

of you. If she should ever be very ill, or in trouble of any kind—no one knows what may happen, and I am only a plain Scotchman, with a little book knowledge, nothing more—will you come to St. Breeda and help her?"

"If I can ever be of the slightest use, send for me at once."

"There's another thing," continued the professor. "You must have been at a good deal of expense on Stannie's account, and I fear her father's also; may I ask you to send any unsettled bills to me. I have a sort of right to pay them, you know."

"I have brought one for you, Mr. Neil," and she opened her pocket-book as she spoke. "We thought that you might like to pay for the stone which marks your friend's grave. Capt. Hunter chose a very plain one; but it is artistic, too. His taste may be trusted in most things. Mr. Ross was not without money when he died. There are no expenses to refund. We paid for the stone before we left, and it only struck us on the way home that perhaps that privilege was more yours than ours. If you care to claim it, you may. I think you understand me, Mr. Neil."

And she looked inquiringly at him, as she handed him the cancelled bill.

"Quite, Mrs. Hunter. I should have felt hurt if you had not given me the chance of doing that much for Charlie and Katey. Are you sure there's nothing else? Put it as you will, you must have been at a great deal of expense and trouble as well."

"That's all," she answered. "Stannie has been a great pleasure and comfort to me for a year in the absence of my own children. But to return to the question of a nurse. If you will excuse me, I shall see one of the chamber-maids on this floor, and enlist her sympathies for the night. You can't possibly know how to put the child to sleep. How soundly she sleeps! She has taken to you at once."

Curled up in Alan's arm, she was sleeping as peacefully as though she had been in a down-cushioned crib.

When Mrs. Hunter left the room on her kindly errand, he touched the pure white forehead tenderly with his lips, and mutely vowed that, come what might, he would shield and treasure her even more than his own existence.

"I have arranged it all," said Mrs. Hunter, re-entering the room, accompanied by a rosy-cheeked damsel, one of the hotel servants. "This girl will take care of Stannie till you leave. The child's luggage is downstairs; it's rather bulky for so young a traveller, but all her poor mother's things are in the larger boxes. She will like to have them when she is older. I shall bid you good evening now, Mr. Neil. Henry will call early to-morrow morning. Will you be in about ten?"

"Oh, yes; I have nothing to take me out till I am going away altogether, and I shall be very glad to see Captain Hunter."

He rose up, and after placing the child in the girl's arms, shook hands with Mrs. Hunter, mentally perplexed as to the propriety of seeing her downstairs and into a cab, or even all the way home; and before he had arrived at a satisfactory conclusion on that distracting point of etiquette, she was gone, and he was left alone to sit and ponder on the strange fate which had sent an orphan baby across the seas to find a refuge in his dreary home; for dreary and dull he knew it was, although hitherto it had answered his purpose well enough.

CHAPTER III.

ST BREEDA TALKS.

The inhabitants of St. Breeda had got hold of a choice nut, and the cracking of it occupied them fully the orthodox nine days, after which allotted time wonders cease to be wonderful. Professor Neil had stepped out of a London railway carriage, holding in his arms a little girl dressed in deepest mourning, and that mysterious child had luggage enough for a regiment of foot—at least, such was the profound belief and utterance of the porter who deposited it in two loads at the Professor's modest door in College Bounds.

Four large iron-clamped boxes were in truth a liberal allowance of luggage for anyone; but the interest they aroused, however it might be in their size and in a conjecture as to the probable nature of their contents, it certainly culminated on the top, where in large white letters, which the blindest of gossips could read, were printed the words, "Ross, Passenger to Madras." There hung the key which could unlock the mystery, or, rather, the hammer able to crack the nut.

Within the memory of the eldest dame or bachelor in St. Breeda, only one Ross had ever been a passenger to Madras—or, more strictly speaking, two; and the same address had done for both Charlie Ross, the minister's wild laddie, and his girl-wife, Katey Glen.

What Alan Neil would do with the bairn was a question which excited speculation of the most improbable and varied nature.

He would certainly marry now; he should have done so a year ago, was the unanimous verdict; and the prospect roused a fluttering of hope in more than one maidenly bosom. Or he might advertise for a lady housekeeper, and her advent would open his barred doors to the outer world. Society, rigidly exclusive though she was, could not but be kind to any lady who might be the means of bringing the Professor a little more to the front.

