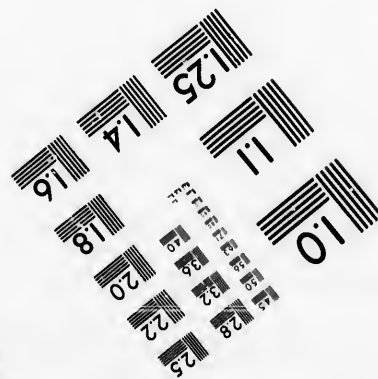
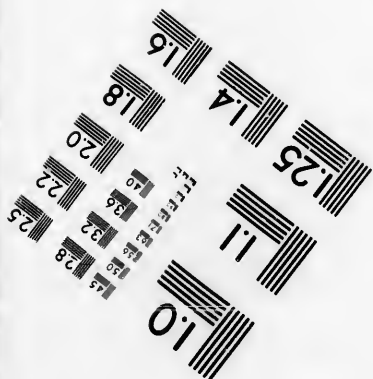
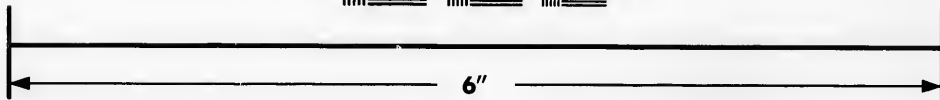
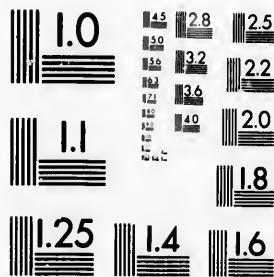


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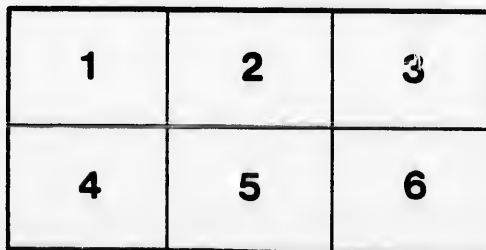
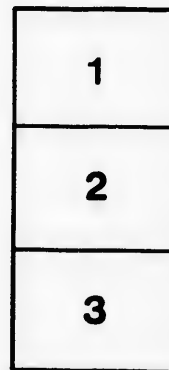
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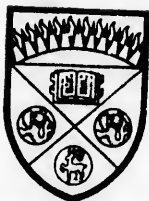
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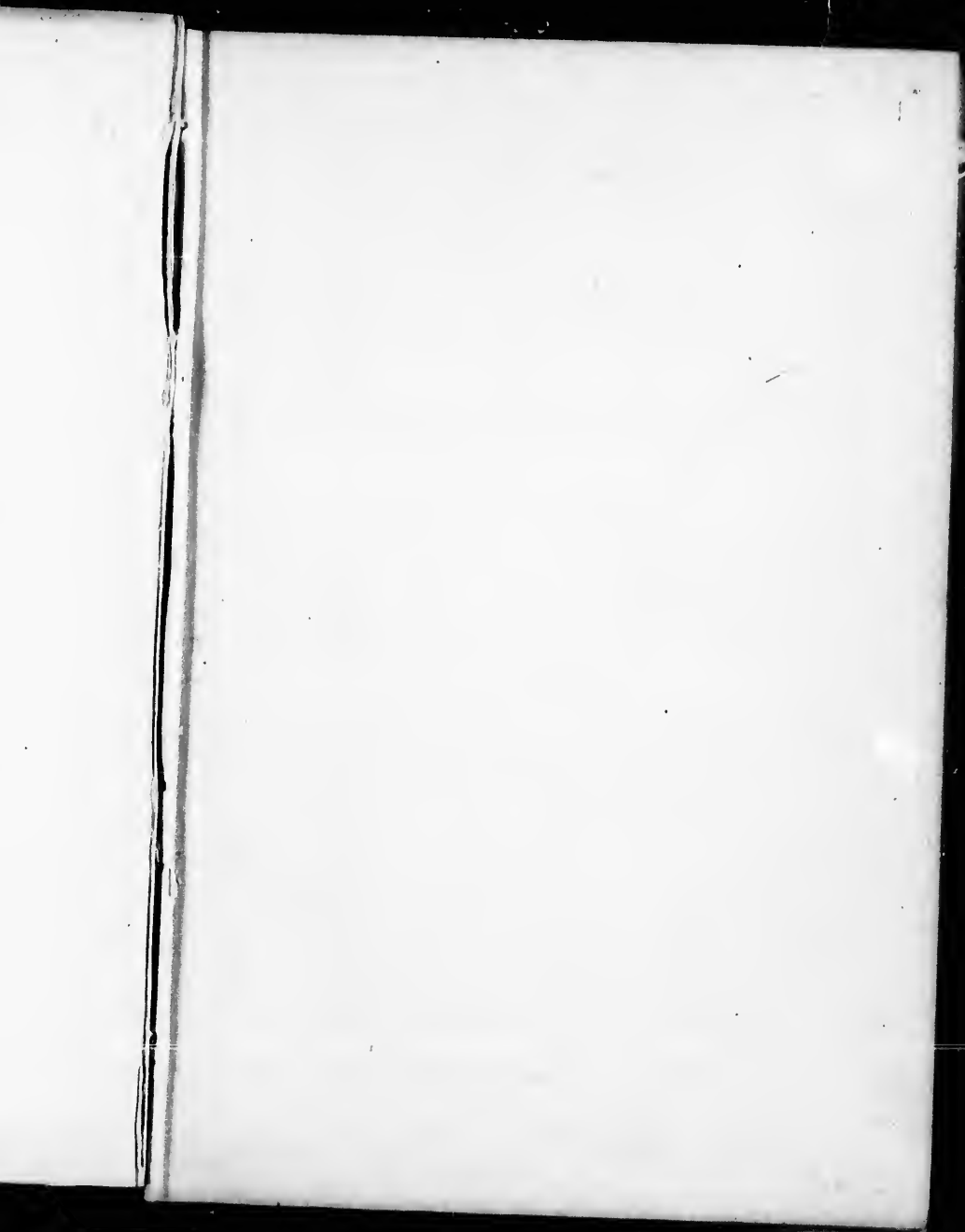
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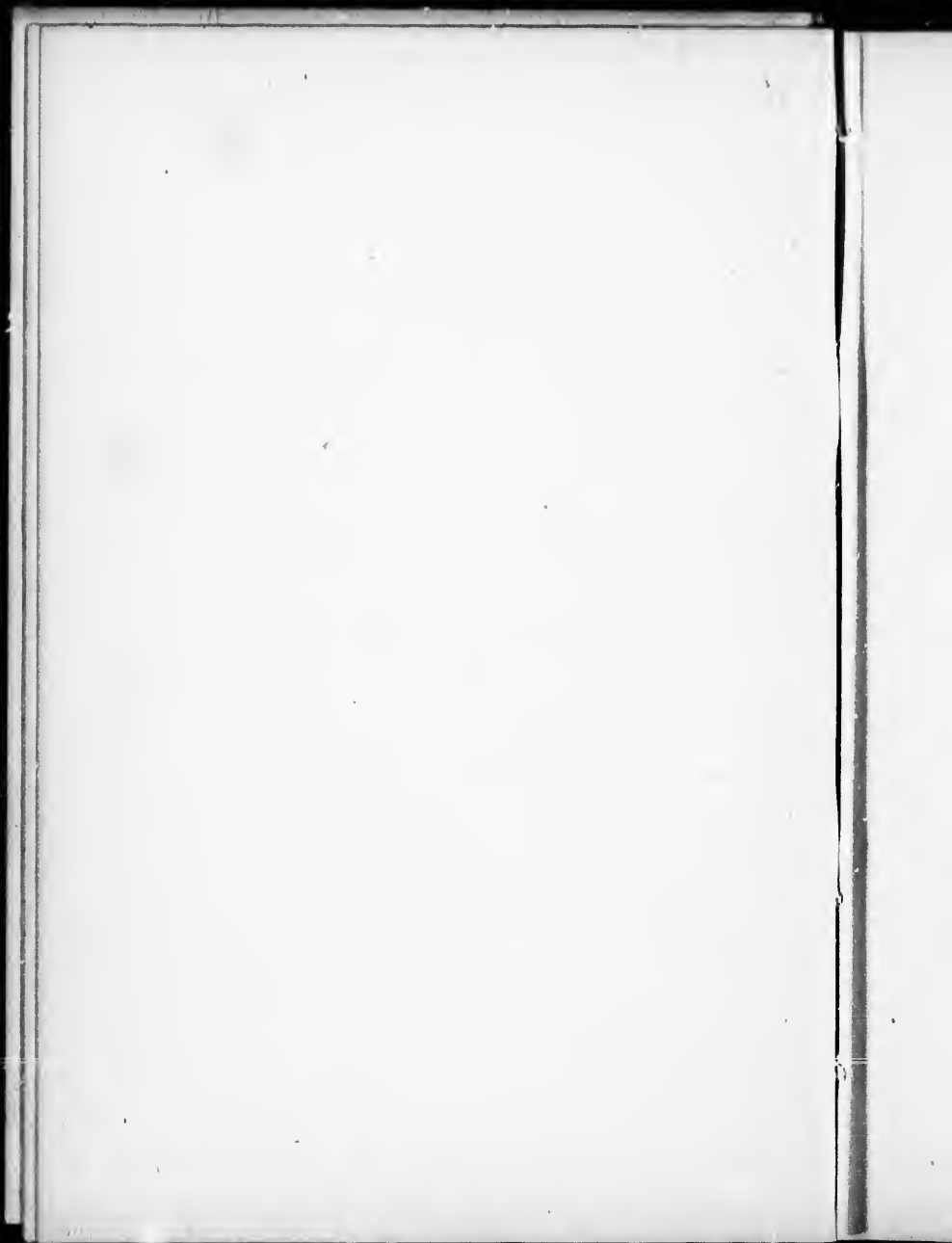
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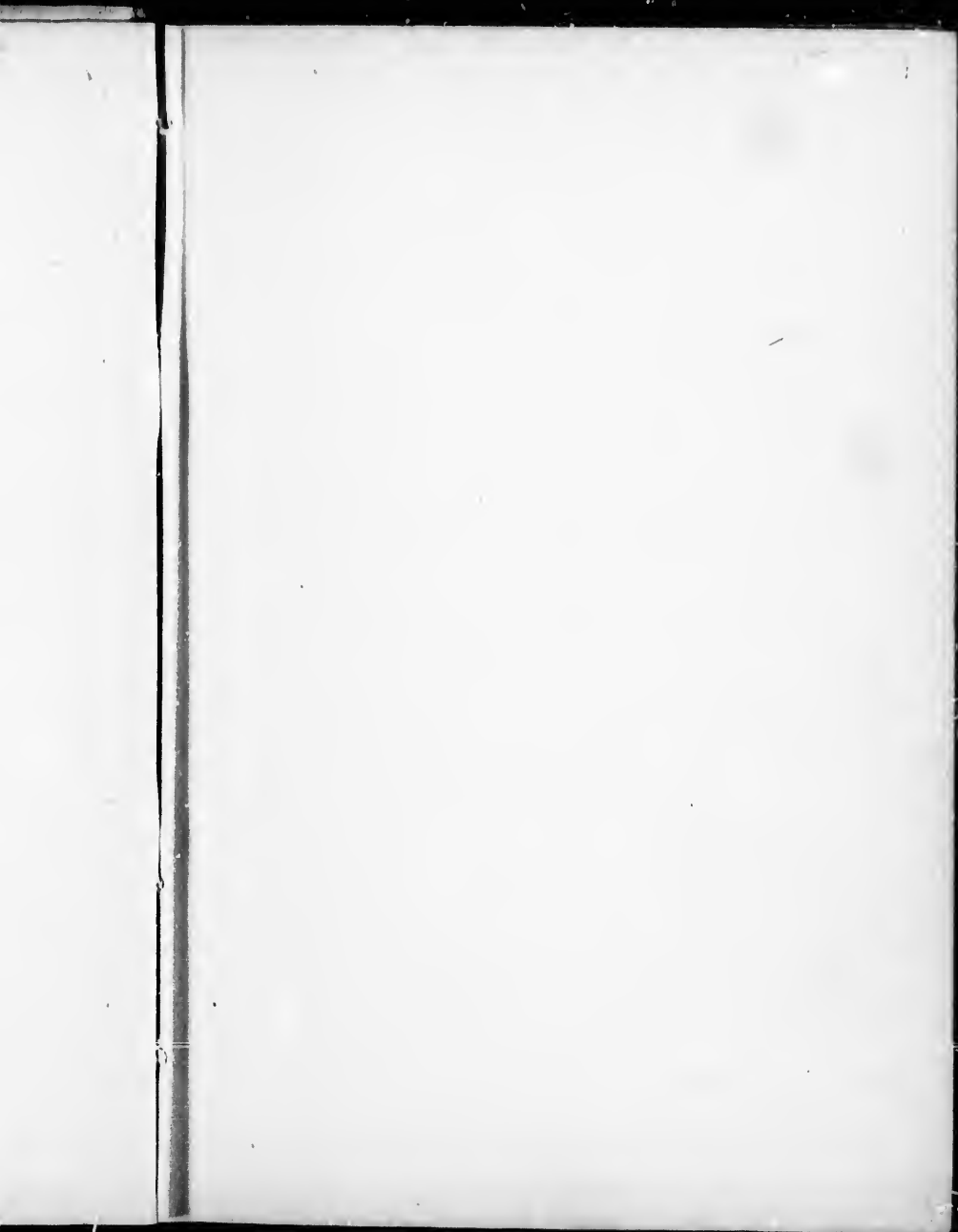
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SOWING THE GOOD SEED.

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HELEN RAYMOND'S NEW HOME.

"She walked up the winding avenue for the first time."—Page 29  
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# SOWING THE GOOD SEED

A Canadian Tale

By ALICIA

"Do not, then, stand idly waiting for some nobler work to do,  
For your heavenly Father's glory; ever earnest, ever true,  
Go and toil in any vineyard; work in patience and in prayer;  
If you want a field of labour, you can find it anywhere."

