

lovely Christian woman, but she died when I was four years old, and there has never been any one to teach me. I am sure you will be very happy.

'Cordially yours,

'HAZEL LEWIS.'

Hazel was a pretty, dark-eyed girl, John's favorite among the maidens of Clayton. They were friends in a simple, earnest way, that was all.

John's face grew very grave. He stood with the note in his hand until the breakfast bell rang, then he completed his toilet and hastened down to find his mother waiting for him at the foot of the stairs.

Mrs. Manchester was a semi-invalid, a fair, faded woman, whose face had once been much like that of her son. She threw her arms around John's neck and said brokenly:

'I am so glad, John. I had prayed for it, but had almost lost hope. You will find the Christian life a hard—'

'Do you people know that it is ten minutes after breakfast time?' called out the sharp voice of Mr. Manchester.

In silence they took their places at the breakfast table. The sun looked in through the leaves and spreading tendrils of the English ivy whose luxuriant growth covered the upper part of the great east window, the table was spread with embroidered linen, fragile china and glistening silver and the coffee, broiled fish, muffins and blackberries were excellent, but John's enjoyment in all these things had been clouded by his welcome home.

He sighed a little as he started for the store. He knew his mother expected him to wait for a talk with her, but the sight of her eyes brimming with tears depressed him. To be sure, tears were usually in Mrs. Manchester's eyes, for she had drifted into a weak, complaining state of mind which was very hard for those about her.

'Somehow I thought everything was going to be different,' John said to himself. 'Well, I'll have to make the best of it.'

There were many little annoyances that day, and he forgot that Christ will give grace for the little troubles of life as well as for the great ones. At last he accepted the fatal theory that his religion must be something set apart from his daily life. So he said nothing when Charlie Peters, his particular friend, strengthened an assertion he made with an oath. A short time after this he nodded affirmatively in reply to the question as to whether a certain piece of dimity would wash well, when he really knew nothing about it.

On his way back from supper he met Hazel. 'Glad to see you, John. You look tired out,' she said, her brown eyes scanning his face. 'That's usually the way when one goes away for recreation. The picnic will set you up.'

For one moment John hesitated. He recalled the quiet joy and peace of the Sunday before. He knew well that a picnic at Wall lake meant a merry time, sports and gaiety—all proper in their places, but surely not the way to keep the Sabbath holy.

'I'd rather not go,' he thought, 'but to begin to refuse to do as I always have done will make my religion obnoxious. Oh, I wish I could have stayed over next Sunday with Aunt Pauline!'

He pledged himself for the picnic. So the days passed by, and John's outer life was unchanged, while his inward peace grew dim.

Mrs. Manchester had forgotten all about Hazel's chatter of the picnic. Sunday morning she questioned Hetty as to why John's place at the breakfast table was empty, and learned that he had had an early breakfast

so as to start on his drive of twelve miles while it was cool.

'Gone to a picnic to-day,' she murmured, and the pain at her heart was too great for even tears.

It was a perfect day for a picnic, sunny and warm, yet with a faint breeze that tempered the heat and rippled the shining waters of the lake. Notwithstanding the beauty by which he was surrounded, notwithstanding the companionship of his most congenial friends, John Manchester was wretched.

At dinner the climax came. The meal was served on a long table which the owner of the grounds had placed in the shade of a group of stately oaks. The little party were lingering over the cream and cake, when Will Vinton said abruptly:

'There's the queerest story floating round town about you, Manchester. I don't see how such things get started.'

John's face flushed. 'What is it?' he asked.

'Why, they say you were converted while you were gone. When Hampton told me I said it was utter nonsense, for you had promised to come with us to-day.'

Charlie Peters laughed merrily. 'That's a good joke on you, John, for—'

Just then his eyes fell on Hazel's expressive face, and he stopped to ask abruptly:

'What is it, Hazel?'

She turned with simple dignity to John. 'Have you never told them? It is true. John is a Christian.'

Never will John Manchester forget the moment that followed. It was not only the harm he had done his friends that confronted him, he understood that he had denied the power of Christ to keep and make pure.

