

CHAPTER IV.

TEN YEARS LATER. A SUMMONS.

TEN long years of hard work, disappointment, domestic comfort, bereavement, hope, anxiety and struggle passed over the heads of Horace Russell and his faithful wife. They had crossed the ocean, found a home in Michigan, buried a daughter, made a fortune, lost it in a fire, and grown mature in each other's respect and love.

Occasional letters from home had told of the gradual decline and death of the gentle mother; of the sudden paralysis and death of the loving Harry; of the princely wealth and hardening character of the father, and such lighter gossip as brings one's childhood's home and days so vividly before the absent.

With a few thousand dollars laid away for a rainy day, Horace felt that he was comfortable, but not content. His mind was active, but the necessity of daily occupation left him but little leisure for study in his peculiar line. He knew that he had material in his mind which, if utilized, would make him rich and perhaps famous. But like Mary of old, he hid all these things in his heart, and never by look or word gave hint to Jennie of the unrest which was a canker to his life.

On the 16th of August, 1854, he received a letter postmarked London.

The handwriting was unfamiliar, and with some apprehension, he opened it.

THE LETTER.

LONDON, August 2, 1854.

DEAR SIR,—A message from my old friend, the Rev. Mr. Marsh, received this morning, tells me that

your dear father has not long to live. When I occupied temporarily Mr. Marsh's pulpit, I had occasion to see much of Mr. Russell, and one evening he unburdened to me the secret of his life. He loves you. He longs once more to see you. And yet so stubborn was his pride, that he would not consent even that a message might be sent to you. Knowing as I do his critical condition, aware as I am of his fatherly affection for the boy of his early manhood, the first-born of his love, I have taken the liberty in your common interest, and beg you to lay aside whatever your occupation may be, and come here that you may receive your father's blessing, and I greatly fear to close your father's eyes.

Pardon me if in sending you the enclosed bill for £100 I offend, but not knowing your circumstances, I take the same liberty with you that I would wish taken with my son, if his father were dying, and he an exile.

With best wishes for your health, and earnestly begging you to come home at once,

I am, yours most truly,

JOHN HALL,
Rector of St. John's.

TO HORACE RUSSELL, Milwaukee.

Enclosed, bill on Brown Bro's & Co. for £100.

Jennie's round fair arm was encircling her husband's neck, and the little fat hands of Harry, their boy, were tearing the envelope at his feet.

For a moment the tears refused to come, but only for a moment. Then