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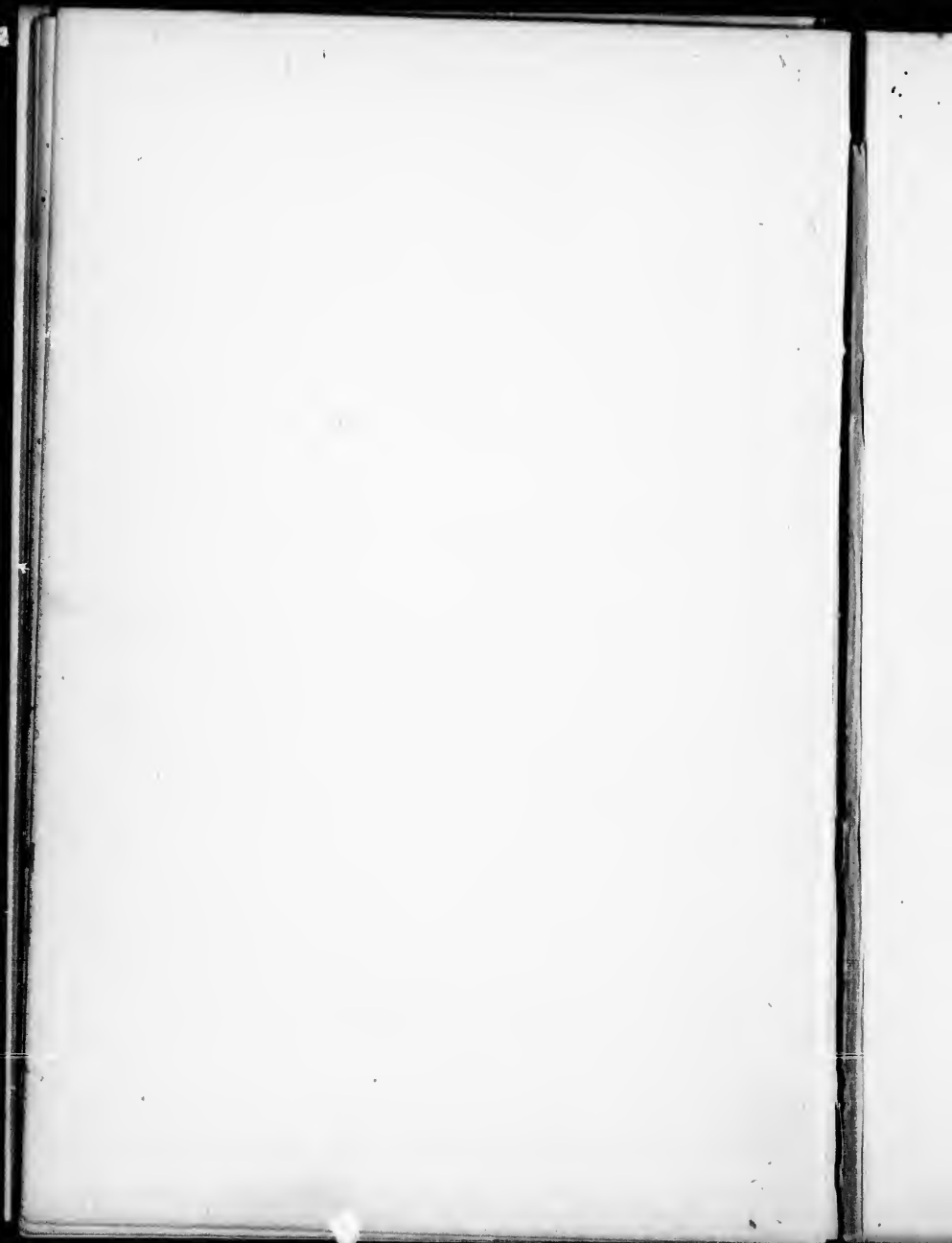
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MAGGIE LINTON AND HER VISITORS.

"Miss Raymond quietly and clearly explained all to the astonished girl."—Page 109.



## CHAPTER I.

### Maggie's Home.

"A little room with a rugless floor  
And the winter blast,  
As it whistles past,  
Peering in at the slender door."



AGGIE LINTON'S home was far from being a comfortable one; it was a small, poorly-built house, containing four low rooms, through the thin walls of which the cold winds whistled during the long winter days and nights, often driving in the snow and sleet to add to the discomfort of the inhabitants. Situated, too, on a bleak hill-side, the house was exposed to all the severities of Canadian weather, and it stood unprotected by sheltering tree or neighbouring dwelling; as lonely a looking home as one ever sees in this Canada of ours.

### MAGGIE'S HOME.

Yet Maggie Linton could remember a time—very far back indeed, it seemed—when she, with her father and mother and little Will, lived in a comfortable, cheery home, where they did not mind how cold the wind blew, or how fierce the storm raged, for thick brick and mortar shielded them, and a warm fire lit up their bright, cheerful kitchen; and when father was not bent and old-looking, nor his hair gray and thin. Maggie sometimes wondered how the great change came about; she did not like to ask her father, but somewhere down in the child's heart there was a consciousness that the great white tavern, with the sign of King William swaying backward and forward in the breeze, was the cause of all; and she never passed the large door, with its four panes of glass covered with crimson moreen, and under which the ominous words "bar-room" were painted in gold letters, without an involuntary shudder, and a thankful feeling that father never closed that great door behind him. Sometimes, too, a fear would cross her mind lest Will or little Johnnie, the poor delicate little brother, who had never known any home save the dreary cottage on the hill, might sometime be tempted thither; and if Maggie Linton had ever prayed, a petition would certainly have arisen from that motherly little heart of hers, that her brothers might not be led into temptation. Maggie was scarcely thirteen, and yet a veritable little woman was she; ever since she

### MAGGIE'S HOME.

could remember she had been obliged to care for others; and since the day when Johnnie was born, he had been her own especial care. Long before mother had died, father and brothers had learned to look to Maggie for whatever of care or comfort fell to their lot; and often the childish form was weary with constant labour, and the over-charged mind and heart discouraged and sad; but a brave, loving spirit dwelt in the little woman—a spirit which would have given Maggie Linton courage to die for those she loved, if need be. She would wish, sometimes, that she could make home more cheerful, but it was hard to add the slightest air of comfort to their abode, and the little housekeeper, with her many cares, soon grew discouraged, and things went on again in the same old way.

It was a dull evening, early in November, when our story opens. It was six o'clock now, and Maggie's father comes in from his daily work; turning to Maggie with a smile, as he closes the door behind him, he said, "Well, my child, supper 'most ready?"

Maggie had been more tired than usual that day—Johnnie had been more fretful than ever—and she had found it hard work to scrape together anything worthy the name of "supper" from the little that remained in the house. To-morrow would be pay-day, to be sure, but that was little comfort when there was not enough for to-day's wants.



### MAGGIE'S HOME.

The father, who had been once a good mason, and able to get plenty of employment and good wages, had injured himself in some way by lifting a heavy stone, some few months before his wife's death; and now, being capable only of light work, his wages were low and his work less certain. The summer had been trying, and now building for the season would soon be at an end, and then they would have to depend upon what little Linton earned in sawing wood, or any such work he could get. It was no wonder that Maggie felt disheartened that November night, when the wind whistled through the crevices of the four walls, that were scarce a shelter from the cold, reminding them that still chiller blasts would blow before the dreary winter was ended.

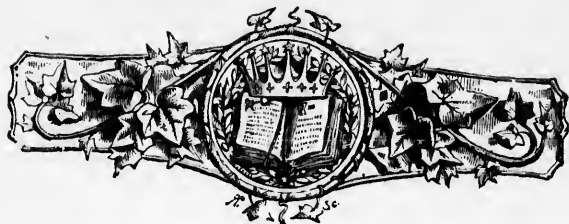
Maggie merely answered "Yes," to her father's question, and went on stirring some Indian-meal and water on the top of the dull stove, which was all that supplied warmth to the dwelling. The stock of wood was evidently low, for it was with difficulty she could get the porridge to boil. Having at last succeeded, she turned to her father, saying, in no very gentle tones, "Where's Willie? When I do have supper ready, there's always one of you that's not here."

"Willie stayed behind to pick up some pieces that were scattered round at the building yonder, but he'll not be long, I think. The poor lad'll be cold; why

*MAGGIE'S HOME.*

can't you make a bit more blaze?" And the worn, weary-looking man drew his chair to the stove and held his hands over it, as if to try and win from it some slight degree of warmth. "It's growing very cold," he added.

Maggie muttered something to the effect that she could not make blaze without wood; nevertheless, her clouded brow cleared, and she told Johnnie, who sat on a low stool by his father's feet, to set out the cups and saucers. The child obeyed, drawing a chair to the cupboard, and carefully lifting down their little store of crockery-ware, broken and cracked, yet much prized in a home where lost or broken articles were not easily replaced. Soon Will entered, his arms full of short pieces of lath and chips of wood, while on his back he carried a bag of shavings. Welcome they were that cold November night, and Maggie looked up with a smile as he drew up a chair and filled the stove with the pine, which crackled and burnt away all too quickly. "But we must not use too many at once," she said, as she stowed her treasure carefully away in a corner of the room.



## CHAPTER II.

### Willie's New Friend.

"Be kind to one another,  
Not to the good alone:  
E'en to the cold and selfish heart,  
Let deeds of love be shown.  
So shall ye be His children  
Who rains His gifts on all,  
And even on the thankless ones  
Bids His bright sunbeams fall."

AS the three gathered round the deal table, to partake of the frugal meal Maggie's skill had prepared, Will said, "Maggie, do you know the young lady that has come to stop at the big house just beyond the church?"

"No," replied his sister, "nor I don't want to; any one as lives there can't be very good."

"Why?" inquired Will, looking up inquiringly into his sister's face, over which a cloud of displeasure had gathered.

"I don't think any one could be very good

WILLIE'S NEW FRIEND.

that lived with Mrs Gordon," returned Maggie, decidedly.

"And why not?" inquired her father, now growing interested in his children's conversation.

"I see enough of her; she's always visiting about among the houses on the hill; but I think she knows better than to come here often," said the little house-keeper, with an air of importance. "Only the other day she came into Widow Bates' house when me and Johnnie were there, and began talking to her about the children up here, and what a shame it was that they did not go to Sunday-school, she said, as she wasn't agoin' to give a copper's worth of anything to people who didn't go to church or send their children to Sunday-school; and she tossed her head, she did, as she looked at Johnnie's worn little dress,—I couldn't bear to see her look so at *him*." And Maggie's eyes filled with tears as she looked at the wee wan face beside her, and quietly she slipped more than half the portion she had allotted to herself—originally not nearly so large as the others—from her own plate to Johnnie's. "She said," she continued, choking down her sobs, "that if we only went to Sunday-school we would get warm clothes; but how can we go at first, all ragged? and I wouldn't go to Sunday-school for the sake of clothes, I wouldn't. I'd a deal sooner stay at home than go to church to beg for clothes." And the

WILLIE'S NEW FRIEND.

little woman drew herself up to her full height, which was not very great, and commenced energetically to wash and wipe the cups and plates. Her father sighed as he drew his chair near the stove again.

"Well, but," persisted Will, who, for a time had been silenced by Maggie's outburst, "I don't believe the young lady is like Mrs Gordon; leastways, she don't look like her, and she spoke so kind like."

"Where did you speak to her?" asked Maggie, turning quickly round.

"I met her to-night as I was coming home. I had put down my bundle, for it was dreadful cold, and was rubbing my hands to try to get them warm, when she came along, and she stopp'd and asked me if I was very cold, and where I lived; how many brothers and sisters I had, and if we went to Sunday-school; she said she was agoing to take a class, as they call 'em, and if I'd go she'd teach me herself; and she said she'd come and see us."

"I don't want her here," said Maggie, wrathfully, "a-blaming me because I don't keep things cleaner, like Mrs Gordon did when she came; but she didn't try it again, I can tell you. I can keep things no tidier; I do just the best I can;" and her aggrieved spirit broke forth in half-suppressed sobs. "Why Will should be taking up with these people I don't see," she continued. "He'll be taking to finding fault next."

*WILLIE'S NEW FRIEND.*

"Nobody's finding fault, my child," interposed her father; "we all know you do the best you can, and a great deal better than many would do; so don't fret child. But if the young lady comes, be civil, Maggie. I daresay it would be a great deal better for Will if he did go to Sunday-school,—it would keep him from running about on Sundays with the boys on the hill; he'd learn something too, maybe, which he needs bad enough, poor lad. But it's ten to one if the young lady ever comes near us; grand folks often forget their promises to the poor."

Maggie was silenced by her father's words, but she was far from pacified; not that she would begrudge Will his "learning," even if she could not get it herself—far from that; but in her heart there was a little sore spot because Will had "took up" with the grand folks that had caused her so much annoyance. Could Helen Raymond have taken a peep into the heart of her whose home she was longing to visit, doubtless she would have been discouraged, and the pleasant visions of "good sister Maggie," that her new-found little friend had conjured up, would have been sadly marred; but as it was, she was in happy ignorance, and eagerly watched for a few spare moments in her days of toil that she might make acquaintance with "sister Maggie," and "wee brother Johnnie."

The southern side of the hill, on the north side of

*WILLIE'S NEW FRIEND.*

which the Lintons' house was situated, was quite thickly covered with low wooden houses, differing slightly in size or outward appearance; but within, a visitor among the "hill people" (as they were called) might find as great a diversity as it is possible to imagine. Some were dirty, comfortless, untidy; while others, and among these it was Mrs Gordon's special delight to spend an afternoon or morning, presented an air of cheerful comfort, the windows bright and clean, with their sills of house-plants,—geraniums and roses, the never-failing bergamot, or still more fragrant musk. And of all this comfort Mrs Gordon believed herself to be the prime originator. That she had accomplished good among the people could not be denied, and it was also true that the inhabitants of the clean, orderly houses were principally decent, honest, church-going people, while those who occupied the cheerless dwellings, that so excited Mrs Gordon's indignation, were seldom if ever to be found in the courts of God's house, or their children in the Sabbath-school. If one wanted to find the head of such a household, one had to go to the great white tavern, with its creaking sign and crimson-covered windows.

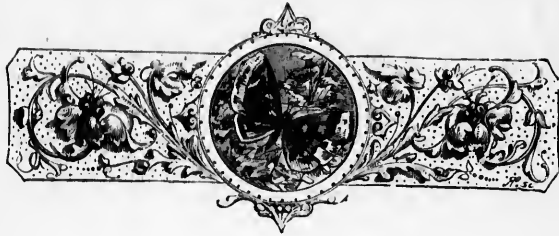
Mrs Gordon was truly desirous to do good, but she had not learned the lesson of love at the feet of her blessed Master. She liberally praised the church-going people of the village, who were clean and tidy in their

*WILLIE'S NEW FRIEND.*

habits, and rewarded their children for going to the Sunday-school ; but the homes where God was not known, where His worship was openly disregarded, and where an influence of love might very profitably be exercised, were either passed over by her, or, if visited, she did not try to win the erring back again by gaining their confidence, and leading them to Jesus as their friend and Saviour, but rather hindered her otherwise good intentions by finding fault with their habits and conduct. She was not yet a partaker of the Spirit of Him who came lowly to seek and to save that which was lost.

The Lintons' house was far removed from this little colony. Being people who, as the neighbours said, "kept themselves to themselves," they saw little of either class of the dwellers there, and as little of Mrs Gordon. She had once visited Maggie, but found no very warm response to her advice as to the comfortless home or the bringing-up of little Johnnie ; and, moreover, finding the Lintons were not in the habit of going to church, she had never called again, and so Maggie only saw her when she passed along the road in her pretty phaeton, or when she met her in one of her very rare visits among the few families she knew among the hill people.

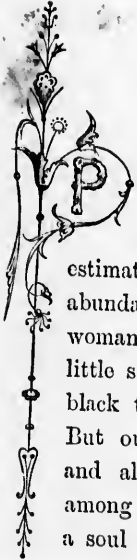




### CHAPTER III.

#### Poor or Rich?

“ Though faith and hope may long be tried,  
I ask not, need not aught beside ;  
How safe, how calm, how satisfied,  
The souls that cling to Thee !”