'Well,' and Charlie threw back his head, 'John, you may have a modern kind of religion, but it isn't the kind my dear old grandmother had.'

'Don't,' Hazel cried impulsively. 'I am to blame. I asked John to come. I never thought about it making a difference. I—I wish, John, you had told me.'

John rose slowly to his feet. 'I am the only one to blame. I was converted and came home with my heart full of joy. I hardly know what is wrong. I thought God's Spirit in my heart must not change my outer life. I see my mistake. All my life I shall regret that I have denied Christ before you.'

No one spoke. John turned away and strode off in the direction of the woods, which bordered one side of the lake.

The sun was nearing the western horizon and the party were preparing for the homeward drive when John joined them. Upon his face was a rapt look. Unconsciously all felt sure that he had spent those hours with the One to whom his life was now pledged.

'I want to ask your forgiveness,' he said slowly, 'for causing you to think religion an idle thing. God helping me, the offence will never be repeated. I see wherein I was wrong. I was trying to put the new wine of my spiritual life into the old bottle of my self-centred past. Christ has forgiven this as well as my other sins, and henceforth my life belongs to him.'

Charlie Peters stepped forward and grasped the hand of his friend. 'Those words have the right ring. We all honor you for the position you have taken.'

John did not stop there. It was hard for him to confess his mistake at home, but he did it. The talk that followed this between his mother and himself was a revelation to the son. The hours of that Sabbath day had brought a lesson also to Mrs. Manches-

ter, and she roused herself and became a help and an inspiration to John.

As for John Manchester, he was fully awakened to a sense of his responsibility toward God and man. He became a joyful worker for the Master, and in time saw his father and many of his young friends accept Christ as a personal Saviour.

'Old Catherine.'

I had just arrived at the 'dress coat period'; I was a collegian of good standing; a church member (I blush to say it); the oldest son of my parents; I bore my father's honored name, and I was surrounded by all that love and wealth could give. My parents were not over-indulgent, but they were loving and careful, and they were, as I can now see them, when I look back from the height of the seventy years which I have climbed since then, true lovers of all mankind.

I was too young and flippant in those days to realize, as I did later, that my parents, while joining cheerfully in the recreations of the social world, with all the surroundings proper to their station, yet had for their less-favored fellow-beings constant thought and love, which they displayed unostentatiously and quietly.

And they did nothing 'to be seen of men,' so few knew the extent of their benefactions. Indeed, I, myself, little guessed all my parents' noble bounty.

One evening, when they were to give a large reception, and I had come down from my room dressed, as my sister Fanny expressed it, 'to kill,' I chanced to pass through an outer corridor just in time to hear one of the maids say to a woman:

'Outside! Go away now! The lady is engaged!'

On the impulse of the moment, I stepped forward and almost shouted:

'Begone, beggar!'

The tottering step was stayed; an old, old face looked up at me; a thin, quavering voice replied to me:

'I mean no harm, sir. Long may you be spared to your noble mother! You are but young, and over proud as yet.'

I almost tremble with shame when I tell you that I stamped my foot and repeated:

'Begone!'

'Her name is "Old Catherine,"' said the maid.

'She is an impudent old beggar,' I replied.

Turning suddenly, I beheld my father, whose face was whiter than his handkerchief. Seizing me firmly by the collar—me, with my eighteen years and my excellent record at home and at college—he turned me about with such force that I nearly knocked my sister Fanny down.

'To your room, sir!' he thundered. 'Take off your dress coat and your evening adornments, and come instantly to my study.'

I should as soon have thought of setting fire to our house as of disobeying my father. I skulked—yes, I am not ashamed to say that I skulked—to my luxurious room. Before my numerous mirrors, and beside my elegant dressing-table, I divested myself of my new and beloved toggery, donned that night for the first time.

As I entered my father's study, my eyes sought the floor. I had not the courage to meet his stern reproving glance. Thus it happened that I did not observe that my mother was also there—my usually radiant mother. At last, as I looked furtively up, I saw her face, and it seemed to turn me to stone. The sadness, the ache which I read in her eyes I can never forget.

'Frederick,' she said 'old as you are, you must listen to a story from your mother's