

GRANDMOTHER'S BIBLE.

"So you've brought me this costly Bible, With its covers so grand and gay; You thought I must need a new one On my eighty-first birthday, you say; Yes, mine is a worn-out volume, Grown ragged and yellow with age, With finger-prints thick on the margin; But there's never a missing page.

"And the finger-prints call back my wee ones Just learning a verse to repeat; And again, in the twilight, their faces Look up to me, eagerly sweet. It has pencil marks pointed in silence To words I have hid in my heart; And the lessons so hard in the learning, Once learned, can never depart.

"There's the verse your grandfather spoke of The very night that he died: When I shall walk in His likeness I, too, shall be satisfied." And here, inside the old cover, Is a date; it is faded and dim, For I wrote it the day the good pastor Baptized me—I've an old woman's whim,

"That beside the pearl-gates he is waiting, And when by-and-by I shall go, That he will lead me into that kingdom As into this one below. And under that date, little Mary, Write another one when I die; Then keep both Bibles and read them; God bless you, child, why should you cry?

"Your gift is a beauty, my dearie, With its wonderful clasps of gold. Put it carefully into that drawer; I shall keep it till death; but the old— Just leave it close by on the table, And then you may bring me a light, And I'll read a sweet psalm from its pages To think of, if wakeful-to-night." —Hattie A. Cooley, in London Christian.

HOW IT ALL CAME ROUND.

(L. T. Meade, in "Sunday Magazine.")

CHAPTER XLII.—NO WEDDING ON THE TWENTIETH.

Charlotte was quite right in saying that now she could cry; a great tension had been removed, an immediate agony lightened. From the time she had left the doctor's presence until she had met Sandy Wilson, most intolerable had been her feelings. She would sink all pride when she saw him; for her father's sake, she would plead for mercy; but knowing nothing of the character of the man, how could she tell that she would be successful? How could she tell that he might not harden his heart against her plea? When she left him however, she knew that her cause was won. Charlotte Home was to be the arbitrator of her fate; she had never in all her life seen such a hunger for money in any eyes as she had done in Charlotte's, and yet she felt moral certainty that with Charlotte she was safe. In the immediate relief of this she could cry, and those tears were delicious to her. Returning from her drive, and in the solitude of her own room, she indulged in them, weeping on until no more tears would flow. They took the maddening pressure off heart and brain, and after them she felt strong and even calm. She had washed her face and smoothed her hair, and though she could not at once remove all traces of the storm through which she had just passed, she still looked better than she had done at breakfast that morning, when a tap came to her door, and Ward, her maid, waited outside.

"If you please, Miss Harman, the dressmaker has called again. Will you have the wedding dress fitted now?"

At the same instant and before Charlotte could reply, a footman appeared at the head of the stairs—"Mr. Hinton had arrived and was waiting for Miss Harman, in her own sitting-room."

"Say, I will be with him directly," she answered to the man, then she turned to Ward. "I will send you with a message to the dressmaker this evening; tell her I am engaged now."

The two messengers left, and Charlotte turned back into her room. She had to go

through another fire. Well! the sooner it was over the better. She scarcely would give herself time for any thought as she ran quickly down the stairs and along the familiar corridor, and in a moment found herself in Hinton's presence. They had not met since yesterday morning, when they had parted in apparent coldness; but Hinton had long forgotten it, and now, when he saw her face, a great terror of pity and love came over him.

"My darling! my own darling!" he said. He came up to her and put his arms round her. "Charlotte, what is it? You are in trouble? Tell me."

Ah! how sweet it was to feel the pressure of his arms, to lay her head on his breast. She was silent for quite a minute, saying to herself, "It is for the last time."

"You are in great trouble, Charlotte? Charlotte, what is it?" questioned her lover.

"Yes, I am in great trouble," she said then, raising her head and looking at him. Her eyes were clear and frank and open as of old, and yet at that moment she meant to deceive him; she would not tell him the real reason which induced her to break off her engagement. She would shelter her father in the eyes of the man she loved, at any cost.

"You are in great trouble," he repeated, seeing that she paused.

"Yes, John—for myself—for my father—for—for you. Dear John, we cannot be married on the twentieth, we must part."

"Charlotte!" he stepped back a pace or two in his astonishment, and her arms fell heavily to her sides. "Charlotte!" he repeated, but he had failed to understand her. He gave a short laugh.

She began to tremble when she heard him laugh, and seeing a chair near, she sank into it. "Yes, John, we must part," she repeated.

