

THE PRIZE STORY.

NO. 10.

One lady or gentlemen's Solid Gold Watch, valued at about \$75, is offered by week as a prize for the best story, original or selected, sent to us by competitors under the following conditions:—1st. The story need not be the work of the sender, but may be selected from any paper, magazine, book or pamphlet wherever found, and may be either written or printed matter as long as it is legible. 2nd. The sender must become a subscriber for Truth for at least six months, and must, therefore, send one dollar along with the story, together with the name and address clearly given. 3rd. Successful subscribers will have their term extended an additional half year for the dollar sent. If two persons happen to send in the same story, the first one received at Truth office will have the preference. The publisher reserves the right to publish at any time any story, original or selected, which may fall to obtain a prize. The sum of three dollars (\$3) will be paid for such story when used. Address—Editor's Prize Box, "Truth" Office, Toronto, Canada. The following attractive and well written story has been chosen as our prize story for the present week. The sender can obtain the Gold Hunting Case Watch offered as a prize, by forwarding twenty-five cents for postage and registration.

EDITH MORELAND; OR, AUNT SOPHIA'S LEGACY.

WRITTEN BY E. H. CREIGHTON, HALIFAX, N. S.

[The following beautifully-written, original story has been considered the best by the Committee, and the writer will be given a fine gold watch at once, on application, or by forwarding the usual twenty-five cents for postage and registration. The story will well repay a careful perusal. Several other stories, both original and selected, are of excellent merit and would do credit to any literary journal. We would gladly lay them all before our readers did circumstances permit.]

"O what should I care for sorrow?
The world's full of joy for me.
No thought of a grief I'll borrow
To weave in my destiny."

The words of the song were adapted to the style and character of the singer, only in her teens, yet every inch a woman. The careless, nonchalant air she wore became her well; there was a graceful ease, almost abandon, about her, which was very pleasing. In a word, Edith Moreland was a picture.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Miss," said the maid, "but here's a letter for you."

Taking it from the tray, Edith went to the window, and pushing aside the drapery she saw it was a telegram.

"Who could have sent it?" Here at school Madame Cordon did not allow any miscellaneous communications. There was no mistake, "Miss Edith Moreland" was written plainly enough; but some of the girls were coming, so she put the note in her pocket until recess, when she would find out all about it.

Her thoughts were very abstracted during morning lessons; Madame frequently requested her to be more precise in her answers. With difficulty she tried to appear composed, but when free to retire her agitation was quite apparent.

Her straining eyes were dim with tears, as she read the short and imperative message, "Come home; all is over with papa."

Like an avalanche this news came upon her. She seemed stunned; like one dazed. She repeated, "All over with papa, and little Gladys alone; I must go immediately."

The news soon spread through the establishment that Mr. Moreland had died suddenly of heart disease, and that Edith would leave the seminary next day.

A hasty farewell was taken of the general favorite; and Madame Cordon, who took much interest in her pupils, was extremely distressed by this unlooked for occurrence.

"Ho! true, my dear," she said to Edith, "one never knows what a day may bring forth. Be assured, the entertainment for which we have been practising so stealthily, shall be postponed. Perhaps you may return; if so, we shall be rejoiced to greet you again; if not, you carry the esteem and respect of the establishment with you, and, kissing the stricken girl, she bade her a hearty good-bye, saying, "remember, my dear, je suis toujours votre amie."

That lingered in Edith's ears like the melody of some sweet old song. She never forgot that parting, for she knew that Madame entertained real love for her; and the thought lightened her heart of some of its care.

Thanks to the speed of the locomotive, on the following day the sisters were together, though quite inconsolable.

Uncle and Aunt Middleton came to them as soon as possible, and attended in a business way, to all that was necessary; but they seemed to the orphans quite unympathetic.

The two girls were left, by the will, sufficient for their maintenance. Uncle and

Aunt Middleton being constituted their guardians. Orphans indeed they were, but with all that makes life desirable. Money and position placed them beyond pity, except that which one broken heart accords to another.

Edith was sensitive and felt her loneliness very much, her only relative being her newly-made guardians. Of them she knew very little as her studies at school had occupied all her time for some years. She was slow to make friends, but when she did, it was a firm friendship. The impression her aunt gave her on the sad day of the funeral was not a favorable one; but her anxieties for her favorite, the little Gladys, almost entirely engrossed her attention.

