

not the judgments of the church or the minister, but God's own declaration of how He will visit sin. When we say *Amen* to these declarations we confess that that is truly the case, not that we wish or desire either that we or our neighbours may be visited with punishment. Anybody who engages in this service under the impression that he is invited to curse his neighbours has wholly misunderstood its purpose and intent.

II. THE COMMUNION OFFICE.

This is the chief and most solemn service of the Christian Church. Here we join together in pleading before God the Father the all-sufficient sacrifice made for sin by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, both God and Man. Here we solemnly show forth also before men His wondrous love and humility in humbling Himself thus to die for us. Here, too, we are enabled to become partakers of that sacrifice by feeding upon the sacramental Bread and Wine. Here, too, we manifest our union with our fellow Christians who are partakers of the same Bread and the same Cup.

This service is compiled chiefly from an ancient liturgy called St. John's, brought from Ephesus after St. John's death, by missionaries to France (or Gaul, as it was then called).

No matter how ancient the form in which our worship is offered, the supreme thing for us to remember is that it should come from our hearts. In order that we may understand aright the spirit in which we should take part in this service, we must read the *Exhortations*, the last question in the Catechism, and we find that we must have (1) Repentance for our sins, and a steadfast purpose of amendment; (2) Sincere and earnest faith in God's mercy through Christ; (3) Be in charity with all men. In order that we may the better see wherein we have done amiss, we are to examine our lives by the light of God's Commandments, and we are called upon to make a solemn profession of our faith by reciting the Nicene Creed.

The sacramental elements are consecrated by the priest reciting the words used by our blessed Lord Himself when He instituted the Sacrament.

We are to receive this Sacrament on our knees, not as an act of worship or adoration of the Bread and Wine, but for the purpose of avoiding all disorder and confusion, and also as signifying our humble and grateful acknowledgment of the benefits of Christ received by the faithful in that holy sacrament, inasmuch as we are thereby made partakers of the sacrifice which our Lord Jesus Christ has made for our sins and for the sins of all mankind.

III. THE CATECHISM.

The Church of England intends that all baptized persons before being confirmed by the Bishop shall be instructed in the Church Catechism (see Exhortation as the conclusion of the Baptismal Office). In this Catechism are set forth by means of questions and answers a course of instruction in the Christian religion. It teaches us both our Faith, i.e., those things which we must believe concerning God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and our Duty, i.e., How we must act both towards God and our fellow men.

Both of these are equally important, for we cannot please God without Faith; neither is it possible to do our Duty either to Him or to men aright, unless we also have a right faith as the motive for all our actions.

The Catechism is, therefore, neither to be taught nor learnt as though it were a mere exercise of memory. The subject it deals with is one that affects the whole life; and the lessons it is intended to convey are the most important for the welfare not only of our souls but our bodies. Our future happiness or misery in a great measure depends on how we master and act up to the spirit of the teaching we receive.

Family Reading.

Love's Mastery: Or the Gower Family.

NUMBER 2.—CONTINUED.

Stella seemed to speak from the very depths of her heart. It was pleasant to talk to any one about her little brother, and to feel that they thought kindly of him too.

"Has he been more ill than usual to-day?" Captain Flamank inquired.

"No, not than usual. Why?" Stella asked, the mere question awakening suspicion in her breast.

"I thought you seemed in trouble, that was all."

"O not about that," she replied, in a somewhat relieved tone.

"What then? I believe you do too many lessons. I shall speak to Somerset and your sister about it."

"I have a great deal to do; more than I want, very much," Stella answered gravely; "but it is not exactly that which troubles me; and I would rather, Captain Flamank, that you did not say anything about it."

"Have you seen my cousin, Mrs. Fleming?" the young man asked, changing the subject, which he saw was becoming unwelcome to Stella.

"No. Is she here to-night? Lora never told me that she was in England even."

"Yes indeed. She arrived a week earlier than was expected, taking us all by surprise. Your sister knew it some days ago, because she invited her here to-night."

"Yes, I daresay. I am not surprised at Lora not mentioning it, only I should have liked to know it."

"Why?"

"Nurse told me that Mrs. Fleming used to know my own mamma," Stella murmured, in a hushed low whisper, which thrilled almost painfully on the ears of the young officer. He felt sorry for the child, and did not speak for a minute.

"Is Mrs. Fleming very sad?" Stella asked when she had recovered herself.

"Sad! For why, Stella?"

"For having left Major Fleming behind. He was sent to China, wasn't he?"

"Yes. I think, on the whole, Ethel is in very tolerable spirits; but you shall judge for yourself, Stella: you must come and be introduced. I almost wonder—" Captain Flamank did not finish his sentence, which would have been to the effect that he was surprised she had not been introduced before.