Or, perhaps, he would place the child out, not at a baby farm—those remarkable establishments of recent date and satanic origin being totally unknown in St. Breeda; but what could be more suitable than to place her in the family of one of the numerous widows of high respectability, of whom there were so many in the town? Or there were two good boarding-schools; she might be sheltered in either of them.

The principal's wife, Mrs. Mactavish, an easy-natured, kind-hearted woman, called immediately, equipped to the teeth with suggestions and advice; to all of which the Professor listened with an attention so profound that the eloquent speaker was quite unprepared, when lack of breath compelled her to pause at last, for the decided manner in which he set all her well-meant hints aside.

"Thank you, Mrs. Mactavish," he said gravely. "You are very kind to trouble yourself about Stannie; but I think she will thrive well enough here with me for the present. Janet has engaged a young girl, a cousin of her own, to attend to her, and she can play about in the garden, and wander in the glen till she's a little older; and then I'll give her lessons myself. I have an objection to boarding schools for young children. When she's that length, she has another guardian, a lady, whose advice I shall take."

There was no use arguing with Professor Neil. Everybody in St. Breeda knew that he was determined to exercise unaided his prerogative of proprietorship, so must be left to do so in his own way; and what a way that would be!

So St. Breeda smiled, and shook her head collectively, as she thought of the quiet student, buried among his books, presuming to understand the management of a spoiled child, for she was certain to prove her father's daughter. Lovable and beautiful, but wayward as the supple bough of a young tree, as she would certainly be, was it likely that she would take kindly to the study of Latin and Greek, or even metaphysics? And, of course, the Professor would be able to teach her nothing else!

"Poor little thing!" said Mrs. Mactavish to Mrs. Macpherson, her next door neighbour. "I fear she will be sadly neglected; but what can we do? I think Alan Neil is the dearest, most unsocial man in the world, for all that he's so clever, unless it be Mr. Graem, at the Manse. He's every bit as bad."

"Well, dear, replied Mrs. Macpherson, a quiet woman, who was kept considerably down in the world, being the mother of nine children, and her husband only an assistant professor,—“well, dear, you can't help it. I hope Janet Scott knows something about measles, and chicken-pox, and scarlatina, for Stannie-Ross is certain to take them all. Indian children take everything."

"If she does, it's quite certain that Alan Neil knows nothing about them. But if he won't allow anyone to help him, we can't insist. I don't see why she shouldn't be happy enough. I saw him buying a doll's house for her in the Arcade. He gave thirty-five shillings for it."

And Mrs. Macpherson sighed at the recollection of what had seemed to her an unnecessary, and almost sinful, outlay of money.

"Oh, he will never grudge her anything," said Mrs. Mactavish, heartily; "and he's no need to. Old Neil left a good round sum in the funds, and Alan's Cambridge fellowship goes on for a few years yet. Besides, he has a good salary, and the Principal tells me that his books sell by the hundred. Charlie Ross did the one wise act of his life when he sent his child to Alan Neil."

"It's a great charge for a young man;" and Mrs. Macpherson sighed again. Indeed, she was always sighing; it seemed to agree with her.

"Yes; it's a heavy responsibility; and so he will find it. She will grow up like poor Charlie, a flighty, feather-brained chatterbox. His father would not hear of a lady housekeeper when he lost his wife, and the consequence was those two grew up like weeds."

"They were both charming," said Mrs. Macpherson, warmly. "How good-looking he was, and how Katey sang! I can sometimes fancy I hear her voice, pet, in the choir on Sabbath. How sweet and clear it used to ring out!"

"Yes; she lilted like a bird, poor lassie! For her sake I would willingly do my best for the orphan; but one must keep up their position, and that's not done by running after Alan Neil too much. I'll rue it some day that he was so independent, mark my words. It's not a man's place to bring up a motherless child without help, even if she were his own, let alone another's. The Principal never interferes in the nursery, and see how well my bairns are all turning out!"

"They do you credit, I am sure," sighed Mrs. Macpherson, feeling that she was a great hypocrite, as a vision of the six red-haired young Mactavishes, as she had seen them last, fighting energetically over a pot of jam in the nursery, came vividly to her recollection.