Gladys being the youngest and rather delicate, was the indulged pet of her "darling papa," as she called him. Feeling her loss, now keenly, she was very tearful.

"Let the little one cry," said her aunt quietly, "it is better for her; she will forget it soon."

But Edith knew better; it was their sorrow and they must bear it.

"Gladys," said Edith, as soon as they were alone, "I have a great deal to say to you before we begin to settle down here; but you are so tired, we will sleep and forget our griefs, to-night at least. Good night, sweet sister, good night, and

"May the soft dews of kindly sleep,
Thy wearied eyelids gently steep."

Edith did not wait till the morrow to argue matters with her sister for she thought, with Goldsmith, that she "could dispute best when alone, and always got the better when nobody was by." She felt that it was necessary to weigh the difficulties of their future course.

On going into the breakfast-room next morning her aunt's greeting was, "Why, Edith, my dear, you look well after the shock you have had. I am glad that you are not a fretful girl. Girls as a rule are drowsy; I hope you will see that Gladys gives me no trouble. I have enough to do," she continued, stroking her superb morning dress, "without attending to children, though Gladys can hardly be said to be that. There are my plants and birds; my letters, and notes, which I am continually answering; my attendance on missions, and superintendence of work for the heathen; my several patronages, and—but you will know in time, for if you have profited by Madame Cordon's teaching; you should be able to assist me. I must be quite alone this morning; I suppose you can find something that will help you pass the time until luncheon; and rising still, she showed Edith plainly that she was expected to retire.

Was this the home and companionship they were cast into? Should Gladys—the pet of their late home—should she be here forever in her sweet childhood time, shut out from the very atmosphere of love? The thought appalled her. "Gladys, Gladys," she repeated moaning, "I must be all in all to you now my little one."

"Here I have been waiting as you wished,

Edith," said the child petulantly. "Burr, our maid, brought up my breakfast as you ordered her to do. You know last night you said you would talk with me a great deal to-day."

"So I will mignonne," and gently drawing the child to a sofa, Edith sat down beside her. "Tis all so strange, dear, you must give me time to rest; only two days since I was at school, and oh! so happy; and in spite of her endeavor to be calm, she sighed bitterly.

All the pleasant memories crowded on her mind. How gladly would she have changed her surroundings—though the perfection of art and beauty—for the cozy room at Madame's, with her genial schoolfellows as companions.

There is an Oriental proverb that "the heart is a crystal palace; once broken it can never be mended." Edith felt that the heart once severely shocked, seldom recovers; and hers beat tumultuously, as she pressed her hands to her side.

"What was it I sang that morning?" she asked herself.

"Oh, I remember—the last words were
"No thought of a grief I'll borrow
To weave in my destiny."

Alas! that was a pretty thought, but how rudely it was stifled. "Yes, Gladys," she said, addressing her sister, "we will have a chat for a little while. At twelve, you and I are to drive, until then we must make use of the time."

The little girl looked up without a fear, a look of perfect confidence in her elder sister whose arms as they embraced her seemed so strong in their protection.

"You know I must be mother and father now, dearest, and I will have to think much before I tell you what to do. When you were at home, your governess was kind and faithful, but there is something more wanting. I think I have a mission now—to watch and care for you. Tis so long since mamma died that you can scarcely remember, but she told me—though I was quite young—that if papa died first, you were to be my little girl."

"I'm so glad," said the child eagerly.

"Now," Edith continued, not noticing the interruption, "you must not do anything without consulting me; without asking any questions trust me entirely; can you do that dearest?"

"I think so sister; but I hope they will let you stay with me; Aunt Middleton looks so strange; she has never kissed me good-night like papa used to do; nor asked me if I was tired; she knows my foot is very lame."

"Never mind thinking," said Edith, cheerfully; "now it is time to dress; the bell will ring shortly. Remember all I have told you; and kissing her, she added, "I will do the kissing for all who forget it."

Luncheon was a formal meal; Aunt Sophia was in a great hurry. Edith found out that it was always so. There was an important meeting waiting her presence. Indeed she had scarcely time to partake of theainties set before her.