He went down on his knees then by her side, and looked into her face. "My poor darling, you are really not well; you are in trouble and don't know what you are saying. Tell me all your trouble, Charlotte, but don't mind those other words. It is impossible that you and I can part. Have we not plighted our troth before God? We cannot take that back. Therefore we cannot part."

"In heart we may be one, but outwardly we must part," she repeated, and then she began to cry feebly, for she was all unstrung. Hinton's words were too much for her.

"Tell me all," he said then very tenderly.

"John, a dark thing was kept from me, but I have discovered it. My father is dying. How can I marry on the twentieth, when my father is dying?"

Hinton instantly felt a sense of relief. Was this all the meaning of this great trouble? This objection meant, at the most, postponement, scarcely that, when Charlotte knew all.

"How did you learn that about your father?" he said.

"I went to see some poor people yesterday, and they told me; but that was not enough. To-day I visited the great doctor. My father has seen Sir George Anderson; he told me all. My father is a dying man. John, can you ask me to marry when my father is dying?"

"I could not, Charlotte, if it were not his own wish."

"His own wish?" she repeated. "Yes! Some time ago he told me of this; he said the one great thing he longed for was to see you and me—you and me, my own Charlotte—husband and wife, before he died."

"Why did he keep his state of health as a secret from me?"

"I begged of him to tell you, but he wanted you to be his own bright Charlotte to the end."

Then Hinton told her of that first interview he had with her father. He told it well, but she hardly listened. Must she tell him the truth after all? No! she would not. During her father's lifetime she would shield him at any cost. Afterwards, all afterwards all the world would know.

When Hinton had ceased speaking, she laid her hand on his arm. "Nevertheless, my darling, I cannot marry next week. I know you will fail to understand me. I know my father will fail to understand me. That is hard—the hardest part, but I am doing right. Some day you will acknowledge that. With my father dying I cannot

stand up in white and call myself a bride. My marriage-day was to have been the entrance into Paradise to me. With a funeral so near, and to certain, it cannot be that. John—John—I cannot—I cannot. We must not marry next week."

"You put it off, then? You deny your dying father his dearest wish? That is not like you, Charlotte."

"No, it is unlike me. Everything, always, again, will be unlike me. If you put it so, I deny my father his dearest wish."

"Charlotte, I fail to understand you. You will not marry during your father's lifetime. But it may be very quiet—very—very quiet, I can manage that; and you need not leave him, you can still be altogether his daughter, and yet make him happy by letting him feel that you are also my wife; that I have the right to shield you, the right to love and comfort you. Come, Charlotte! come, my darling! we won't have any outward festivity, any outward rejoicing. This is but natural, this can be managed, and yet we may have that which is above and beyond it all—one another. We may be one in our sorrow instead of our joy."

"Oh! if it could be," she sobbed; and now again she laid her head on his shoulder.

"It shall be Charlotte; we will marry like that on the twentieth. I will wrangle it with your father."

"No, John! no, my dearest, my best beloved, it cannot be. I cannot be your wife. Loving you as I never—never—loved you before, I give you up; it is worse than the agony of death to me. But I give you up."

"You postpone our marriage during your father's lifetime?"

"I postpone it—I do more—I break it off. Oh! John, don't look at me like that; pity me—pity me, my heart will break."

But he had pushed her a little away from him. Pale as death he rose to his feet. "Charlotte! you are deceiving me; you have another reason for this?"

"If you will have it so," she said.

"You are keeping a secret from me."

"I do not say so, but you are likely enough to think this," she repeated.

"Can you deny it?"

"I will not try, I know we must part."

"If this is so, we must. A secret between husband and wife is fatal."

"It would be, but I admit nothing, we cannot be husband and wife."

"Never, Charlotte?"

"Never!" she said.

Hinton thought for a moment, and then he came up and again took her hand. "Lottie, tell me that secret; trust me; I know there is a secret, tell it to me, all of it, let me decide whether it must part us."

"I cannot, my darling—my darling—I can say nothing, explain nothing, except that you and I must part."

"If that is so, we must," he said.

He was pained, shocked, and angry, beyond words. He left the room and the house without even another look.

CHAPTER XLIII.—"I LOVE HIM," SHE ANSWERED.

That evening Charlotte came softly into her father's study and set down by his side. She had not appeared at dinner-time, sending another excuse. She was very well, she said; she would see her father later in the evening. But as she could not eat, she did not care to come to dinner. She would like to see her father quite alone afterwards, Charlotte had written this verbal message with great care, for she wished to prepare her father for something of extra importance. Even with the tenderest watching it was impossible to avoid disturbing him a little, and she wished to prepare him for the very slight but unavoidable shock she must give. Jasper dined at Prince's Gate as usual. But after dinner he went away. And Charlotte, when she knew this, instantly went down to her father. She was now perfectly calm.