 POOR Helen Raymond! So the world had called her for the last two years; and poor enough was Helen, if we estimate poverty or riches according to the abundance of the things which a man or a woman possesseth; for all Helen Raymond's little store was conveniently held in the small black trunk which bore the initials "H. R." But our life consisteth not in these things; and although Helen might truly be classed among "the poor of this world," yet hers was a soul "rich in faith," and it mattered little

*POOR OR RICH?*

that her earthly possessions were few, for was she not an heir of the kingdom which our Father in heaven has promised to them that love Him? One day, just two years ago, Helen had been watching from the windows of her father's house the approach of the carriage which had gone to the depôt to fetch her father and mother home. They had been absent some few days on a visit to friends in the States, and now Helen was expecting them back. It was past the time; she was sure the train must be in now, but the carriage did not come; and as the short autumn day softly faded into twilight, the watcher grew impatient and anxious. At length she heard the wheels; the carriage stopped; she rushed out,—but no father, no mother. What could be the matter? Her father, so prompt, so punctual, never disappointed any one, if he could possibly avoid it, and he knew she would be waiting for them.

The poor girl was not long left in suspense; all too soon came the fearful, crushing tidings that one of those accidents—alas! too common on American railways—had left poor Helen Raymond fatherless, motherless. No need to dwell on the sad events which followed. The bringing home the mangled bodies, the leaving the dear old home, the facing the cold, unsympathising world, which cared so little for the woes of the orphan cast upon its mercies. But God is merciful; even the

*POOR OR RICH?*

heaviest blow He lightens; and Helen Raymond could say—

“Thy way, not mine, O Lord,  
However dark it be!  
Lead me by Thine own hand;  
Choose out the path for me.

“Choose Thou for me my friends,  
My sickness or my health;  
Choose Thou my cares for me,  
My poverty or wealth.

“Not mine, not mine the choice,  
In things or great or small;  
Be Thou my Guide, my Strength;  
My Wisdom, and my All.”

Fortunately for Helen, she was received as governess into a Christian family, the mother of which she had known for some years. A few months, however, before our story opens, this lady was obliged to leave Canada, and then Helen came to live with Mrs Gordon, to whom we have already alluded, who lived in the “big house,” as the villagers called it. Very different Helen found this to her former home, but she knew she could not choose,—that her Father, doubtless, had some work for her among these untried scenes, if it lay only within the walls of Mrs Gordon’s luxurious house. But a new field of labour seemed opening to her, and her heart beat high with quiet joy as she started off one afternoon to find out where “sister Maggie” lived. The wind was

*POOR OR RICH?*

sharp and cold, and old Winter had reminded his subjects that he would soon usurp Autumn's throne by sending down innumerable messengers in the guise of tiny, fleecy snowflakes. Many of them had settled noiselessly among the fallen, withered leaves; some fell lightly on the hard frozen ground, while others were floating in the air, as if uncertain whether to come to earth—where nothing pure can last—or not. There was much, too, beside the outward dreariness that surrounded her, to make this young orphan's heart sad, and yet it was with quick, bounding steps she pressed the light snow beneath her dainty feet, and ascended the hill-side.

Helen had little difficulty in deciding which house answered Will's description of his home; and indeed it stood alone, some distance from the little group of houses, as if in outward appearance it described the character and disposition of its inhabitants. Maggie Linton would have indignantly repelled the idea that the thought of the young lady's promised visit had made the slightest change in her routine of work; and yet, almost unconsciously, the little housekeeper had tried during the last two or three days to keep the house a little more tidy, and she had most certainly sat up late for two nights to mend Johnnie's little dress, that the young lady might at least not toss her head at the sight of her brother's tattered clothes.

*POOR OR RICH?*

And yet, notwithstanding Maggie's efforts, a very comfortless home it seemed to Helen, as the child's mistress, with a little graciousness in her manner as she remembered her father's words, ushered her in. Johnnie was sitting on the floor beside the stove, which threw out scarcely any warmth, the little remaining store of fuel being husbanded for the evening, when father and Will would come from work so cold and tired. In his arms, the pale, thin, little child held a gray kitten, that from its struggles evidently considered the embraces too endearing, and gladly made its escape when Johnnie, at the unusual sight of a strange face, ran to his sister, and clung to her skirts in unaffected shyness.

"I suppose your brother told you I was coming to see you?" said Helen, a little at a loss how to ingratiate herself into the favour of the little maiden who stood so respectfully dignified and reserved.

"He said as you promised to come," was all Maggie's reply, as she sat down and took Johnnie on her knee.

"And this is Johnnie, I suppose?" said Helen, at length, looking kindly on the frail little form; "poor little fellow! Has he been sick?"

Helen had found the way to Maggie's heart; a sympathising, kind word when "wee Johnnie" was the subject would work wonders with his quiet sister.

*POOR OR RICH?*

Maggie looked up at Miss Raymond with a bright yet half-tearful smile, as she pressed the little one still closer in her arms.

"No, ma'am, he's not been worse than usual; but Johnnie's always been kind of weakly, and he can't stand no cold, nor nothing like that, ma'am; he's always worse in winter-time."

"And your mother is dead, Maggie?"

"Yes, ma'am; she died some two or three months after Johnnie was born."

"Poor little fellow! Then you have everything to do—take care of Johnnie and the house, and get the meals ready all yourself?"

"Yes, ma'am; and I suppose the house does look kind of dirty; but it's hard work to keep things clean in this poor place," returned Maggie, half-apologetically; and for the first time in her life she felt ashamed of her comfortless home. It was not that Helen had spoken to her about it; she had rather expressed pity on account of her many duties and cares.

Perhaps Miss Raymond understood the thoughts then filling Maggie's mind, and deemed it better to let them work their own way unaided by further word of hers, so she changed the subject by saying—

"I was asking Will if he would come to Sunday-school: do you think he will?"

"I think father would like to have him go; he

*POOR OR RICH?*

thinks it would be better for him than running about with the boys on the hill," continued Maggie, growing quite confidential with her new friend. "Not that Will's a bad boy, but being home all day Sunday, he does not know what to do with himself like; so I think father 'll get him to go, though Will feels shy like, never havin' been to school."

"Does he not know how to read?" inquired Helen, a little dismayed at the thought of the utter ignorance she would have to deal with.

"Oh, yes, ma'am; father has taught him of evenings, and Will is very fond of his book; father says he's quite a scholar, but he's most tired of reading the books we have;" and Maggie glanced up to a little wooden shelf containing a Bible, evidently but little used, an old annual, and a work on gardening,—a relic of days when roses and hollyhocks bloomed before the Lintons' door.

"He would get nice books to read if he comes to school," said Helen, her eye involuntarily following Maggie's.

"Would he though? That would be fine; he could read aloud evenings. Father and me is tired of hearing the stories in the old green book," pointing to the annual; "we've heard them twenty times and more."

"Can you read yourself, Maggie?"

*POOR OR RICH?*

"Only little words, and not all of them; I've just picked up a little now and again. You see, when the work's done, there's father's and Will's clothes to mend, and I'm tired," and Maggie heaved a heavy sigh.

"I suppose you could not come to Sunday-school?" said Helen, as she rose to go.

"I don't think so, as father's home; but never mind, if Will can go, it'll be good for him."

"But I want him to come to school for other reasons than to learn more or get nice books. I want him to come that he may learn about Jesus Christ, who loved us all and died for us. You know about Him, Maggie?"

"There's a picture of Him in the Bible hanging on the cross. I look at it sometimes, but father don't care for reading that book."

"Doesn't he! I'm sorry; it is God's own Word, and we should love it more than any other book."

Maggie looked a little bewildered, and Helen sighed as she turned to leave the room.

"Well, then, Will will come at half-past two on Sunday. I will watch for him, and come to the door when I see him; little Johnnie is too sick, I suppose, but if he could come, I would take good care of him."

"Thank you, ma'am, but Johnnie's too weakly now; but when summer comes round, ma'am, maybe he



*POOR OR RICH?*

could go with Will—ch, Johnnie?" And Maggie took the little fellow up in her arms, while he, with delighted face, was holding fast with both hands a bright picture-card Miss Raymond had given him.

"Thank you, ma'am; and perhaps you will come again some day, ma'am?"

"Oh, yes; I will come very soon."

As Helen walked along, she felt that there had been much in her visit which should cause her to thank God and take courage. Should Will come to Sunday-school it would be keeping him from dangerous companions, and in a measure from breaking God's commandments in desecrating His holy day; he would be provided with books, the reading of which might prove beneficial, not only to himself, but to others. Perhaps, too, the father could be induced to attend church; and thus Helen's musings grew brighter, and she scarce heeded the biting wind or the thick flakes, not now descending slowly and undecidedly, but thick and fast, as if determined to cover so much ground ere night set in.



#### CHAPTER IV.

##### *Changes in Maggie's Home.*

"I am the Good Shepherd."

"He shall gather the lambs in His arm."

AND so the young lady did come! and what did you think of her, Meg?" inquired Linton that evening, as the little family once more gathered round the supper-table.

"She's well enough," answered Maggie, not willing at once to acknowledge her change of feeling towards Will's friend.

"Isn't she real nice?" asked Will, not heeding his sister's reply. "I think she's as nice as can be."

"She's not like Mrs Gordon, anyhow," returned Maggie, yielding a little; "she didn't

*CHANGES IN MAGGIE'S HOME.*

tell me I ought to be ashamed of myself for having such a dirty house, and she needn't, for I felt it bad enough, I can tell you ; it's not a fit place for the likes of her to come into, it isn't."

"Well, I can't help it, child," returned her father, sadly. "I feel it more than you do, Meg, but I can't help it."

"Now I didn't mean to vex you, father," said Maggie, quickly, grieved at her careless words. "I know you can't help it ; I was blaming myself, not you."

"You've no cause to blame yourself, child ; you do the best you can."

"I don't know as I do ;" and Maggie threw a half-despairing look around the wretched room. "But the young lady was kind, anyhow ; and spoke so kind-like to Johnnie, she did ; and gave him a fine picture : you must show it to father, Johnnie."

Will was now all anxiety to know what she had said about him. "She wants you at school by half-past two on Sunday, and she'll meet you and take you to her class," said Maggie, in reply to Will's hurried questions. "And, oh, father ! she says Will will get nice books to read—won't that be fine ; you'll read them to father and me, won't you, Will ?"

"Maybe so," replied Will, feeling proud of the honours to be conferred, and needing little urging from

*CHANGES IN MAGGIE'S HOME.*

his father to make him willing and glad to accept Miss Raymond's offer.

Sometimes his shyness would make him feel awkward at the thought of going among so many strangers, but Miss Raymond would be there, and then—the books. Will could not withstand such a temptation, whatever might be the consequences. But then what about his clothes? Careful little Maggie had long ago thought about that difficulty, and late into the night the busy fingers plied the shining needle, that an air of decency at least might be given to Will's worn, shabby clothes. All the next day, too, Maggie was busy for Will, washing and ironing, cutting and mending; for though to appear with clean, whole garments was a rare thing for one of the Lintons, still Maggie would not let her brother go to Miss Raymond's class clad in dirty or untidy clothes. On the evening of the visit there was a scene never before witnessed in that wretched abode. Linton took little Johnnie on his knee, and read from the card Miss Raymond had given him, with the picture of the Shepherd and His flock, the words—

“ I was a wandering sheep,  
I did not love the fold;  
I did not love my Saviour's voice,  
I would not be controll'd.

“ Jesus has sought the lost,  
Has found the wandering sheep;

*CHANGES IN MAGGIE'S HOME.*

'Twas He that brought me to the fold,  
'Tis He that still doth keep.

" I was a wandering sheep,  
I would not be controll'd ;  
But now I love the Shepherd's voice,  
I love, I love the fold."

And as he read these words to his motherless boy, John Linton felt a consciousness of how far he himself had strayed from the fold of the Good Shepherd, and how little charm there was to him in his Saviour's voice.

It was a great event in Will's life, when, clean and neat, thanks to Maggie's care, he set off for the school-house on Sunday afternoon. He stood for a time at the door, afraid to open it and expose himself to the gaze of the many eyes which the hum of voices told that the room contained. At length Will gained courage, turned the handle, and stepped into the room, looking anxiously for Miss Raymond. He soon espied her talking to the tall, kind-looking minister that Will had so often seen in the village streets, or wending his way to visit the hill people. Very soon Miss Raymond saw her new scholar, and hastening forward, with a smile of welcome showed him her class, where half a dozen boys were already seated. Will felt very shy at first, and ashamed that he did not know some verses like the other boys. But before the kindly smile of his teacher his bashfulness by degrees wore off, and no

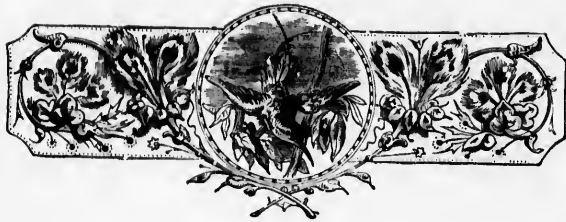
*CHANGES IN MAGGIE'S HOME.*

child in the school felt happier than did he, when Miss Raymond praised his reading and sent him off with a card containing the verses he was to learn for the next Sunday.

Who can tell but that Will was thinking of the joys of that better land Miss Raymond had told him about, as he trudged home singing the words of the hymn they had sung, and which, in some way unaccountable to himself, seemed to ring in his ears?—

“Come to that happy land,  
Come, come away.”

How would Helen's heart have rejoiced could she have looked into the window of that cheerless cottage on the hill, and seen Will standing by his father, who, with that Bible, untouched for years, on the table before him, was trying to find out for his son where the verses were. It was a sight that angels might rejoice to look down upon from their glorious home above, where for ever they sing the praises of our God and King.



## CHAPTER V.

### The Cedars.

"We are like little flowers in bud ;  
We know not evil yet from good ;  
Nor can we reason if we would,  
On that which is not understood ;  
Oh, mothers, be our teachers !  
Show us the wrong, teach us the right ;  
Be unto us as God's own light !  
Ye love us—love us—and ye might  
Be our divinest preachers."



JUST outside the village, and beyond the modest but picturesque church, from which it was separated by a beaver-meadow and a swift-running stream, stood "The Cedars," the residence of Mrs Gordon, sheltered on two sides by groves of grand old cedars intermingled with the silvery birch and maple, and rich in all the treasures of wild-flowers in which our Canadian forests abound. The earliest hepaticas were found in "The Cedars" bush, as



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*THE CEDARS.*

it was familiarly called in the village ; lobelias, trilliums, wild violets, the beautiful pitcher-plant, and feathery fern, were in great luxuriance ; whilst the approach to the house from the road lay through an avenue of chestnuts, growing out from the green sward on either side, and gracefully varied with evergreens and groups of the flowering almond, mahonia, barberry, japonica, and other sweet-scented shrubs which adorn our lawns. Sweet and melodious were the songs of the birds as they resounded through the deep woods ; very pleasing their warbling and trilling as they flitted from bush to tree. Every thicket poured forth its harmony, and the blue jay added his accompaniment, as, with well-feigned alarm, he screamed at the top of his voice as Helen drew near. The golden oriole, the scarlet tanager, and the lovely, gentle blue-bird, seemed to vie with each other, incessantly crossing and recrossing the avenue, as if challenging attention to their beautiful plumage, but especially to the care of Him without whose knowledge not a sparrow can fall to the ground.