Her husband was quite satisfied; his business was also pressing, and when he came home, quietness was essential to him. It was rather agreeable to him that his wife was so prominent a figure in society; and then he argued, she had no children to care for, and the house would be dull for her.

So the two girls, like birds in a gilded cage, pined for something they felt did not exist in their new home. True, there were two of them; one could console with the other.

As they drove out that day they saw many children whom they envied; and a feeling that she had suddenly grown old, took possession of Edith. Only a few days and it seemed like a life time. But then she had Gladys, and she would try to bear it.

The same routine was enacted every day. The servants like mute spectres glided hither and thither, in the performance of their duties; while, but for the birds, a death-like stillness, pervaded the mansion. Aunt Middleton could not brook noise or disorder or—anything indeed, except entire submission to her will.

"What is the cause of your sister's lameness?" she asked of Edith, one morning.

"A sprained ankle, aunt at first, but it still continues weak."

"Perhaps if she walked more it would cure it. Here, uncle, what is your opinion? Look at Gladys; she is positively lame. No—no child I stand up straight. You should make an effort; I believe that is all that's needed. Edith just walk

across the room with her. There now, you see she has done it. Nothing like 'will,' you know."

"I think the little thing might do as she likes, Sophia. Tis her own foot, you know my dear. You're not supposed to know where the pain is any more than to know where somebody's shoe pinches."

"Now, that is a poor argument. If were to be so illogical, where would some of our unions be to-day? No, no. If a hover tries, one never succeeds. Girls, you may have this afternoon, but do not make noise, as I must write."

Edith was so full of sorrow for her sister whose foot was really painful, that it was a marvel how the hasty words were kept back; but thanks to an excellent training, and powerful will, the only answer, as she retired with her arms about her sister, was a bow.

With the exception of literary entertainments, Aunt Sophia did not indulge in amusements; she declared time too precious. At stated periods her elegant rooms were thrown open to the combined wisdom of select society.

"The children," as Mrs. Middleton called Edith and Gladys, were a source of annoyance to her. When she found the young delicate, and likely to require care, it occurred to her that she might place the child in some institution of learning.

"Is it not too bad," she said to her husband, one day, "to have one's comfort disturbed, and peace intruded upon by the children?"

cannot see that they are much trouble to you, Sophia. Edith seems a woman beyond her years."

"You men never can see the inner life of a woman; so many little things that mountains to bear," she said, half reproachfully.

"I'm heartily glad of it, my dear," returned with a laugh, "not glad of mountains that you labor under, but they are invisible ones."

"Ah! you are pretending to be deaf. But why my brother could leave me thinking better than these girls, I cannot say. A burden they certainly are. I think shall send them to school, Gladys at rate."

"Do as you please, dear, I have nothing to say to it; but why not let them stay here with a governess; the house will bear the innovation."

"Never do," she answered, putting her hands deprecatingly, "Never! quite impossible."

"As you please, then," he replied with a slight twinkle of his eyes which said "you will have your own way. Good-night, my dear, I'm quite late," and he was soon on the way to his office.

The arduous and many duties that Aunt Middleton was imposing on herself, began to undermine her health. Her physician ordered her to rest; but what would she do without her? It could not be. She went on. But only for a short time. The physician was right—everything was left for the present.

The girls were sent to a fashionable nunnery, very unlike Madame Cordon's; formal, and very uncomfortable.

Mrs. Middleton, with her husband, went on a tour, in search of health; but seemed as difficult to find as the North Pole.

Restless and ill, she returned to her home unable to attend to any of her old avocations. In a hopeless state of nervous prostration, she such another sufferer?

Poor Mrs. Middleton. Nothing but the result of an overworked and enfeebled nervous system.

Edith was recalled from school, but must part from Gladys. That was her problem. As usual she thought of it as a difficult one, she sought thanks to her early training.

Yes, Edith was greatly indebted to her early training. Madame Cordon's education was the Bible, and English specialty. She would say—speaking to pupils, "When they go into the world will have many problems to solve."

From the day that she left Madame's establishment, the principles learned had been constantly applied to the difficulties which Edith found herself pelted to face; and which had the suddenly metamorphosing the light girl, into a thoughtful woman, she never lost her natural cheerfulness. Edith's return to Maplewood, the of the house struck her with