresh, young love. The first time she had ever noticed the taint of liquor in his breath, it was at her own home. She was surprised and spoke her surprise, but Harvey had apologized, assuring her that the doctor's prescription for a severe cold was the cause of it.

Having perfect confidence in his word, her fears were allayed for the time being, but as after a brief interval the same thing occurred again, and yet again, she grew troubled at heart and pleaded earnestly with Harvey to break off the pernicious habit. But he would laugh and call her 'little Puritan' and kiss away her fears. Only a night or two before the scene with which our story opens, he had indulged so freely in wine at a very fashionable entertainment, that he was in no condition to escort Mabel at its close, but had instead to be helped into the carriage which conveyed them home—the one in a state of maudlin excitement, the other, grieved and indignant, yet almost broken-hearted at the threatened wreck of all her fond hopes. It was then that Mabel, counselled by the wisest and best of mothers, determined to take a decided stand, and compel her lover to choose without delay. The next evening, when Harvey came to see her, sober and full of apology, she carried her resolution into effect. Harvey indignantly protested at her position, assuring her there was no danger, and he would 'never sacrifice his liberty to a woman's foolish whims.'

'Then all is over between us, Harvey,' said the young girl firmly but sadly, and naught could shake her resolution.

The day after the rupture of their engagement was Thanksgiving Day, and well was it for Mabel that duties which could not be ignored claimed her attention or she would have broken down utterly in her secret anguish. She was a beautiful singer and for years had been the leading soprano at St. Paul's Church. But as the grand 'Jubilate Deo' rang through the spacious temple the next morning in the Thanksgiving service, it seemed to Mabel that her heart must break even with hallelujahs on her lips.

'How can I sing the Lord's song in a strange land,' she moaned within herself—for to her it was indeed a strange land of sorrow and suffering, this unaccustomed land into which she had been called so unexpectedly. That very week she saw the name of Harvey Bertram in the list of passengers on an outward bound steamer, and she then fully realized that her beautiful dream of love was over.

A year passed by. To Mabel, it dragged its slow length along wearily, albeit she occupied her time conscientiously in domestic and social duties. Never a word all the long while had she heard of her former lover, nor did she know even if he were alive. Many suitors crowded around her eagerly pressing their claims, but she remained constant and loyal to her first and only love. She could neither forget nor cease to love, unworthy as he had proved of her devotion.

Harvey himself, meanwhile, had journeyed hither and yon, hurrying restlessly from one end of the continent to the other—now in gay Parisian salons, now amid the snow-clad mountains of the North, yet again in sunny Italy, striving ever to forget beneath her smiling skies and amid her dark-eyed, beautiful women, the one sweet face which never for one moment left his memory. He had loved a true woman, and a true woman had loved him, and with that fine subtle essence, as inexplicable as it is indestructible, this true love was constantly though unconsciously drawing him ever toward the worthy object of his affection and away from the hindering evil that had separated them.

One day, as he was in the act of lifting a glass of wine to his lips, a sudden vision of her in all her loveliness, and in the sweet sadness of their parting hour, came before him. It was more than he could bear. Instantly all the latent manhood within him sprang into full being. Swift as a flash of lightning he beheld his own danger and the priceless worth of his beloved. 'I have been a fool and worse,' he exclaimed, dashing the untasted cup to the ground. 'If I am not too late to retrieve the past she shall yet be mine. God helping me, I will break these chains.' And God answered the earnest entreaty.

It was again Thanksgiving morning, and again as of yore, Mabel was to sing in the

opening anthem at St. Paul's. Just as she was leaving her home for the church a messenger handed her a letter which was marked 'Special Delivery.' Recognizing the familiar handwriting, every drop of blood left her face, and her heart beat almost to suffocation. Opening the letter with trembling hand, this is what she read:

'Dearest, you were wholly right and I was altogether wrong. Forgive me if you can, and take me back into your true, loving heart again. Never shall you have cause to repent it. As you see from the date of my letter, I arrived in New York yesterday, and am hastening to you on the wings of love. To-morrow (Thanksgiving Day) I will dine with you at two o'clock, God willing. Your own, repentant Harvey.'

Ah, gloriously rang forth the choral through the vast auditorium on that glad Thanksgiving morning! Not a few beheld with wonder and admiration the almost glorified face of the leading soprano, as above the rocking, jubilant tones of the organ, far above the mighty chorus rose that voice of marvellous power and sweetness, 'Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever.'

[For the 'Northern Messenger.'

The Missionaries' Departure.

'He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, daily, and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me.' We witnessed an illustration of the meaning of the text, not long since, when, at the railway station of a pretty Ontario village, a Canadian, doctor-missionary, with his wife and bright little girl, parted from the home associations and friends, with their faces set China-wards, to re-enter on the Master's work, in that far land from which they had been driven, not many months before, by Boxer fanaticism.

The ageing parents were both present, to give the parting hand-clasp, and get the last glimpse of the departing ones, but, as we looked at the two subdued faces, there seemed in them nothing likely to betray to the casual onlooker, the heavy heart tension that lay behind the outward quiet.

True, the mother stood with firmly-set mouth, and tearless eye, and the father was perhaps paler than usual, while the outgoing son and daughter-in-law were almost cheerful. Such was the outward appearance, the Master alone, knows the heart throbs.

After it was over, the father was heard to remark to the effect, that 'It was probably the last time they would meet here.' It may be the absent ones are destined for the martyrs' death and the martyrs' crown, and that the next home-coming will be where they meet in the Eternal Home, with earth's farewells forever past.

However, they have counted the cost, and who will say which has surrendered most, the parents who give thus, of their best to Christ, or those who go from them to battle for him against foes, seen and unseen.' It is the ever-present, personal, Saviour, who leads the way for his followers, and the love for this divine leader, prompts the up-giving of the human heart's most closely held treasures, but lo! by this very up-giving come returns a hundred fold. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.'

The Find-the-Place Almanac

TEXTS IN PROVERBS.

Nov. 24, Sun.—There is that scattereth and yet increaseth: and there is that withholdeth more than is meet but it tendeth to poverty.

Nov. 25, Mon.—He that trusteth in his riches shall fall.

Nov. 26, Tues.—He that winneth souls is wise.

Nov. 27, Wed.—He that hateth reproof is brutish.

Nov. 28, Thur.—The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

Nov. 29, Fri.—The lip of truth shall be established forever.

Nov. 30, Sat.—Lying lips are abomination to the Lord.