*THE BLUE-BIRD.*

“ When first the lone butterfly flits on the wing,  
When red glow the maples, so fresh and so pleasing ;  
Oh, then comes the Blue-bird, the herald of spring,  
And hails with his warblings the charms of the season.



*THE CEDARS.*

“He flies through the orchard, he visits each tree,  
The red flowering peach, and the apple’s sweet blossoms;  
He snaps up destroyers wherever they be,  
And seizes the caitiffs that lurk in their bosoms;  
He drags the vile grub from the corn it devours,  
The worms from their webs, where they riot and walter:  
His song and his services freely are ours,  
And all that he asks is—in summer a shelter.

“When all the gay scenes of the summer are o’er,  
And autumn slow enters so silent and sallow;  
And millions of warblers, that charm’d us before,  
Have fled in the train of the sun-seeking swallow;  
The Blue-bird, forsaken, yet true to his home,  
Still lingers, and looks for a milder to-morrow;  
Till foreed by the horrors of winter to roam,  
He sings his adieu in a lone note of sorrow.

“While spring’s lovely season, serene, dewy, warm,  
The green face of earth, and the pure blue of heaven,  
Or love’s native music have influence to charm,  
Or sympathy’s glow to our feelings are given,  
Still dear to each bosom the Blue-bird shall be;  
His voice, like the thrillings of hope, is a treasure;  
For through bleakest storms, if a calm he but see,  
He comes to remind us of sunshine and pleasure!”

“The Cedars” was a substantial stone building, of some pretension to taste, with its French windows, balcony, and handsome porch, around which the Virginia and trumpet creeper hung in rich festoons.

The heart of Helen Raymond, taught by her blessed Master to “consider the lilies of the field,” rejoiced in the beautiful scene which lay before her, when, some

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little time before our story opens, she walked up the winding avenue for the first time ; but the ties which bound her to the bright, cheerful, Christian home she had just left were not to be too rudely sundered, and for a moment a shade of sadness overshadowed her better thoughts as she drew near to the house. Nor was the heart of the lonely girl lightened by Mrs Gordon's reception ; her patronising manner and cold greeting were so different from what Helen had been accustomed to, that sad indeed the orphan felt when left alone in the small apartment assigned to her use. But most of all was she disappointed when introduced to her future pupils, three in number—Grace, who numbered fourteen summers, Horace twelve, and Laura ten. At first Helen tried in vain to assure herself that there must be something good and lovable about her pupils ; but their carelessness and impertinence seemed at once to repel her love and defy her authority. It was only too evident that, whatever control Mrs Gordon had over her children, it was not the gentle, all-powerful influence of love, but was enforced in harshness, and consented to not willingly, but through fear. Helen soon perceived that in that house, or at least among her pupils, religion, instead of being looked upon as a holy, blessed thing, was hated and despised as something which enjoined unwelcome duties and exacted unwilling sacrifices. When Helen had been an inmate of Mrs Gordon's

### THE CEDARS.

house some three months, she began to feel that there was more in her lot for which to be thankful than she had realised on the day of her arrival at The Cedars. Increased acquaintance with her pupils served to show her that, under all the seeming indifference, pride, and selfishness they displayed, there was much of what was good, true, and noble; that in spite of Horace's obstinate selfishness, he had an honest, faithful heart, and if his dispositions and propensities were only turned in the right direction, and kept in check by that love which never faileth, he might yet become a true Christian man. Ever steadfast and staunch in the way of right she felt he would be, if once led into that narrow path. And Laura, too, passionate and wilful, was often affectionate and winning; and Helen hoped that already she had gained some influence over the neglected child. But of Grace, Helen could not feel thus; she repelled every attempt of hers to win her love, and frequently was the occasion of creating rebellion in the other children. Sometimes the poor young governess could scarcely restrain the indignant, angry exclamations which would rise to her lips at Grace's impertinent, irritating remarks. It would have been worse than useless to apply to the mother, and so she laboured patiently on, hoping that at last love would break down the hard wall of obstinacy and pride within which Grace seemed to enclose herself, and give her

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entrance to that heart of hers which could hardly be so unfeeling as it seemed.

The first Sunday Helen spent at The Cedars she had asked Grace what time they went to school.

"Oh, *we* don't go to Sunday-school," said Laura; "only mamma goes, to teach the poor children of the village."

"And why don't you go, too?" asked Helen, in surprise.

"Only poor children go to Sunday-school," returned Grace, scornfully; "I wonder you ask such a question, Miss Raymond."

"I always used to like going to Sunday-school very much," said Helen, with a sigh, as she thought of the old home, and of her father and mother.

"I think I should like to go," said Laura.

"It would be better than staying at home," added Horace; "Sunday afternoons are always so stupid."

"How can you talk such nonsense? Mamma would not think of letting us go. Besides, how would you like to sit close to a lot of dirty children?" and Grace shrugged her shoulders with disdain at the thought.

"Oh, you are so proud, Grace! The children that go to Sunday-school are nearly all neat and clean; for the very poor don't go," returned Horace; and then, conscious of not having silenced his sister's objections in

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the least, he walked to the window, and began whistling to himself.

"Which do you think God would look upon with the most pleasure, Grace—the child whose heart was full of love to Him, who tried to please Him, and was poorly dressed; or the child who was well dressed, and was disobedient, careless, unthankful?" asked Helen, quietly. Grace's cheek flushed angrily, as she replied, tossing her head—

"I am sure I don't know; I never thought about it. That was not what I was talking about at all."

"It was in reality," said Horace; "and after all, what are fine clothes?—what good do they do if a man is dishonest, mean, and bad?"

Helen felt, as she had done before, that Horace's real danger would be in trusting in his own righteousness, in priding himself upon his own superiority, and sighed. A silence of some minutes ensued, when Horace spoke again—

"I never could see why mamma would not let us go to Sunday-school; she is so queer. I've half a mind to go into your class, Miss Raymond."

"Not if your mother thinks it better for you not to go; going to school would not do you much good if you were disobeying her; but if she does not object, I would like you to come very much."

*THE CEDARS.*

Horace again turned away, Helen fully expecting him to say, "Pshaw! who cares for her?" or some such remark, which were not unfrequent expressions of his, but no such words came.

"And how would you like to go, if mamma says yes?" said Helen, turning to Laura.

"I think I'd like it, if Horace went."

"Well, you may please yourselves, but I shan't go," exclaimed Grace.

"Wait till you're asked," returned her brother, impertinently.

"Well, you'll see mamma won't let you go; I'm sure she won't," said Grace, as she left the room.

"I will tell you what," said Helen, when she was gone, "if your mamma objects, I could be home by half-past three, and there would be time before tea for us to have a Sunday-school at home: how would you like that?"

"I think it would be nice," Laura replied; "don't you, Horace?"

"Not so good as going to school; there would be nothing but girls here," returned Horace, in his blunt way. He had never learnt to regard the feelings of others, or perhaps he would have seen the shadow on his governess's face, and have regretted his thoughtless remark.

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Helen remarked sadly, "Well, Laura, will it only be you and I?"

"Oh, perhaps I will come too," said Horace. "But there's the bell—come along." And hurrying out of the schoolroom first, he left the other two to follow together, never thinking that some politeness was due from a little gentleman, as he believed himself to be, even to a governess.

Children, you who have a kind governess who works and toils for you, do you ever think how sad her life must be working her weary way among strangers, perhaps far from those nearest and dearest to her? Do you ever think how a kind, sympathising word, even from you, might cheer her when she is sad, comfort her when she is lonely, with the thought that, even far from those dearest to her, she finds some one to love her? Do you ever think how, by your coldness, your indifference, and disobedience, you grieve and wound her; while, by your thoughtfulness, your attention to her wishes, by many a little act of kindness, you may lighten her often heavy load, and brighten her path of care?



## CHAPTER VI.

### Clouds and Sunbeams.

"One by one thy duties wait thee,  
Let thy whole strength go to each ;  
Let no future dreams elate thee,  
Learn thou first what these can teach.

"One by one thy griefs shall meet thee ;  
Do not fear an armed band ;  
One will fade as others greet thee,  
Shadows passing through the land."



ELEN was a little surprised when, one day during the following week, Mrs Gordon introduced the Sunday-school subject, and, from her words and manner, betrayed that Grace had been duly informing her of all that had been said in the schoolroom on Sunday afternoon.

"I cannot see what business you have to interfere with my children in such matters, Miss Raymond," added Mrs Gordon, after having delivered herself on the subject.

"I can assure you," returned Helen, "that



CLOUDS AND SUNBEAMS.

what I said was not meant as interference. I had no idea that you objected to the children going to Sunday-school. I am sure I always found it the greatest pleasure, when I was a child."

"Ah! I daresay." This was all Mrs Gordon said, but what she meant was, "It might do for you; but my children, with their delicate health and refined feelings, must not associate with the children who attend the school here."

Helen understood what she meant, and was silenced. Perhaps a feeling of regret for her words crossed Mrs Gordon's mind, for, in spite of her foolish pride and mistaken ideas, she was not an unfeeling woman; so, after a moment's pause, she turned again to Helen, saying—

"However, Miss Raymond, if you choose to read with the children when you return from school, you may. I daresay it would do them good, for I am sure you keep them in better order than I can. But I am afraid you will never get Grace to join you,—she is such a high-spirited girl, so impatient of control;" and as if it was a fact greatly to be rejoiced over, Mrs Gordon shook her glossy curls and settled herself in her luxurious chair with a satisfied air.

But Helen was too happy to notice her. She had not expected such ready acquiescence in her wishes, and she longed for the next Sunday, that her work of love might begin.

*CLOUDS AND SUNBEAMS.*

The Sabbath came at last, and she hurried home from school full of happy thoughts; but these pleasant flowers of the mind were sadly crushed by the sight of Horace fast asleep on a sofa up-stairs in the hall, and Laura curled up in a chair reading a story-book. However, when, having removed her hat and cloak, she returned to them, Horace was sitting up rubbing his eyes, and Laura yawning over her book.

"Will you come and have Sunday-school?" she said, stopping in the hall with her Bible in her hand.

"Oh, stay here," drawled out Horace; "it's jolly on this sofa."

"Oh, no, that would never do; we will go to the schoolroom."

Laura jumped down, and putting her hand into Helen's, went with her, a little to her governess's surprise, and much to her delight. They had hardly gained the schoolroom when Horace joined them, and lazily threw himself into a chair.

"Remember we are in school," said Helen, reprovingly.

"Oh, pshaw!" returned the boy. "Have we to sit up just as we do in school?"

"If we are careful to behave properly, and be attentive when learning only about some famous man, or the geography of some country, should we not be much more so when studying in God's Word about Jesus

*CLOUDS AND SUNBEAMS.*

Christ and the happy heaven above? But now, Laura before we commence, go and tell Grace that we will be glad if she will join us."

Laura went a little reluctantly, while Horace lifted down their school Bibles from the shelf on the wall. Laura speedily returned, saying Grace would not come. Helen looked up sadly, and said, "I am very sorry, but perhaps she will come some day; and now we will begin our school with prayer."

It was short and simple, and when they arose Helen said they would next sing a hymn. Both the children had good voices, and being fond of singing, readily joined in as Helen sang—

"We sing of the realms of the blest,  
Of that country so bright and so fair,  
And oft are its glories confess'd;  
But what must it be to be there?"

"We speak of its pathways of gold,  
Of its walls deck'd with jewels so rare,  
Its wonders and pleasures untold;  
But what must it be to be there?"

"We speak of its freedom from sin,  
From sorrow, temptation, and care,  
From trials without and within;  
But what must it be to be there?"

"We speak of its service of love,  
The robes which the glorified wear,  
The Church of the First-born above;  
But what must it be to be there?"

*CLOUDS AND SUNBEAMS.*

"Do Thou, Lord, 'midst pleasure or woe,  
Still for heaven our spirits prepare,  
And shortly we also shall know  
And feel what it is to be there."

"Don't you think mamma would let us have the melodeon in here on Sunday afternoons?" asked Laura, when the hymn was ended. "It would be so nice."

"I think she would," said Helen; "and you are getting on so nicely with your music that soon you could play the tunes yourself."

Laura was charmed with this plan, and could scarcely collect her thoughts sufficiently to attend to the lesson. Helen, opening her Bible, turned to Horace and said—

"I think we will take the celebrated characters of the Bible as they come in order; we must therefore begin with Adam. We will read all we can find about each person, both in the Old and New Testament, and try what we can learn from their characters and the different circumstances of their lives—by what we can imitate in their good qualities, and see what lessons we may learn from their sins and follies."

The children read the principal incidents in the life of Adam and Eve, while Helen endeavoured to show them the great sin of disobedience to God's commands, the punishment it always brings, and to tell them of

*CLOUDS AND SUNBEAMS.*

that precious Saviour whose righteousness can alone avail for us—who was prophesied of even in the earliest chapters of the Bible—who, ever so many years before He came to live, and suffer, and die for us, was the Saviour of all who believed in Him. The children had often heard of this before, but Helen's words seemed to give to "that sweet story of old" new interest, and an hour passed before they were aware.

"And now," said Helen, as she closed her Bible, "I am going to give you our subject for next Sunday, and before we meet again you are to find out all you can about the person of whom we will read, for doing so will not only exercise your minds, but will give you a knowledge of God's Word which is only gained by careful study."

Horace looked interested; anything like research was just what he liked, and when he liked to do a thing, Horace generally did it well.

"Our subject for next Sunday," continued Helen, as she wrote it on a piece of paper for the children, "will be, a man who suffered for righteousness' sake at the hands of a wicked and cruel brother. I don't want to hear your guesses," she said with a smile, as Laura was about to speak; "I would rather not know what you think; and Horace, for the present at least, I would like you to help Laura a little; after a few weeks she will be able to get on alone."

*CLOUDS AND SUNBEAMS.*

"But when will we find all this out?" asked Laura;  
"we have so many lessons to learn during the week."

"Yes, but you have Saturday; less than an hour would be sufficient time for you to find and learn your verses; and you might, while I am at Sunday-school, look over your lesson together. And now we will sing another hymn."

And so closed Helen's first Sunday-school at home. A happy hour it had been to her; and when she sought her own room to ask for a blessing on her labours, her heart glowed with thankfulness for the new privilege granted to her.