In another minute Stella was standing beside a lady, whose gaze she felt to be very earnestly fixed upon her countenance—a lady so much younger than she had expected to meet, that Stella at first imagined nurse must have been mistaken, and that this, after all, was not the Mrs. Fleming whose arrival she had been anticipating. She was dressed in a high white muslin dress, and was without ornament of any kind, save a hoop of large pearls guarding the gold ring on her left hand. And her face—it seemed to Stella, as she looked into it for the first time, the sweetest and softest she had ever seen, with a mild passive beauty of its own, very winning and attractive.

"Allow me, Ethel, to introduce to you Miss Gower's younger sister, Stella," Captain Flamank said, as he bent towards his cousin. "Stella—such a pretty name, is it not?"

Mrs. Fleming smiled. Perhaps she thought the face, into which she was still earnestly gazing, prettier and sweeter even than the name; but she did not say so.

"Yes; it reminds us of all that is bright and hopeful," she answered; and then she drew the young girl nearer, and kissed her, almost as a mother would have done. It was a rare thing for Stella, a kiss of love, from any one but Tracy, and her heart softened; while the hard angry feelings she had all night cherished seemed to melt away and be forgotten for the while. A soft colour came into her cheeks.

"She knew my mamma," she murmured inwardly, "and so she kisses me. How pleased Tracy will be!"

"May I call you Stella too?" were Mrs. Fleming's next words. "I should like to have that privilege."

"O yes," said the young girl: "I like it best."

"I guessed directly who you were, when you came into the dining-room, from your likeness to your brother and sister, Stella dear," Mrs. Fleming went on to say; "and I have been wanting to speak to you. If George had not done so for me, I should have come and introduced myself."

"I did not know you were here until Captain Flamank told me," Stella apologised, looking down on the carpet, and a deep colour coming into her cheeks, as she thought of her bad playing. "It

was not my fault about the music. I had never practised it."

"What about the music?" asked Captain Flamank quickly. "I was in hopes the music was in the future of the evening, not in the past."

"I detected very little amiss, dear Stella," said Ethel Fleming gently. "It was a very brilliant and a very difficult piece; and, though your sister might have been a little vexed, I am quite sure no one else was."

"What was it?" asked Captain Flamank again.

"Nothing, nothing at all, George," replied his cousin—"nothing but what we should be very pleased to hear over again now."

"I broke down about twenty times, and spoiled Lora's part," said Stella, simply; "but it was because I had never practised it. There are lots of pieces I can play well enough, only Lora"—here she stopped.

"Lora does not like you to break down, I am very sure," said the captain, laughing; "and I am very glad I was not in the room. You will have to make the amende honourable by favouring the company again."

"I do not think so to-night," answered Stella, who knew her sister's countenance too well.

It was a very unusual thing for her to attempt to justify herself, especially to a stranger. Her natural reserve and pride forbade it; but Mrs. Fleming was one, the only one perhaps for years, whose favour and interest Stella was anxious to win; and she feared the kind of impression that first night's interview might make. A friend of her own mamma—one who had seen her long after she had—one who, perhaps, might love her for that mother's sake. Had Stella known that Mrs. Fleming made one of the auditors before, she would have stifled her feelings of resentment towards her sister, and asked for a piece to which she could do justice; a request which Lora certainly would not have denied.

A quiet, rather a dubious smile had come into Mrs. Fleming's face; and she looked at Stella again very earnestly. The smile passed away as she considered those grave, pensive, beautiful features. She changed the subject of conversation; for, quite unable to read the young girl's thoughts, she had misjudged her motive in referring to her playing, and fancied that perhaps pride and self-complacency had been mortified, and led to the explanation. The shadow on the brow of one so young and so fascinating perplexed her, even as it had perplexed her cousin, and that more seriously. For Mrs. Fleming was not one of this world's gay children. In it, but not of it, she had long learned the transitory nature of its gladder pleasures and dearest delights; and she had also learned, by earnest and sympathetic observation, quickly to mark the strange void, and to detect the anxious longing for some enduring good, so often to be traced on the countenance—even amid smiles—of the children of wealth and apparent gladness.

"Stella?" she said softly, and taking the child's hand again in her own; "Stella? Is the name a true symbol of its owner's life—of brightness within, of cheering hopeful light to itself and others? Tell me, dear Stella."

The unusual conception and straightforwardness of the inquiry, though it surprised, yet by no means repelled the young girl: indeed, it was put with such extreme tenderness and winning grace, that it would have been impossible to feel offended.

"No," she answered at once, simply and honestly—"not to myself certainly, and not to more than one besides: I think it may to one." The remembrance of little Tracy's words, "I am always stronger and better when you are here," came into her mind, and gave assurance to the last part of her answer.

Captain Flamank, who was listening attentively, gave a slight start, and a kind of low repressed whistle, not exactly suited to a drawing-room. He knew at once who was meant by that one; and the exclusiveness of the suggestion was not altogether pleasant to him.

"Stella, you should not say that—it cannot be true," he remarked, in a tone which, for him, was rather reproving, and very unusual.

Stella was vexed; yet she knew so well she had spoken the truth, that she made no attempt to recall her words or qualify their meaning.