The Mactavishes were generally called "dear, sweet children." How could they be termed the reverse in St. Breeda? Their father was the Principal of the College, and a man of vast learning. And their mother was the leader—well, scarcely of fashion, when one considered the shape of her bonnets—and she possessed no æsthetic tastes; but her social position in the place was secure and well recognized; and it somehow was the usual thing to describe the children as engaging, to call them pet lambs, and other such endearing epithets.

In reality they were not what could be called

objectionable; they were good-natured, impulsive boys and girls, with high cheekbones, and an abundance of animal spirits, who fought with each other tooth and nail one minute, and kissed and made it up the next.

Alan Neil, however, as has been before hinted, possessed a theory of his own as to what constituted nice children, and the little Mactavishes did not exactly correspond with it. He gazed at them in their pew in the parish kirk every Sabbath day, and in his quiet way was highly amused with the dumb pantomime every week enacted there.

Master Donald would settle himself in a comfortable posture, conducive either to sleeping or listening; whereupon Miss Mary would slyly pull his hair. There was a tuft on his crown, which always moved about in a tempting manner. The disturbed youth would then protrude his tongue at her, till the very roots of that very useful member were visible to the whole congregation, if they cared to look, and shake his clenched fist in a menacing manner behind his mother's back, that lady generally leaning forward as she sat with her eyes devotionally closed.

Incited by their boldness, Miss Annie, the next in size, would proceed to distort her little features in a frightful way, rolling her eyes upwards, and stretching her flexible mouth into a smile, which brought it to close angles with her ears.

Alan Neil, as he witnessed these playful on-goings from his post of observation in the gallery, resolved to accept of no counsel, however delicately offered, from one, or any, of the mothers in St. Breeda regarding Stannie's training. She should grow up for the next five years, at least, unfettered and uncontrolled by any prescribed rules. And, if later, she developed a tendency to comport herself Mactavish-like in church, he would call in the aid of Mrs. Hunter.

But never did child merit consideration so little as Stansmore Ross. Reared in an atmosphere of love, she grew and expanded like a flower. The Professor combined the affection of a father with the tenderness of a mother; and Janet Scott petted and treated her with an indulgence such as had never before been witnessed in St. Breeda.

And though last-mentioned, not behind those two in devotion, came Mr. Graem, the plain-featured, quiet parish minister.

But no amount of petting could mar the innate gentleness of Stansmore's nature. And, after all, it is a fallacy that love spoils either children or grown-up people.

Over-indulgence, in some cases, may be seed sown which will yield a harvest of tares one day; but pure, genuine love never spoiled man nor woman yet.

The little house in College Bounds rang with her laughter; and the Professor was never so deeply occupied with a book, or the compiling of a lecture, but that he could lay either aside whenever his study door opened to admit the daintily-clad little figure; for the softest of velvets in winter, and finest of muslins in summer, set off to advantage each budding charm.

Mrs. Mactavish often wondered where Alan got the "tasty" garments in which he loved to see the young girl dressed. She would have marvelled still more could she have seen the checks which were sent half-yearly to Mrs. Henry Hunter to defray Miss Stansmore Ross's bills.

Nothing was too good for his adopted child. If Mrs. Hunter had sent cloth of gold embroidered with pearls for his ward's wearing, he would have paid for it cheerfully.

Without intending, almost without knowing it, he had imitated St. Breeda in her exclusiveness so far as Stannie was concerned.

She had no infantile playmates, no childish companions. Occasionally she went and drank weak tea, and ate Bath buns, cut sandwich style, with jam between, in the Mactavish nursery; and at rarer intervals still she sat enthroned like a diminutive queen in the midst of the Macphersons.

But these youthful reunions were a weariness to her little spirit. Returning from the former hospitable mansion one afternoon, she climbed into the Professor's arms and said, "Stannie never go out to tea again. Stannie stay at home with Uncle Alan always."

"Why, my darling?" questioned the Professor, as he stroked her yellow hair. "Were they not kind to you?"

"Oh, yes—very kind; but Stannie likes better to be at home with you."

And so the social question was settled, and from that day she accepted no more juvenile invitations.

Mrs. Mactavish had remonstrated one Christmas when Stannie was about six years old. Her young people were to have a tree in the back drawing-room, which was to be laden with tapers, shining balls, dolls, and toys of every description; and naturally the good-hearted woman wished the "orphan child," as she persistently called her, to participate in the coming fun, the prospect of which was filling her children with the wildest excitement.