Helen soon found that to that hour on Sunday afternoons she owed much of her increasing influence over her pupils, and it was with trembling thankfulness she felt that the entrance of that word which giveth light, was gradually dispelling the clouds of pride and selfishness from the hearts of her scholars. She lived in hope that Grace would yet join them in their pleasant employment. Very soon Laura took her teacher's place at the melodeon, which Mrs Gordon had willingly allowed them to use, and very proud the little girl felt of her position as musician. Often poor Grace would listen at the door, and wish she was with them, but that spirit of pride which was her greatest enemy ever held her back, and with a sigh she would return to the loneliness and solitude of her own room.



## CHAPTER VII.

### Buds of Promise Appearing.

"Sow, and look onward, upward,  
Where the starry light appears,—  
Where, in spite of the coward's doubting,  
Or your own heart's trembling fears,  
You shall reap in joy the harvest  
You have sown to-day in tears."

**D**AYS and weeks and months passed on in their never-staying course, bringing very little outward change either to the Lintons in their humble home, or to the inhabitants of Mrs Gordon's stately mansion; yet in both houses an inward change was going on, very slowly, almost imperceptibly, but yet surely, and all through the humble instrumentality of Helen Raymond's often silent influence. Who need say that they are too poor, too weak, to work for Christ?

*BUDS OF PROMISE APPEARING.*

"If you are too weak to journey up the mountain steep and high,  
You can stand within the valley as the multitudes go by,  
And can chant in happy measure as they slowly pass along ;  
Though they may forget the singer, they will not forget the  
song.

"If you cannot in the harvest gather up the richest sheaves,  
Many a grain both ripe and golden, which the careless reaper  
leaves,  
You may glean amidst the briars growing rank against the  
wall,  
And it may be that the shadows hide the heaviest wheat of all.

"Do not, then, stand idly waiting for some nobler work to do  
For your heavenly Father's glory ever earnest, ever true,  
Go and toil in any vineyard, work in patience and in prayer ;  
If you want a field of labour, you can find it anywhere."

Even the little ones can do much for the cause of  
God below. Little hands can oftentimes do work where  
larger ones would fail, just as little sparkling drops of  
dew will make the tender floweret grow which the  
mighty tempest would destroy. Jesus listened with  
delight to the lisping praise of infant voices, and who  
can tell but that the sweet songs of those little ones  
cheered and comforted Him even in those dark hours  
of dreadful agony that so soon followed his triumphal  
entrance into Jerusalem ! Oh, little children ! come to  
Him, that He may take you up in His loving arms, and  
bless you. No hand but His can safely guide and  
support you in the perilous journey of life that lies  
untrodden and unknown before you No love but His



*BUDS OF PROMISE APPEARING.*

can comfort you in trouble, or make the sunny days of life really bright and happy ; and when Death comes—and it may come to any of you very soon—it will be no enemy, but a friend, a deliverer to release you the sooner from earth, that you may find eternal rest in Jesus's bosom.

Helen Raymond fondly hoped that Laura Gordon was trying to love and serve Him whom the young governess ever strove to set before her pupils. The outbreaks of temper were less frequent ; impatient, unkind words were seldom used by her in the school-room, and Helen began to feel, with thankful heart, that her work had not been in vain.

Sundays came and went, however, without finding Grace joining in the lessons, which were regularly kept up, seemingly with increasing interest, by Horace and Laura, who quite looked forward to Sunday afternoons. Once or twice Helen had asked Grace to join with them, but the girl would scarcely vouchsafe any reply whatever. However, lately she had manifested some interest by making inquiries of Horace as to what they did, and she often declared Sunday afternoon was the most stupid time of the whole week. These and other things made Helen believe that she was not so indifferent as she seemed, and that in reality she would be glad to take part in their lessons. Laura, too, was of the same opinion, and frequently she and Helen would

*BUDS OF PROMISE APPEARING.*

talk together of how they could induce Grace to meet with them.

One Sunday, when the bright spring days were really coming, and the snow and ice fast vanishing under the powerful rays of the sun, Helen and Laura were sitting together after their school had been closed, the soft shades of evening stealing quietly in. A sweet peace seemed to come over the heart of the orphan governess while she stroked her pupil's soft hair tenderly, and felt how dear she was growing. The subject of the day had been Joseph's reconciliation with his brethren. So much of instruction and interest does the life of this patriarch afford, that Helen felt that in one lesson they could not take it all in, and made it the subject of several Sundays. But now the story was nearly ended, and she had been speaking of the beautiful type Joseph was of the blessed Saviour, and of all that Jesus had done for His brethren, even though they had treated Him far worse than Joseph's brothers had their father's favourite. Both governess and pupil had been silent for some moments, when Laura, lifting her head from Helen's lap, as she sat on a stool at her feet, and placing one of her hands in her friend's, musingly said—

“How much Jesus did for us! and yet we find it so hard to give up even a little thing that we like for Him; don't we?”

“Yes, indeed, very often; but it is in sacrificing self

*BUDS OF PROMISE APPEARING.*

and our own wishes that we are most like Christ. But what are you thinking of, dear?"

Laura did not reply at once, but hid her face in Miss Raymond's lap.

"What is the matter, Laura, dear?" asked Helen, stooping down to the child.

"I thought that perhaps—perhaps, if I let Gracie play the melodeon on Sunday afternoons she would come to school." The words were very low and broken, and at last Laura could restrain herself no longer, and sobbing out, "But oh! I liked playing the tunes so much," she gave way to her sorrow.

Helen waited a little; she well knew the struggle passing in the child's heart, and felt that there must have been a great change there before Laura would have even thought of thus giving up her own pleasure.

"Laura, darling!" she at length said, caressing the child, "I know it would be very hard for you to give this pleasure up; I had not thought of it before; but, perhaps, you could induce Grace to join us by thus yielding to her your post at the melodeon. Poor child!" she added, as the little girl's tears fell fast and hot, "I feel for you; but, dear, I am sure you will be all the happier for this self-denial. How pleasant it will be to have Grace with us, and think that, in God's hand, you were the instrument of bringing her! Perhaps she will not come; but even if she will not, you

*BUDS OF PROMISE APPEARING.*

will be happier for doing all you can. But here she is; shall we ask her?"

Laura was glad the deepening twilight hid her tear-stained face, so that her sister did not notice that she had been crying. Grace having obtained the book for which she had come, was leaving the room, when Miss Raymond said—

"Won't you stay, Grace? Laura and I want to talk with you."

"What do you want?" asked Grace, coldly, stopping however at the door.

"Oh! come and sit down with us, Gracie; it is so nice in here, the moonlight is just beginning to shine in; do come, Gracie. I'll fetch you the rocking-chair out of the hall;" and Laura jumped up, and bringing in the chair, set it down close to her own stool, just where the mild rays of the moon were pouring in through the long French window.

"I was going to read," said Grace, hesitatingly, yet she laid her book down, and took the chair Laura had brought her, who, slipping her little hand in that of her sister's, looked lovingly up at her. Grace was touched, she could hardly tell why, and gently pressed the little hand that lay in hers.

"Oh, Gracie!" Laura began, her voice trembling, "we want you so much to come with us on Sunday afternoon; do Gracie, won't you?"

*BUDS OF PROMISE APPEARING.*

Helen saw the entreaties of the little pleader would avail more than any words of hers, and so remained silent, stroking Laura's hair, while she inwardly prayed that the little one's mission might be blessed. Grace did not speak, but Laura could feel the hand that held hers tremble.

"And, Grace," the child went on, "if you will only come, you may play the tunes, and that is so nice!" and Laura, at the remembrance of what had been such a pleasure to her, suddenly broke down and hid her face in Helen's lap, lest Grace should see the tears. All was silent for a minute, then Grace bent her head down to Laura's, and whispered—

"I will come, Lorry."

Laura sprang up and threw her arms round her sister's neck, but neither spoke. In a few moments Grace rose and left the room, not, however, without stooping down and giving Helen a kiss, who could only murmur, "God bless you, dear!"



## CHAPTER VIII.

### A Day of Rest.

"Hail! sacred day of rest,  
From toil and trouble free:  
Hail! quiet spirit, bringing peace  
And joy to me.

"A holy stillness breathing calm  
On all the world around,  
Uplifts my soul, O God, to Thee,  
Where rest is found."



It is Saturday night; little Johnnie and tired Will have both sought their humble bed. Will had been working hard all day splitting wood, while his father sawed. Maggie was busy with her needle, trying once more to make Will's patched and threadbare coat fit for his appearance at Sunday-school. Her father sat near her, his elbows on the table, his head resting on his hands, but his eyes fixed on his daughter's nimble fingers.

"You must be tired, lass; come, lay aside your work and rest a while."

*A DAY OF REST.*

"Yes, I'm tired, but I'm 'most done; and then, you know, to-morrow will be Sunday, and now-a-days I don't do much of Sundays, so that it's most like a holiday,—leastways, what I think them like, for I have not had one for a long, long while." Maggie's tone was not discontented, hardly sad, and her father did not sigh, as Maggie's words sometimes made him do; indeed, Linton did not sigh so often now, though, if you had asked him, he could not have told you why. Wages were low, work difficult to get, no comforts had been added to their daily fare or wretched home; and yet there was a difference, an indefinable, half-imperceptible change, in the aspect of the dreariest of the many dreary dwellings on the hill.

Helen's regular Saturday visits—which had been going on for two months now—had, almost unknown to herself, induced Maggie to try and give to their low, bare room an air of cleanliness and comfort on the days when her visitor was expected; and so much happier did she feel in consequence, and so pleased her father seemed when he came home from work, that by degrees Maggie grew to trying to keep their home always neat. To-night the floor had been swept, and even washed; the stove looked, if not bright, yet neat and clean, and the whole room presented an appearance very different from that which it bore when our readers first saw it.

Linton sat on, watching his daughter, while she

*A DAY OF REST.*

scarce raised her eyes from her work ; so intent was she, that she almost started when her father said, suddenly—

“Maggie, do you know I’ve half a mind to go to church to-morrow ; it’s many a long year since I entered a church door, but somehow, Meg, I don’t think it’s right to live as we’ve been doing. There’s Will was saying to-day that he did not see the good in going to church, father didn’t go ; now I’d like Will to be a better man than I’ve been. I believe I’ll go to-morrow, and take Will along.”

“But your coat, father—the sleeve is all torn ;” and the little woman heaved a weary sigh as she laid Will’s finished jacket down, and thought of the long rent in the sleeve of her father’s coat. Linton saw her disheartened look, and said, quickly—

“But you’re not to mend it, Meg ; you can put a pin in—it won’t show. Go to bed, child, you’re tired.”

Maggie did not reply, but sat with her arms folded, not heeding her father’s words ; at length her face brightened, and she said, quickly—

“Now, father, if you’re going to church to-morrow, you ought to go to bed now ; I’ve something to do yet ; please go, father.”

Linton rose from his chair with a weary sigh, and slowly went up the broken, narrow steps that served



*A DAY OF REST.*

for stairs, shuddering involuntarily as the cold air of what was little more than a barn chilled him; but the sleep of the labouring man is sweet, and Linton soon forgot cold and weariness in heavy slumber. But a long hour after, Maggie bent over her work, endeavouring, with weary and benumbed fingers (the fire had gone out, and the stock of wood was so low she dare not make more), to mend neatly the rents, and to hide the worn, bare places in the thin, old coat. Weary and worn, at last Maggie went to rest. Who shall say that the motherless girl was not learning the lesson of self-denial which is so hard to learn, and yet the exercise of which brings such true happiness and such real joy as those who never give up ease or wealth, who never sacrifice their own inclinations for another's pleasure, cannot even estimate?

Sunday morning dawned bright and clear, the snow sparkled in the sunshine, and each bush and tree glowed as if decked with diamonds. The sky was of that deep, clear blue which we see on bright winter days in this glorious Canada of ours. Not a cloud marred the beauty of the heaven above. Though so bright, all was hushed in that peculiar calm which we never find excepting on the Sabbath-day. Linton's heart seemed to catch an impress of the calmness and the brightness as he walked quietly over the crisp snow with Will at his side.

*A DAY OF REST.*

"Won't the minister wonder to see you at church, father?" asked Will, as they neared the house of God.

Linton did not reply, but the words awakened an uncomfortable feeling, and he wished his son had not said them. If they had not been so near the church, and if Will had not been with him, he almost felt as if he would have turned back, but it was too late now; so silently the two entered the sacred edifice, and seated themselves near the door. Mrs Gordon's pew was at the side, thus commanding a view of the whole church. Will saw that Miss Raymond noticed them coming in, and he almost fancied she smiled.

The prayers, the hymns,—all carried John Linton back to the early days of his wedded life, when, with his wife, young and happy, at his side, Sunday after Sunday found him in his place in God's house; but years had fled since Linton had worshipped there, and a strange awe filled his heart as he knelt in prayer, or listened to the sweet songs of praise. Then came the sermon, and as Linton listened—listened to the voice of the man whom he had roughly turned from his door, he felt the words he uttered were not his own, but those of One far greater,—One whom he had also rejected,—One who had again and again knocked at the door of his heart, and prayed him to open it that He might dwell there, who was now imploring him more

*A DAY OF REST.*

earnestly than ever by the voice of that earnest minister. "Turn unto me, for why will ye die?" "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "Oh, come unto me, for though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And the strong man bowed his head in his hands, and groaned within himself,—groaned when he thought of his once blooming, happy wife laid in a drunkard's grave,—groaned when he thought of his three motherless children whom he had never even spoken to about a God,—groaned when he thought of his guilty soul, of his unopened Bible, of his misspent Sabbaths. The good seed was being sown, the Word was surely finding entrance into his heart. It might be long ere it bore fruit; thorns might oft try to choke its growth; but it would not return void to Him who had planted it in John Linton's heart, but would accomplish that whereunto He had sent it.

Linton felt very wretched all that day, and found but little sleep during the long, dark night, until, as day dawned, he was almost ready to wish he had never entered the house of prayer. So miserable did he feel, that, in the morning, as he passed the crimson-curtained windows of the great white tavern, he felt for an instant an impulse to go in and drown in the intoxicating cup, which he knew would be so readily

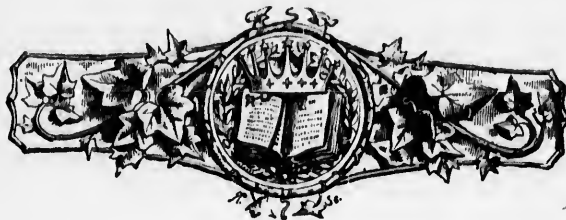
*A DAY OF REST.*

offered him, the reproach and remorse which seemed almost driving him wild : but in a moment the red, bloated face of his poor wife, and her wan, pale features, as she lay in her coffin, seemed to rise before him, and John resolved that he would not add that crime to the many sins which seemed weighing him down. Just as he had resolutely passed the door, over whose threshold so many unwary feet had been tempted to cross, and once crossing, had found it ever after so hard to pass by unheeding, John met the minister, who looked kindly at him, and seemed inclined to stop, but Linton hurried on, ashamed at the remembrance of his former rudeness, and then he felt sorry he had not responded to the smile, and stopping, half turned round ; but the minister was walking slowly on, his head bent down as if in deep thought. John turned slowly on his way, wondering if the Lord would leave him thus, and not turn to him when he would fain kneel an humble suppliant at His feet ; and as he thought, in his ears rang words he remembered having read, faint voices of the past they seemed, and yet they rang so clear and loud, that he well-nigh started. " Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord, therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." And again the

*A DAY OF REST.*

wretched man groaned within himself, and half cursed himself for having gone to listen to the words of life. And yet he could not resolve that he would not go again ; rather he wished that Sunday were again on the morrow, that he might perchance find some comfort for his weary, troubled soul.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### Mrs Gordon's Troubles.

