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THE STORY OF "PANSY."

"I am going to write a sketch of 'Pansy,'" I said to one of the young ladies in our Public Library, "and I would like to take several of her books home, to look them over."

"There are none in," she replied.

"None in, when I see by your catalogues you have several of each of her more than fifty volumes?"

"Oh! there is one in—Mrs. Harry Harper Awakening, but that will probably be taken out during the day."

"What is the reason 'Pansy's' books are always in demand?"

"Because they are bright reading for young people, and as pure as they are bright, and we like to specially recommend them. When hundreds come to us, and ask what they shall read, among those of the few unexceptionable writers we can always speak well of the 'Pansy books,' and the boys and girls always come back pleased, and ask for others by that author."

What is true of "the Pansy books," in the Public Library of Cleveland, I doubt not to be true of them in the libraries of other cities.

I have just been reading Mrs. Alden's "One Commonplace Day." I have been with poor Kate Hartzell to the picnic, and felt ashamed of Fannie Copeland, or any other girl who is too proud to associate with a noble-hearted young woman because she helps to wash dishes and make bread. I have felt a great liking for Mildred Powers, who, though her father was a judge at Washington, put on no airs, and was thoroughly kind to everybody. I have followed Kate to the home of the drunken father and drunken college-brother, and have seen how a girl really can be a ministering angel. I understand, I think, the reasons for the perennial popularity of the "Pansy books." They waken the music of the noble chords of the soul. In their influence, as compared with that of the usual Sunday-school book, or work of light fiction, lies the difference that exists between waltz and oratorio.

It was years ago that I read Ester Ried, and cried over Ester's death, as I suppose thousands of others have done. After that I was always wondering how the author of that most magical book talked and looked and if I should like her if I ever saw her.

One day I heard that "Pansy" was to conduct the primary department of the Sunday-school Assembly at Framingham, Mass. So I went out from Boston to hear her.

When I arrived, I found a crowded house listening to a sweet-faced woman, in early life, much younger than I had supposed, with a rich, pleasant voice, heard in every part of the house, and with a most attractive and womanly manner. She was natu-

ral, interesting and earnest. It is unnecessary to add that I liked her.

And now what has been the history of this very successful woman?

Born in Rochester, N. Y., in 1842, she had two blessings, perhaps the greatest earthly gifts: a father and a mother who were wise, patient, tender, helpful under all circumstances. The father held wonderfully pronounced convictions on all the great questions of the day; he was a strong temperance man, a strong anti-slavery man, a leader in every moral reform, and pressing forward, alone oftentimes, for public opinion was not educated up to his standard, whereas now he would have hosts of co-laborers. The noble man standing solitary upon advanced positions, upon high, lonely

was much disturbed; but the father mounted his baby in triumph on his shoulders, and called her his own little pansy-blossom; and from that time the sweet name clung to her. Thus gentle was the man of strong thought, over a thing that could not be helped, and which was done in innocence. A less thoughtful parent might have punished the child, and then wondered as she grew older that she did not develop lovelier traits! How often we spoil the flowers in our home gardens!

A little incident which I have heard Mrs. Alden relate, shows not only the love within that early home, but the skill of the father in the character-forming of his child. "I recall," said she, "a certain rainy day, when I hovered aimlessly from sitting-room

amount mentioned in the due-bill, and my father replied that of course one had the right to issue a due-bill to a man who had earned nothing, if for any reason he desired to favor him, and that therefore the sum would become that man's due, because of the name signed.

"I remember the doleful tone in which I said, 'I wish I had a due-bill.' My father laughed, tore a bit of paper from his notebook, and printed on it in letters which his six-year-old daughter could read, the words:

DEAR MOTHER:

PLEASE GIVE OUR LITTLE GIRL A PATTY-CAKE FOR MY SAKE. FATHER.

"I carried my due-bill in some doubt to my mother, for she was not given to changing her mind, but I can seem to see the smile on her face as she read the note, and feel, again the pressure of the plump, warm cake which was promptly placed in my hand.

"The incident took on special significance from the fact that I gave it another application, as children are so apt to do. As I knelt that evening, repeating my usual prayer: 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' and closed it with the familiar words: 'And this I ask for Jesus' sake,' there flashed over my mind the conviction that this petition was like the 'due-bill' which my father had made me—to be claimed because of the mighty name signed. I do not know that any teaching of my life gave me a stronger sense of assurance in prayer than this apparently trivial incident."

"Pansy" began to write little papers very early in life, which she called "compositions," and which were intended for her parents only. From her babyhood she kept a journal where the various events of the day were detailed for the benefit of these same watchful parents. There could have been little that was exciting or novel in this girlish life, but the child was thus trained to express her thoughts, and to be observing—two good aids in her after-life. She was also encouraged to send long printed letters each week to her absent sister, telling her of the home-life, and describing persons and places. "Pansy" was very happy in all this work, stimulated by gentle appreciation and criticism.

When "Pansy" was perhaps ten years old, one morning the old clock, which she "really and truly" supposed regulated the sun and moonly stopped. Such an event had never before occurred. She considered it worthy of a special chronicle, and forthwith wrote the story of its hitherto useful life and the disasters which might have resulted from its failure in duty. This clock was very dear to the father and mother, being associated with the beginning of their early married life. When "Pansy's" story was



MRS. G. R. ALDEN ("PANSY").

look-outs, lived half a century ahead of his time. The mother was a sunny-hearted, self-forgetful woman, devoted to all that was pure and "of good report."

Their little girl, Isabella, received her now famous name of "Pansy," from an incident in her baby-life. The mother had a choice bed of great purple and yellow pansy blossoms, which she was treasuring for a special occasion. One morning the wee child, being in a helpful, loving mood, sallied out and picked them every one, and bringing the treasures in her arms showered them in her mother's lap, with the generous statement that they were "every one for her."

They were to have been used on the evening following, and the good mother

to kitchen, alternately watching my father at his writing, and my mother at her cake-making. She was baking, I remember, a certain sort known among us as 'patty-cakes,' with scalloped edges, and raisins peeping out all over their puffy sides. I put in an earnest plea for one of the 'patties' as it came from the oven, and was refused. Disconsolately I wandered back to father's side. He was busy with his annual accounts. "Our home was in a manufacturing town, where the system of exchange, known as 'due-bills,' was in vogue. Something caught my eye which suggested the term to me, and I asked on explanation.

"Father," I said, "I have seen a printed to know..."

ALBERT GALLON QUE