

joys. The two families mixed a good deal because of the two mothers. Through the firmness and watchfulness of Grace, her children escaped from the contamination of Josie's children, all save poor Harry, soft and yielding, who became the associate of Josie's eldest boy Ned, a bad lad who led Harry into gambling and dissipation, which ended in both the boys fleeing to Boston—Ned carrying with him five hundred dollars stolen of his father's money. After years of wandering and suspense the prodigal Harry returns to his sorrowing parents in the last stages of consumption to die beside his mother. But even in his case was the promise fulfilled, "*when he is old*" he will not depart from it. We will however give, in the author's own words, the story of the prodigal's return, which many parents will recognize as a life-like sketch of something, alas! that may have happened in their own family history:—

There were changes in the household. Totty, the baby, was beginning to be quite a young lady, and spurned the pet names in which she had once delighted. Mary had left school, and had gathered about her quite a circle of congenial friends. Arthur had graduated as a College Student, and was studying for the ministry—a profession on which he had set his heart to the great joy of his parents. John was doing well; he had laid up money, and was thinking of starting in business for himself.

Harry had never been heard from, and was seldom mentioned. He had gone down from among them, and the waters of oblivion had closed over him. There was now scarcely a ripple upon the surface to call to mind the active, merry boy, who had once been not only the disturbing element, but the life and the soul of their family circle.

Mary was in the garden training up some vines with her father's assistance. Her mother stood beside them, alternately offering suggestions and admiring their work. Alice was setting out some roses and pinks in the bed which was her own peculiar care. The air was balmy and fragrant with the breath of flowers. The setting sun gilded the whole scene with his parting beams, and made it radiant in beauty. They were all so happy as scarcely to be conscious of the extent of their own happiness, when they were startled

by a loud, shrill, scream, from the maid-servant who was opening the parlor windows.

They looked up with one accord, and saw her wringing her hands as she cried out, "It is a drunken man. He has come to murder us!"

Almost at that moment the figure of a man came down the garden walk. Such a figure! tall, slender, and slightly bent, though not by age, with long, rough, brown hair, with a face sunburnt, though far from rough or repellant, with a beard that had not known the touch of a razor for weeks, with coarse garments, and a dark blue cap without a visor, gathered in at the top of the head by a large brass button.

Alice screamed aloud at the sight of him, while Mary uttered an exclamation of fear and drew closer to her sister.

Mr. Westervelt advanced to meet the intruder, demanding angrily,

"What do you want here, sir?"

The man paused, and then said, in weak, quavering tones,

"Do you not know me, father?"

Ere any one could seem fully to take in the meaning of these words there was a sudden cry:

"It is Harry, my son! He has come back!" And in another moment the mother and son were clasped in each other's arms.

Oh, there was great joy in the Westervelt family that night! Harry had come back—weak, wandering, erring, Harry had come back.

What mattered it that he came in poverty and wretchedness? What mattered it that he had sinned against much love, had wandered far and long, and had wrung their very hearts? He had come back! After many years his heart had turned to them once more, and had led him home.

Oh, if there can be such joy as this in an earthly home over a penitent child, why should we doubt that there is indeed joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth? Oh, if there can be such forgiving love on earth, why should we doubt that there is forgiveness with God, when the poor lost souls for whom Christ died, would fain turn back from their wanderings and go home to seek their father and their friend?

Not a word of reproach, not a word of blame, was there for the loved one who had come home. In the first glow of the welcome, all unpleasant recollections were unnoticed. But as the excitement of the moment passed away it became evident to them all that there was still room for anxiety about Harry, though from a different cause. The bent form, the language which was not natural to him, the constant hacking cough, were symptoms which could not be overlooked.

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Harry lingered a few weeks, but he daily