"Why wilt thou make bright music  
Give forth a sound of pain?  
Why wilt thou weave fair flowers  
Into a weary chain?"

"The voices of happy nature,  
And the heavens' sunny gleam,  
Reprove thy sick heart's fancies,  
Upbraid thy foolish dream."



HELEN found Grace's first Sunday lesson with them passed even better than she had hoped. Little Laura's endeavour seemed to be to try to make all as pleasant and attractive as possible, and Horace repressed every expression of scorn at Grace's limited knowledge of Bible history, though often not without an effort, as his compressed lips showed all too plainly. Helen was thankful the boy did not give more direct manifestations of his feelings,

*MRS GORDON'S TROUBLES.*

and smiled her approval as Grace bent her head over her Bible ashamed of her ignorance. Not many weeks, however, passed ere she was quite up with her brother and sister, and the Sunday lessons seemed weekly to increase in interest and profit.

Mrs Gordon at last began to see the change manifested in her children, and silently wondered how it was that one so young and inexperienced as Helen could exercise over a girl like Grace a so much better and stronger influence than she had ever done. She could not see, either, that her governess neglected the mental culture of her pupils, or even those accomplishments which in her eyes were of so much importance. Grace had certainly made great improvement in her drawing, and Laura, who had always shown a decided taste for music, was progressing even beyond her mother's expectations. As for Horace (Mrs Gordon never had professed to understand him), she was amazed that Miss Raymond got on at all with him; for her own part, she never had attempted to cross his will, and yet she had never known him to disobey his governess, or use a disrespectful word to her.

As she lay musing on these things one night, Mrs Gordon resolved, on the first opportunity, to ask Helen the secret of her influence over her pupils. She had not long to wait, for on the following morning she found Helen sitting with her work in the bright,

*MRS GORDON'S TROUBLES.*

pleasant hall up-stairs. Studies were over for the week, and Helen was very glad, for in spite of all improvements in her pupils, she was often sorely tried by Grace's indifference, Horace's persistency, or Laura's carelessness. But there were pleasant anticipations that morning,—the visit to Maggie in the afternoon, which she ever looked forward to with increasing interest, and then the sweet day of rest on the morrow, so refreshing an oasis to the weary traveller Zionwards through this desert world; and pleasant, too, was her meeting with her class in Sunday-school, and the hour afterwards with the children at home. All this made Helen feel cheerful and happy, and she was singing gently to herself when Mrs Gordon found her.

"Is it not a lovely morning?" she said, brightly, looking up from her work as Mrs Gordon neared her.

Lovely it was indeed. It was early in June, the air was soft and fresh, and blew softly in at the open balcony-window, gently moving the bright green leaves of the geraniums and fuchsias, which stood on a tall stand just where the life-giving sunbeams poured their golden glories on their heads. The breeze was sweet with the odours of flowers and the fresh, green grass; and the songs of birds, whose homes were high up in the topmost branches of the tall old cedars, were wafted in every breath of air. The children had all gone to spend the day with some friends, and Mrs



*MRS GORDON'S TROUBLES.*

Gordon and Helen were alone. Mrs Gordon came in with an account-book in her hand, and her face looked worried, not at all in keeping with the brightness and peace surrounding her. Helen could not but see the contrast, and she said, pityingly—

“What is the matter, Mrs Gordon? Anything I can help you with?”

“Oh, I am worried to death,” sighed Mrs Gordon, throwing herself into an easy-chair. “I am perfectly disgusted with the ingratitude of these poor people on the hill. I spend more than half my time working for them, and yet I get no thanks for it; they take everything I give as a matter of course, and are even offended if I don't give one month what I gave the month before; or if Mrs Green's children get one dress more than Mrs Low's, I am told about it at once, with such an injured air, just as if Mrs Low had been deeply insulted. I declare I don't know what to do.” And Mrs Gordon sighed more deeply; yet still the birds sang on and the sun shone, and Helen felt what a pity it was that this disciple of Jesus should not also be singing and making melody in her heart unto the Lord, and that smiles should not light up that face which was so gloomy and clouded.

“I am sure you must often be disheartened and sad, dear Mrs Gordon,” she said, gently; “and I know these people are very discouraging; but then all

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MRS GORDON AND HELEN RAYMOND.

"Mrs Gordon came in with an account-book in her hand, and her face looked worried."—*l'Age Co.*



MRS GORDON'S TROUBLES.

workers in the Lord's vineyard are tried and often downcast. If there had been no danger of growing weary, I suppose our Lord would not have said that they should reap if they fainted not. How often He must have been sad at the unbelief even of His disciples, who were constantly with Him, before whom His mightiest works were done, and yet who, at His very last, and in His greatest need, forsook Him and fled." Helen's quiet words calmed Mrs Gordon; she laid her book down, and resting her head in her hands, sat silently listening.

"Yes," she replied, in a subdued tone, "but it was different with Him: He knew He was doing His Father's will, but I—I sometimes think I am all wrong;" and Mrs Gordon buried her face in her hands, then raising it, she went on vehemently,—“There are my own children, even I I never had any influence over them; they love me, but they never seemed to care for what I said to them; and yet a stranger, who has only been with them a few months, can command far more respect from them than I can. Those children have been left almost solely to my care ever since their father died, when Laura was only three months old, and yet I have never been able to control them as you do. I really do not know what to do.”

Helen was deeply pained, and knew not what to answer; her heart inwardly went forth to God, that, as

*MRS GORDON'S TROUBLES.*

with His servant Moses of old, He now would put words of wisdom into her mouth, and strengthen her soul.

"Oh, don't feel so, dear Mrs Gordon," she said, laying down her work and looking earnestly at her friend. "I am sure the children all love you very much. Both Grace and Horace are very peculiar; they are both very reserved, and not every one can understand them." Helen could not at that time say all that she really thought—that if their mother had only been more with them, tried more to win their respect, she too might have understood her children's peculiarities of disposition, and gained that influence over them which a mother, above all others, should exercise; as it was, she could only be silent.

"Well," said Mrs Gordon, with another deeply-drawn sigh, "I am very glad you have done them some good. I suppose I should be thankful for that, at any rate. I am sure I don't profess to understand them."

"Perhaps," suggested Helen, very gently, "if you could be more with the children it would be better. You see it is very seldom you are together excepting at meal-time. If you could get them to sit with you in an afternoon or in the evening, and let one of them read aloud while you worked, it would bring you together more, and would, I think, be pleasant for you all."

*MRS GORDON'S TROUBLES.*

"I don't believe they would do it; and even if they would, I don't see how I have time for it. I have some one to visit every day, and then in the evening there are accounts to make up, or work to cut out, and that makes such a noise and confusion that there is no comfort or quiet."

"Suppose you let me take a little of your visiting: the walking would be good for me, and you would be left alone with the children, which would be better than if I were here."

Mrs Gordon did not immediately reply; at length she said, "Well, if you will, I am sure you would do better than I can. There you have got that Linton to come to church, and he had not been inside a church door for years."

"Why, I never even asked him to come to church," said Helen; "I was very much surprised when I saw him."

"That is strange! I thought you must have been urging him to come."

"Perhaps if I had he would not have done so," said Helen. "I rather think the influence is through his children."

"Well, it is all the same," returned Mrs Gordon; "you got Will to come to Sunday-school; and I am sure I never saw a greater change, even outwardly, than in the Lintons' house within the last few months: they

*MRS GORDON'S TROUBLES.*

have actually got a sort of fence put up, and some little flowers on each side of the door."

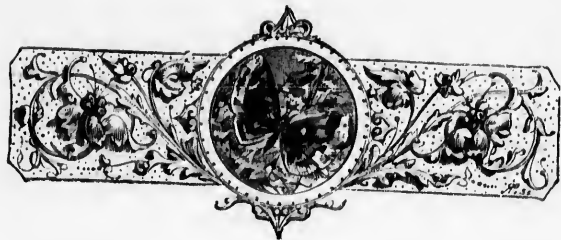
Helen smiled, but did not say how she had begged a few seeds from the gardener, and showed Will how to plant them.

"I wish you would take some of my people in hand," Mrs Gordon continued, after a minute's pause, "and perhaps I will do as you say about the children : but I must go, for there is Mrs Low coming for some cold meat I promised her." And she hurried off, leaving Helen alone again with the flowers, and the sweet music of the merry little winged songsters to cheer her heart, which had been saddened by poor Mrs Gordon's melancholy and depression.

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## CHAPTER X.

### Johnnie's First Visit to the Sunday-School.

"There's a song for little children  
Above the bright blue sky,  
And a harp of sweetest music  
For their hymn of victory.  
And all above is pleasure,  
And found in Christ alone ;  
Oh come, dear little children,  
That all may be your own !"



THE fresh tints of spring had been succeeded by the mellow shades of summer, and in many places the hot July sun had already withered and browned the bright green grass, which had made even the bleak hill-side almost beautiful, when one Saturday afternoon, Helen, as usual, turned her steps in the direction of the Lintons' cottage. The air was sultry and oppressive, scarce the faintest breeze relieving the closeness of the atmosphere, even on the brow



### JOHNNIE'S FIRST VISIT

of the hill, and Helen felt hot and tired when she reached her destination. The little garden, if such it might be called, had lost much of its spring beauty; the ground looked hard and cracked; the few flowers hung their drooping heads, and longed for the evening shade and the refreshing dew. From the weeds which had sprung up regardless of heat or drought, Helen guessed that Will must have been unusually busy, for the little housekeeper had not much time to bestow on what, in her strong, practical nature, she half deemed foolish nonsense. Helen's surmises proved correct; she soon heard from Maggie that Linton had obtained steady employment for the summer at the Court-house that was being erected in the town, and that Will was busy there too.

"We don't see much of either of them now," said Maggie, "for when they come home of nights they be both so tired, that it's off to bed they are soon after supper, so me and Johnnie are just company for each other;" and Maggie looked fondly at the little fellow, who sat on the floor playing with some sprigs of yarrow he had brought in from where it almost whitened the hill-side with its luxuriant growth.

"Come, Johnnie," said Helen, "let me see how you know your letters to-day."

The child willingly complied, and Maggie handing down the highly-coloured spelling-book—which was

*TO THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.*

kept so carefully wrapped up in paper on the shelf —Helen and Johnnie were soon deep in the mysteries of A, B, C's, while Maggie, whose work had all been done long ago, in anticipation of Miss Raymond's visit, sat down near them, listening admiringly to her brother's repeating letter after letter as Helen pointed them out, and herself learning even more than Helen guessed.

For some time past Miss Raymond had made her weekly visit to the Lintons a time for teaching little Johnnie, so that soon he might come with Will to Sunday-school; and now the little fellow had made considerable progress, and could read words of one syllable quite easily. Though Helen had often wished it, she had never felt able to help the Lintons in any way beyond what she could do in teaching Maggie to be more careful, or in giving the children an occasional book; and, to do them justice, they had never looked for gifts from her, but regarded her visits as in themselves sufficient proofs of her kindness; indeed, they were people who would not stoop to ask help of any one; and yet, how Maggie's eyes sparkled as Helen displayed a little linen coat she had that day brought for Johnnie, "so that," as she said, "he might come with Will to Sunday-school to-morrow."

The delighted faces of both the receiver of the gift and his no less pleased sister, was payment enough for

*JOHNNIE'S FIRST VISIT*

Helen, if reward she wanted beyond the pleasure of merely giving.

"And Johnnie will come, then, to-me row?" said Helen, turning to the child.

"If Johnnie may sit with Miss Raymond," he replied, in his childish voice.

"Oh, yes, Johnnie shall sit with me; and soon, perhaps, sister Maggie will come too."

"I could not leave father," returned Maggie, shaking her head. "But I was thinking that by and by, when the days were shorter, I might go to church of evenings. If it was a little dark it would not matter so much about my clothes; but now, you see, the sun is so bright at six o'clock, and it seems to show off one's old clothes so;" and Maggie sighed.

"I wish you would go, Maggie. I should think that now your father has work, he might buy you a print dress. I would show you how to make it, and then you might go to church every Sunday."

"Perhaps he might, as he hasn't to get Johnnie anything now, as I was wanting him to do; and then Will has a good coat now, too," mused the unselfish little woman. "Yes, I b'lieve I'll ask him," she concluded, "and I know father would put Johnnie to bed. I think it would be nice to go to church; I do get kind of tired sometimes being here all the time; I never goes nowhere, except running to town now and again for

TO THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

something I want." What a little woman this child of twelve was, with her household cares and her motherly concerns for father, and Will, and wee Johnnie, and her utter ignorance of all childish joys and pleasures! Helen sometimes almost wondered at her womanliness and tenderness, brought up as she was almost without female society of any kind,—at her delicacy of feeling, and strong sense of right and wrong; and then she thought how God himself had fitted the child for her unusual position, and she wondered still more as she mused on His goodness and power, and felt how He ever fitteth the back for the burthen and tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb.

Johnnie's little pale face was turned brightly up to greet her as Helen joined her class the following day: he listened earnestly and quietly, while Helen heard the boys their lessons and they read together; and while she spoke to them on the lesson of the day, which was the raising of the widow's son, so much attention did he pay, and understood it all so well, then when Helen turned to him to explain the chapter in simpler words, she was surprised at the child's knowledge of the story; and she watched the little fellow's face light up as they began to sing the closing hymn.

EVENING HYMN.

"Glory to Thee, my God, this night,  
For all the blessings of the light.

*JOHNNIE'S FIRST VISIT, ETC.*

Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings,  
Under Thine own almighty wings.

“Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,  
The ill that I this day have done ;  
That with the world, myself, and Thee,  
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

“Teach me to live, that I may dread  
The grave as little as my bed :  
Teach me to die, that so I may  
Rise glorious at the judgment-day.

“Oh, may my soul on Thee repose,  
And with sweet sleep mine eyelids close ;  
Sleep that may me more vigorous make  
To serve my God when I awake.”

Helen could not but think that it might not be long ere he indeed joined that angel throng, a crown upon that pale forehead, a harp in that little hand, and for ever praised that dear Saviour who, when on earth, took such as he up in His loving arms, and blessed them, declaring that of such is the kingdom of heaven.



## CHAPTER XI.

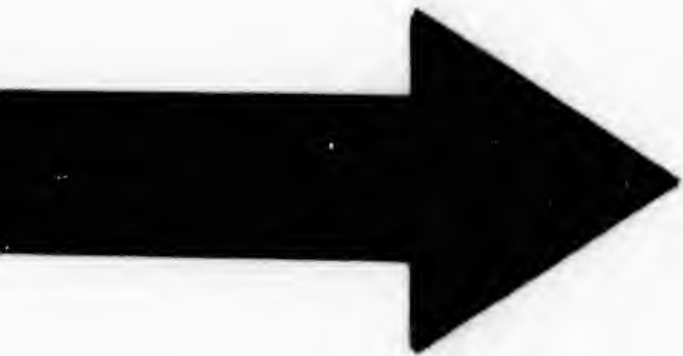
### Twilight Talks.