The Professor thanked her as usual for her kindness, but referred the decision to Stannie. The "ungrateful" child came into the study, and stood before Mrs. Mactavish in her dark blue velvet dress, with soft lace falling around the neck and short sleeves, looking the prettiest little culprit in the world.

"You'll come on Tuesday evening like a good bairn, Stansmore, and see the Christmas-tree, and get a toy off it, will you not?" said Mrs. Mactavish, insinuatingly.

"I'd rather stay at home, please. We are going to have a plum-pudding with holly on the top, and fire all round it, and Mr. Graem is coming to dinner," was the little woman's prompt answer; and no allurements of gilded nuts or boxes of sweetmeats could induce her to change her mind.

"Alan Neil, you are ruining this orphan child; it's sheer madness to defer to her will, and give her her fling in everything. Why will she not come?" demanded Mrs. Mactavish, rising, flushed and angry, from her seat. "I said long ago that you were not fit to bring up another man's child, and time has proved it. She is completely spoiled. You should make her come."

"Don't be angry with her, Mrs. Mactavish; perhaps she is the least bit spoiled. I do not wish to keep her apart from other children; but what can I do? I can't drive her like a little calf into a field among other little calves."

"I am not vexed with her, but I am with you for the way you have guided her. It's unnatural in a child to care nothing for parties. The Macphersons are wild about going out; they like to get on their braw dresses and sashes; but Stansmore is always so grand"—and she glanced reprovingly at the little blue skirt—"it's no treat for her to get on a white muslin and red shoes. What extravagance to dress her up like a peacock as you do!"

"I can afford to dress her well, and it pleases me to see her looking nice," said the Professor with knitted brow.

Mrs. Mactavish saw that she had gone too far, and hastily said, "Of course you can. I know that. You are making a fortune by your books. The Principal tells me that your last one was a great hit. You are getting to be a famous man, Alan. You will be leaving us some day for a chair in Glasgow or Edinburgh, or maybe in London."

"No danger of that; I shall be faithful to St. Breeda!" laughed the Professor, as he opened the door for the Lady Principal's exit; and added, "I know, Mrs. Mactavish, that Stannie would like you to say good-bye to her. She will be unhappy all day if you don't."

"Oh, I'm not angry with her. Kiss me, bairn; and if you change your mind, and come after all, so much the better."

(To be continued.)

ORGAN FOR SALE.

From one of the best manufactories of the Dominion. New, and an excellent instrument. Will be sold cheap. Apply at this office.

HUMOROUS.

A TOAST for the people of Morocco—The Dey we celebrate.

SOME men are called muffs because they are used to keep a dirt's hand in.

A GOOD lawyer is not a necessity, for necessity knows no law.

WE have heard some people say that they could live on music. Then it must be on note meal.

DURING peace a regiment is quartered; during war time it is occasionally cut to pieces.

COULD it be said of a man who rang the bell for a false alarm of fire that he tolled a lie?

"MUMM" the word at a champagne supper," is the "dry" remark of the Rome Sentinel.

IN a recent discourse the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher described a bass drum as "two sheepskins spread over empty middle-classness."

JOSH BILLINGS says of society that his acquaintances would fill a cathedral, but that the pulpit would hold his friends.

A MAN who lost his money in Stock Exchange speculations denied that he was either a "bull" or a "bear." He insisted that he was simply an ass.

A LITTLE girl who was much petted said, "I like sitting on gentlemen's knees better than on ladies; don't you, ma?"

INSULAR PREJUDICE.—"And in France, you know, Parker, they speak French. Instead of saying 'Yes,' for instance, they say 'Wee.' " "Lor, Miss! How paltry!"

TEACHER in American high school: "Are pro and con synonymous or opposite terms?" Scholar: "Opposite." Teacher: "Give an example." Scholar: "Progress and Congress."

WHY does not ISSI resemble a pair of lovers on a sofa?—Because there is I at each end.—Family Herald. On the contrary it resembles them closely, because the two weights are in the middle.—CAN. ILL. NEWS.

GOING THRO' THE RYE.

Says the Captain to Pat.

"Come, I'll have none o' that!"

As Paddy of whisky was drinking his fill.

With a satisfied sigh,

As he finished the rye.

Says Paddy: "B' Jabbers, I don't think ye will!"

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper. W. W. SHERAR, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N.Y.

c-o-w