For the time being she had forgotten herself absolutely. Nothing gives outwardly a person like self-forgetfulness, like putting yourself in your fellow-man's place. Charlotte had done this when she stepped up to her old father's side. She had dressed herself, too, with special thought for him. There was a muslin frock, quite clear and simple, which he had loved. It was a soft Indian fabric, and clung to her fine figure in graceful folds. She had made Ward iron it out, and had put it on. Of late she had considered it too girlish, but to-night she appeared

in it, knowing it would please the eyes for which it was worn.

Mr. Harman was chilly and sat by the fire. As usual the room was softly but abundantly lit by candles. Charlotte loved light, and, as a rule, hated to talk to any one without looking at that person fully. But to-night an opposite motive caused her to put out one by one all the candles.

"Does not the room look cosy with only the firelight?" she said. And then she sat down on a low stool at her father's feet.

"You are better now, my love. Tell me you are better," he said, taking her hand in his.

"I am well enough to sit and talk to you, father," she said.

"But what ailed you, Lottie? You could not come to dinner either yesterday or to-day; and I remember you looked ill this morning. What is wrong?"

"I felt troubled, and that has brought on a headache. But don't let us talk about me. I mean, I suppose we must after a little, but not at first."

"Whom shall we talk about first? Who is more important? Is it Hinton? You cannot get me to think that, Charlotte."

"You are more important. I want to talk about you."

Now she got hold of his hand, and, turning round, gazed firmly into his face.

"Father, you have troubled me. You have caused my headache."

Instantly a startled look came into his eyes; and, she reading him now—as, alas! she knew how to do but too well—hastened to soothe it.

"You wanted to send me away, to make me less your own, if that were possible. Father, I have come here to-night to tell you that I am not going away—that I am all your own even to the end."

"My own to the end? Yes, you must always be that. But what do you mean?"

She felt the hand she held trembling, and hastened to add—

"Why did you keep the truth from me? Why did you try to deceive me, your nearest and dearest, as to your state of health? But I know it all now. I am not going away from you."

"You mean—you mean, Charlotte, you will not marry Hinton next week?"

"No, father."

"Have you told him?"

"Yes."

"Charlotte, do you know the worst about me?"

"I know all about you. I went to see Sir George Anderson this morning. I forced from him the opinion he has already given to you. He says that I cannot keep you long. But while I can, we will never part."

Mr. Harman's hand had now ceased to tremble. It lay warm and quiet in his daughter's clasp. After a time he said—

"Put your arms round me, darling."

She rose to her feet, clasped her hands round his neck, and laid her head on his shoulder. In this position he kissed first her bright hair then her cheek and brow.

"But I want my little girl to leave me," he said. "Illness need not make me selfish, and you can still be my one only dear daughter, and yet be Hinton's wife."

"I am your only dear daughter," she repeated. "Never mind about my being any man's wife." She tried to smile as she resumed her seat at his feet.

Mr. Harman saw the attempt at a smile, and it instantly strengthened him to proceed.

"Charlotte, I am not sorry that you know that which I had not courage either to tell you or to cause another to tell you. I am—yes, I am dying. Some day before long I must leave you, my darling. I must go away and return no more. But before I die I want to see you Hinton's wife. It will make me happier to see this, for you love him, and he can make you happy. You do love him, Charlotte?"

"Yes, I love him," she answered.

"Then we will not postpone the marriage. My child shall marry the man she loves, and have the strength of his love in the dark days that must follow; and in one week you will be back with me, no less my child because you are Hinton's wife."

"Father, I cannot."

"Not if I wish it, dear—if I have set my heart on it?"

"I cannot," she repeated.

She felt driven to her wits' end, and pressed her hands to her face.

"Charlotte, what is the meaning of this?"

There Have "N this it not m He is Must You give i you and le "Is "Woi put it "W rathe "I destr me of "N have from "3 forw: "A be wu nurse force Now you, happ "I said look that: Char: HIN Nov I. trate (ues prog nati ance, II. The Spar zens ditio upon They ing I tend Prim dyke Spar siege its r thro delat; whoe the l of 9 Day city fami well the plu ocea lief: nort fron Nor the acro abut thro fled, One mail that A lo fort the gate a lo tho last indi Da to l of (ten str win ten ten law con Rep