"Calm twilight veils the summer sky,  
The shining clouds are gone ;  
In vain the merry laughing child  
Still gaily prattles on ;  
In vain the bright stars, one by one,  
On the blue silence start, —  
A dreary shadow rests to-night  
Upon the father's heart."

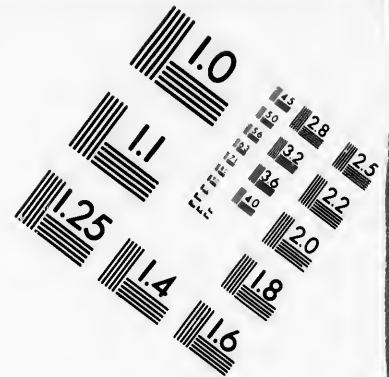
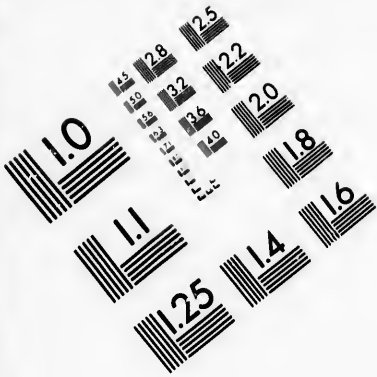


MAGGIE got her print dress ; and, under Miss Raymond's directions, it was comfortably and neatly made. Not many weeks elapsed before the child was found regularly in her place in church every Sunday evening. Other comforts besides the new dress were soon added to Maggie's wardrobe, and in a way which Helen little expected. She was much surprised one Saturday when Laura begged leave to accompany her on her visit to the

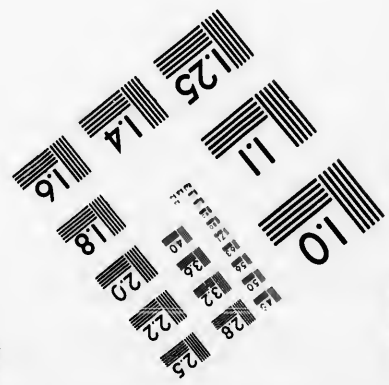
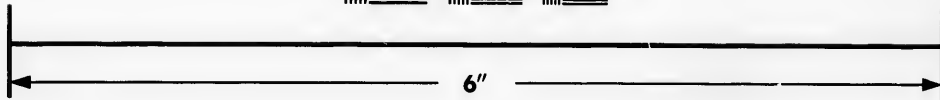
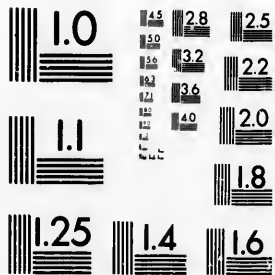








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*TWILIGHT TALKS.*

Lintons. Though Mrs Gordon at first opposed her daughter's wishes, declaring she would catch a fever, or something of that kind, going about among poor, low houses, yet she at last yielded, and not only so, but did not let her go empty-handed, providing her with several articles of clothing for Maggie, and even some of Horace's clothes for Will. The little girl went off full of glee, and could hardly walk quietly by the side of her governess, so anxious was she to dispose of her gifts and see Maggie and little Johnnie, of whom she had often heard Miss Raymond speak ; but when they had at last reached the cottage, she grew timid and shy, and Helen was obliged to explain that Mrs Gordon had sent Maggie some clothes she thought might be of use, and that Laura had brought them herself that she might know Maggie and Johnnie. At length the child's shyness wore off, and she quite captivated Johnnie by singing him "I want to be an angel," and giving him a little book of hymns, which she told him she had had ever since she was a wee, little girl.

This was but the beginning of many visits paid by Laura, not only to the Lintons, but to others of the hill-families ; and thus she early began to enjoy the happiness of a ministering child, and know the greater blessedness of giving than receiving.

July at last gave place to August, and the heat, which had been unusually great all summer, grew to such an

*TWILIGHT TALKS.*

intensity, that even the inhabitants of the little town, who were well accustomed to the extremes of Canadian heat and cold, felt it almost more than they could endure. On the hill, however, where the air was purer and fresher, no signs of sickness had as yet appeared, and all went on about as usual with our friends the Lintons and the other families among whom Mrs Gordon and Miss Raymond visited. Johnnie was now a regular attendant at Sunday-school; and among Helen's pupils there was not a more earnest listener than the little pale-faced fellow, who at first was looked upon with contempt by the larger boys, but who often put them to shame by his attention and correct answers to their teacher's questions. Maggie and Will went regularly to evening service, and thus Johnnie was left to his father's care, who would sit with him on his knee at the cottage door, and watch the sun setting in its crimson glory, sinking like a burning ball behind the dim horizon, and giving promise that he would rise with renewed strength and power on the morrow. Sometimes the two would sit in silence, Johnnie with one arm round his father's neck, his head resting on his shoulder, and his little face close to his. Sometimes Johnnie would sing, or the two together would talk; and imperceptibly John Linton began to look forward to these evening hours with his youngest born, his poor, weakly, little Johnnie. He used to feel some-

*TWILIGHT TALKS.*

times as if the childish prayer Miss Raymond had taught, and which he lisped at his knee before he was put in Maggie's little bed, did him more good than anything else, and lifted for a moment the cloud of depression and care which seemed hanging dark and heavy over his soul ever since the first Sunday he went to church with Will.

August was now half over, but the weather did not moderate. The Sunday had been even more close and sultry than the preceding days; and as Linton sat with Johnnie on his knee when the welcome shades of evening were coming on, he looked even more weary and worn than was his wont. Johnnie stroked the furrowed, worn face tenderly as he said, in his childish tones—

“Daddy, what makes you always look so sorrowful? Do you never feel glad? Aren't you happy, daddy?” he went on, nestling closer, and again resting the tired, little head on his father's shoulder.

“Not often, Johnnie, lad. I have a great deal to make me sorrowful.”

“And hasn't you anything to make you glad, daddy? You has me and Maggie and Will.” And the little one again began his caresses.

Linton pressed the child closer to him, but did not speak.

“And then we has heaven, daddy. Jesus will come to take us up there; we isn't good enough to go our-

*TWILIGHT TALKS.*

selves, but Jesus will come and take us. We will go right up yonder, just where the stars are coming out." And the little hand pointed up to the heavens, where the crimson of sunset had all but faded away, and where the stars were beginning to peep out one by one. Then Johnnie lay back and was so quiet, that at last Linton looked down to see what was the matter, and found that the little fellow was fast asleep. He sat with him in his arms for a long time, and then he laid him in his little bed, and kneeling down beside him, buried his face in his hands and prayed little Johnnie's prayer, for he knew the child would be greatly grieved when he found he had gone to sleep without saying his prayers, and he thought that perhaps he would be comforted if he knew his father had said it for him. Long after that prayer was ended Linton knelt on, he knew not how long, but he felt as if he scarce wanted ever to rise again, such a sweet peace as he had never before known seemed shed abroad over his heart, and again and again he repeated, "Jesus, tender Shepherd! hear me!"

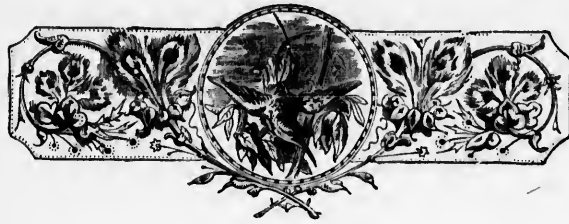
"Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me!  
Bless Thy little lamb to-night;  
Through the darkness be Thou near me,  
Watch my sleep till morning light.

"All this day Thy hand hath led me,  
And I thank Thee for Thy care;  
Thou hast clothed, and warm'd, and fed me,  
Listen to my humble prayer.

*TWILIGHT TALKS.*

“ Let my sins be all forgiven,  
Bless the friends I love so we! ” ;  
Take me, when I die, to heaven,  
Happy there with Thee to dwell.”

The word “shepherd” seemed to suit him so well, he felt he had been such a wandering sheep, that he had strayed so far from the fold ; and could it be possible that the Shepherd himself had sought the wandering one, was tenderly bringing him back again? As John Linton knelt by his child’s lonely bed, there was joy among the angels of heaven over him, and from one to another of those bright beings above passed the joyous words, “ Behold, he prayeth!”



## CHAPTER XII.

### *Shadows Falling.*

'Gently, Lord, oh, gently lead us  
Through this gloomy vale of tears;  
Through the changes Thou 'st decreed us,  
'Till our last great change appears.'

**S**ORROW was about to visit the Lintons' home, and the peace and happiness that had reigned there for the last few months was soon to be broken in upon. Perhaps Linton foresaw it sometimes; perhaps he already saw the first faint outlines of the dark cloud which was soon to overshadow them all; for his joy in his reconciled Saviour, though deep and all-pervading, was yet subdued and chastened; and as he sat on the peaceful Sabbath evenings with his little one on his knee, he would strain the fragile form closer and closer to him, and while wee Johnnie would speak of the heaven where good



*SHADOWS FALLING.*

little boys and girls go when they die—of those who stand “around the throne of God in heaven, children whose sins are all forgiven, a holy happy band,” the tears would involuntarily start to the father’s eyes, and he would long that he might go with little Johnnie to that bright home whither he instinctively felt his boy was fast hastening. Whether Maggie and Will ever thought as he did he knew not, but he could tell from the sister’s sad wistful eye, as she watched Johnnie, that her heart was filled with anxiety for her wee brother. And though feeling as he did, Linton’s heart gave a bound of bitter pain when, one evening as he returned from work, Maggie met him at the door, saying, in low sad tones, “I’m afeard Johnnie’s got the fever, father; he’s been so sick all day; I put him to bed a while ago, and he’s asleep now, but I’m sore afeard he’s got the fever.”

Linton, without making any reply, walked into the house and to Johnnie’s bed-side, where he stood for some minutes, until his eyes were dim with tears as he thought how dear the little one was to him, and how he would miss the little voice that always said so gladly, “Eh! Maggie, here’s daddy coming!” and the little hand that used to be slipped into his so confidingly.

Never for a moment did Linton doubt that the hand of death was laid on the child. He gazed a moment longer, and then, turning to Maggie, quietly said—

*SHADOWS FALLING.*

"Yes, Meg, wee Johnnie's got the fever; we will send for Miss Raymond—and the minister." The last words were said very slowly, and so low Maggie could scarcely hear them. Then her father sat down to his supper with her and Will, who had just come in and been informed of Johnnie's illness in whispered tones by Maggie, while Linton stood bending over the sleeping child. When the silent meal was ended, Linton rose, and turning to Will, said quietly—

"Will, just go down and ask Miss Raymond to come up; Johnnie mayn't live till morning, for he's but weakly, poor wee fellow! and the fever won't take long to do its work. Johnnie would be so vexed to go without seeing the young lady; but you needn't mind about the minister to-night. And now, Will, be off, for it soon drops dark."

Will obeyed in silence, while Maggie turned away to hide the tears that would flow. Linton seated himself near his son, watching anxiously every movement of the restless little sleeper, whose flushed cheeks and burning brow were too sure proofs that he had fallen a victim to the scourge which that summer had made many homes sad.

Will was back very soon, but it was only to state that his errand had been unsuccessful; none of the ladies at the big house were at home, and the servant did not know when they might be back. He had left

*SHADOWS FALLING.*

a message for Miss Raymond, which the girl promised to deliver as soon as any of them returned. And so there was nothing to be done but watch and hope that Helen might not be too late. It was a long sad night; occasionally Johnnie would awake crying he was "so thirsty;" and his father - he never left his side, would hold the cup of water to the feverish lips with some endearing word, hoping that the expression would meet with some response, but none came, and the tired little head would fall back again on the pillow, and the lids would close over the large bright eyes without a word of recognition to the anxious father. Will went up to his bed, but more than once in the night he stole noiselessly down the rickety stairs, and taking a look at his brother, would creep back again as silently as he came. Maggie, who had thrown herself at the foot of the bed, scarcely closed her eyes, but not a word passed between the father and daughter. It was with a sad heart that Linton set off to his work the next morning; he could not stay at home, but he left Will behind, telling him to come instantly for him if Johnnie should wake and seem to know them, for he knew that then his boy would not long be here to know or speak to him. Not long after he had gone, Will, who was watching at the door, announced to Maggie that two of the young ladies from the big white house were coming up the hill.

*SHADOWS FALLING.*

"Oh, is it Miss Raymond?" exclaimed Maggie, joyfully, as she ran to the window.

But no, it was not Helen, but Grace and Laura, who were slowly making their way to the cottage door. Grace had never been there before, and as she entered Maggie felt a little awed by her cold, haughty manner; but she was soon put at her ease by Laura, who, full of sorrow about Johnnie, poured forth a torrent of questions and regrets at Miss Raymond's absence. Miss Raymond, Laura said, had stayed all night with a friend with whom they had been visiting the previous day, but she was soon expected home. "And now," she added, quite out of breath in her haste, "mamma has sent some things for Johnnie which she thinks will do him good, and she says she will come to see him, if Miss Raymond doesn't come home to-day. But what is the matter with him? dear little Johnnie!" she said, leaning over his bed.

"Father thinks it just the fever," said the unconscious Maggie, and then, looking at Grace, she saw in a moment what made her turn so hurriedly towards the door. "But you need not be afraid, Miss; the doctor says as it's not catching at all."

"Oh, I'm not afraid," said Grace, "but it is time we were going. I hope your little brother will be better."

"Thank you, ma'am; but father's afraid not," returned Maggie, with tears in her eyes.

*SHADOWS FALLING.*

As Grace hurried off, she felt what a coward she was; she tried to persuade herself that it was consideration for Laura and her mother that prompted her, but conscience denied the assertion. In her heart of hearts Grace Gordon envied her governess her peaceful, happy spirit, her joy in life, her hope in death,—perhaps half-envied Maggie Linton in her humble home. Laura was silent and sad; she wished Miss Raymond was at home; she wished Johnnie wasn't sick; she wondered, if she took the fever, whether she would be afraid to die; and then, with the impatience of childhood at aught that is melancholy or depressing, she almost tried to banish thoughts of poor little Johnnie herself.

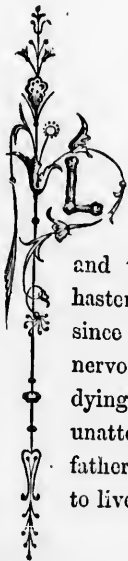
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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### Little Johnnie goes Home.

" Oh, to join the thrilling voices  
Of that happy sainted choir :  
Each in Jesus Christ rejoices,  
All their thoughts to Him aspire.  
In the world is war and strife,  
Pride and vanity are rife :  
But in heaven will ever be  
Peace, and rest, and purity."



INTON knew, as soon as he came in sight of his lowly home, that his boy still lived, for Will kept his watch by the door, and the anxious father knew he would have hastened to meet him had there been any change since the morning : he hurried on with quick, nervous steps, and was soon at the bed-side of his dying child. Little alteration was visible to the unattentive observer, but the sharp eye of the father saw that wee Johnnie had not many hours to live.

*LITTLE JOHNNIE GOES HOME.*

"I'm real sorry Miss Raymond isn't here," said Linton, at length. "Will, my boy, hadn't you best go and see if she's come yet?"

"Oh, I know she'll come as soon as ever she gets back, and, father, I don't like to leave," replied Will, with an imploring look.

"Well, well, my boy, I won't ask you, then, for I'd like you to be here."

There was something touching in the silence the father and son preserved on the one thought which filled both minds,—their very silence spoke volumes of suppressed feeling. The supper stood untouched; and as Maggie glanced from it to her father, she recollected, for the first time, that she had never given him his dinner to take with him that day. This duty she had performed ever since she could remember, and had never till that day neglected it; she felt herself reproached as she looked at her father's pale face, and she fancied his hair had never looked so gray as it did then.

"Oh, father!" she began, in murmured tones, for all voices are hushed in the presence of sickness and death, "I never gave you your dinner to-day; do come and take some supper."

"I never heeded it, lass; I couldn't eat when wee Johnnie was a-dying; how could I, child? But I'll just take a sup of tea to please you." Linton drank the proffered tea in silence. Maggie noiselessly re-

LITTLE JOHNNIE GOES HOME.

moved the cups and saucers, for they expected the minister, on whom the father had called on his way from work. Will still kept his post by the door.

The long summer day slowly and gradually faded away. The sun set amidst richest hues of purple and crimson, gold and violet, which glowed and burned long after he had gone to rest. The faintest shade of colour at last died away, and soon the deep-blue sky was lit with its myriads of starry lamps. The stillness of evening stole over all, and still the sad-hearted father sat by his youngest born; one hand, long and enclosing the little, thin, hot one that lay on the coverlid, the other supporting his own aching head. Silence had long reigned unbroken in the small, low room, when Will crept noiselessly up to the bed, whispering—

“Father, here’s the minister and Miss Raymond.”

And even as he spoke the two entered, for the dusk of evening had hid them from the boy’s wearied gaze until they had just reached the cottage door. All was so still when Helen entered, that she feared her little pupil was beyond the reach of her voice; but one glance at the flushed little face told he might even yet speak to her.

Linton smiled a sad welcome to the two, but as if by mutual consent, no words were spoken. Helen seated herself close by Maggie, taking one of the child’s hands lovingly in hers, while the minister took



*LITTLE JOHNNIE GOES HOME.*

a chair near Will and beside the table, on which a dim candle was now burning, and in a low voice began to read the fourteenth chapter of St John. The words seemed just what they all wanted, and every heart was calmed and even cheered.

For a full hour the little company sat, the silence only broken by the minister's low, soft voice repeating words of heavenly comfort. All at once the long lashes were lifted from the thin cheeks, that, within the hour, had been growing so pale. The eyes wandered for a moment, then fixed on Linton's face, and the weak little voice murmured—

“Daddy, take Johnnie.”

In a moment the quilt was wrapped tenderly round the frail, little form, and he was in his father's arms. There he lay for some minutes perfectly still, and then the blue eyes opened again.

“Daddy, Johnnie thinks he must be going to Jesus: Johnnie's so tired. Daddy come too, won't he? Johnnie want daddy too.” The tired little head drooped once more, and the eyes closed for a long time. Then for the last time the lids were lifted, and the once bright eyes looked from one to the other of the faces that bent over him, and an involuntary smile played on the child's lips as he nestled again in the arms that longed so sorely to keep their light burden for ever in their embrace.

*LITTLE JOHNNIE GOES HOME.*

"Daddy"— But the dying lips refused to say more. A short struggle, and all was over—the weary little form for ever at rest—the ransomed spirit for ever with that Saviour who had said, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven."

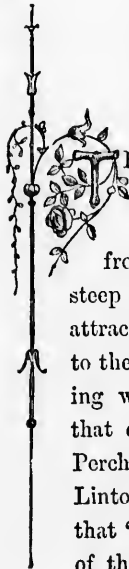
Helen and the minister, without a word, turned and left the mourners alone with their dead.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### The Shadows Deepen.

“ When gathering clouds around I view,  
And days are dark, and friends are few,  
On Him I lean, who not in vain  
Experienced ev'ry human pain ;  
He sees my wants, allays my fears,  
And counts and treasures up my tears.”



HERE was no notice of wee Johnnie's death in the daily newspaper ; no long mournful funeral procession wound its way from the door of his lowly home, down the steep hill-side, to the quiet little churchyard, to attract the notice of passers-by, or call attention to the fact that a child was dead by the drooping white hearse-plumes, or the white ribbon that confined the crape on the mourners' hats. Perchance, one or two of the hill-people or Linton's fellow-labourers carelessly remarked, that “ that sickly bit child of Linton's had died of the fever ; ” but that was all the notice they

*THE SHADOWS DEEPEN.*

took of it, save a warning to their children not to go near the house. And before the sun had run his seven days' journey, wee Johnnie was forgotten by nearly all.

But there were a few in whose hearts the remembrance of the delicate little child still lived fresh and sweet.

Helen missed the thoughtful, earnest little face among the too often careless, troublesome boys of her class,—missed the little voice that always welcomed her visits to the cottage. How much Maggie missed her constant companion, the object of her tenderest care and solicitude ever since his babyhood, who can say? Often was wee Johnnie the subject of her own and Will's conversation, and they would mingle their tears over the little green mound in the churchyard. But around no heart had the child wound himself as round that of his father; none longed so sorely for touch of his little hand, or sound of that childish voice that was so still. Much as Linton had dreaded losing his son, he had never fancied it would be so hard as it actually was. Strong as he knew the ties were which bound him to his motherless boy, he had not dreamt that the rending of them would be so terrible. He felt almost crushed by his grief. Sometimes he would sit alone on the calm, still Sunday evening (for they could never induce him to go with them to church at night), and think of the little form, so still and silent in its



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*THE SHADOWS DEEPEN.*

long resting-place, and pray that he might soon lie in the peaceful grave beside his child. Yet by degrees, time, that wondrous soother of the deepest woe, subdued his grief, and in a measure healed his wounded spirit; and gradually Linton lifted his thoughts from the new-made mound in the quiet churchyard, up to the bright blue sky beyond, which was the home of his ransomed child; and sometimes he would think it might not be very long before he joined his loved son gone before.

It is well for us that the future is hidden from our eyes by an impenetrable veil. We could never bear the burdens of to-day, were those of to-morrow added thereto. Sometimes, indeed, not only would they swallow up present grief, but even overwhelm our very selves in their exceeding weight.

All unheeding, Maggie Linton's step began again to grow light, and sometimes she would even sing softly to herself some of wee Johnnie's favourite hymns as she went about her daily work. Poor Maggie! she did not sing long. Summer had scarce faded into autumn, when one evening, as she was cheerily preparing her father's supper, a strange sight on the hillside made her pause to gaze, while her heart—she knew not why—beat with a sickening throb of suspense and fear. Some five or six men were moving slowly up the ascent, bearing between them a sort of rough

*THE SHADOWS DEEPEN.*

litter on which lay the form of an elderly man, his face wan and pale, his eyes closed—alas! closed never again to open on earthly scenes. Why was Will there? Maggie asked herself, terror filling her heart. Why did he not come to tell her what was the matter? Poor boy! he walked slowly behind with bent head and trembling footsteps. Alas! Maggie knew the truth too soon. Some scaffolding on which her father had been working had given way, precipitating him some fifty feet to the ground, killing him instantly.

“Oh! is he quite dead?” moaned Maggie, as they tenderly laid the poor body where only a few short weeks before wee Johnnie had lain a-dying.

“Dead enough, my poor lass! We might as well have taken him to the churchyard for all the good ye can do him.”

Maggie looked up wonderingly in the face of the speaker, a tall, gruff-looking man she knew well as one of her father's fellow-labourers; and yet, as she looked, she saw something like a tear start to his eye, and he turned abruptly away, saying to his companions—

“Well, I guess we can't do nothing more for poor John. It's a better place for our old women than for the likes of us.”

The men moved not away without many murmured words of pity for the poor orphans, and promises that they would do well for Will anyhow.

THE SHADOWS DEEPEN.

Maggie felt that some among them at least would be far from good examples for her brother ; and when they were alone, she clung to him sobbing piteously. Will did not know how to comfort her, and the orphan brother and sister wept together over him who had been both father and mother to them. How much of a guide and support he had been, perhaps they had neither of them realised until now, when they were for ever deprived of his care and counsel. Night at last drew her quiet curtains around them, and a feeling of awe stole over the two young children as they felt themselves alone in the presence of death.

“Hadn't we best pray?” whispered Maggie, at length.

“But what will we say?” sobbed Will ; “father's always prayed.” And at the remembrance of the chapter and prayer they had had every night and morning, the little ones' tears flowed fast. When they grew calmer, Maggie said again, “We can say ‘Our Father,’ at any rate.”

And so the two knelt together ; and when the sweet, simple prayer was ended, they fell asleep by the side of their dead father.



## CHAPTER XV.

### Our Father's Protecting Care.

“ Who doth the birds supply,  
Who grass and trees and flowers  
Doth beautifully clothe through ceaseless hours ;  
Who hears us ere we cry,  
Can He my need forget ?  
Nay, though He slay me, I will trust Him yet.”



AGGIE and Will were almost alone in their trouble, for somehow the neighbours were not very friendly to the girl who had never sought them in more prosperous days. One or two of them came in until after the funeral was over ; but Maggie felt a decided relief when they were gone. She would gladly have had Miss Raymond come to see her ; but that was impossible, for Helen was miles away, and knew nothing of her little friend's trouble. And thus poor Maggie had no one to speak to about her trouble, or the anxiety for the future



*OUR FATHER'S PROTECTING CARE.*

which weighed on her spirits. There had been a little money in the house when her father died, and Will had still work to do at the new building, so that present necessities were supplied ; but yet it is not to be wondered at that Maggie Linton's faith often failed her as she thought of the long, cold winter creeping on with slow but sure steps. She was coming home from the town one day, whither she had been to replenish their slight stock of provisions, and as she began slowly to mount the steep hill, she commenced to feel very weary, and her heart sank within her. She felt as if she would gladly sit down on the grass and cry ; but Maggie did not often give way, and she struggled hard to keep down the rising sobs. Suddenly her attention was arrested by the low quick flight of a bird along the ground, that sure sign that some unprotected little home is near. Maggie stooped down to look, but she smiled to herself at the thought of any nest being in such a bare, shelterless place. The smile soon grew brighter, for close to the root of a half-grown thistle, whose very top had been rubbed off by a passing cow, lay a tiny nest, and in it two little birds with erected heads and open bills, waiting for the return of the startled mother, whom, no doubt, they believed had gone to seek them food. Protection there was none to the humble home ; it lay exposed to the careless passer-by, to the rough hoof of the many kind that

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*OUR FATHER'S PROTECTING CARE.*

wandered about the hill in a vain search for a fresh blade of grass. Maggie gazed in wonder ; it seemed little short of a miracle that the tiny thing had remained unmolested for so many weeks, with not even a friendly blade of grass to shield it ; and the child lifted up her heart in trust to Him who watches over the birds of the air so tenderly, that not one falleth to the ground without His knowledge ; and she believed that He who cared for and provided for those two helpless little things, would watch over and keep her and Will in their poor lonely home. With many a long, lingering look at the bare little nest, Maggie turned slowly homewards. Every day she went to look at the little nest on the hill-side. Sometimes she would find the tiny fledgelings alone, sometimes a sharp quick whirr would tell they had just been left ; but very soon the nest was deserted, and when Maggie had gone three days and found it empty, she took it off the ground and carried it home. Then she told Will about it, and the two never looked at the little nest without being reminded that their Father cared for them even more than for the little ground birds that had lived there so long secure in the midst of dangers.

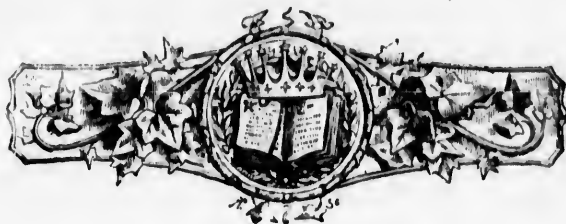
Will would not go to Sunday-school when Miss Raymond was away, but regularly twice every Sunday the brother and sister went to church together. The

*OUR FATHER'S PROTECTING CARE.*

minister more than once stopped to speak to them as they went into the churchyard ; for always when the Sunday was fine, the two would go to visit father's and wee Johnnie's graves, none the less dear to the orphans that no marble slab marked the spot, or told on its smooth surface the name and age of those who lay beneath. The minister often revolved in his own mind, how he could best help the children, and sometimes felt at a loss what to do, when so many had lost friends that summer—so many that he knew would need help in the coming winter—so he resolved to wait until Miss Raymond came home ; she would probably know best what could be done.

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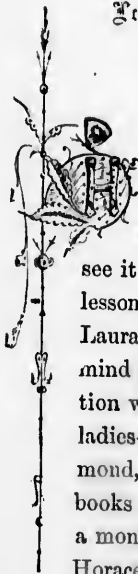
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## CHAPTER XVI.

### Lessons Taught in the Sick-Room.

"These trials, Lord, Thou dost employ,  
From this world's snares our hearts to free;  
And break't each scheme of earthly joy.  
That we may find our all in Thee."



VACATION-TIME had now arrived at The Cedars, and, as Horace declared, not a day too soon; for his part, he did not see it did a fellow any good to be kept at his lessons in this hot weather; and as for Grace and Laura, he thought they were weaker both in mind and body for the last month—an insinuation which was promptly denied by the young ladies—and, continued he, "if I was Miss Raymond, I would jolly soon have put these old books away, and have locked up the schoolroom a month ago." Miss Raymond kindly reminded Horace that the heat had been so intense he

*LESSONS TAUGHT IN THE SICK-ROOM.*

could not have enjoyed his holidays a month ago, and instead of paddling his canoe or fishing, he would have been glad to seek the coolest room in the house. Now they had the prospect of delightful weather, and she was sure they would appreciate his mamma's arrangement for postponing the holidays, and enjoy the change.

Helen Raymond's work was not left behind when she bid adieu for a time to The Cedars and Maggie Linton. A loving earnest heart can find work for its Master anywhere ; and indeed, in a measure, Helen took hers with her, for she found that many a lesson might be taught her pupils, even if it were holiday-time. And then they kept up their Sunday work with unflagging interest, and for this the governess felt truly thankful. That short hour on the Lord's-day seemed to keep them together the whole week ; it was the centre from which proceeded Miss Raymond's influence over the children. Helen found little real satisfaction in Grace. She was, indeed, less trying than formerly, and always manifested considerable interest in the Sunday-lessons ; but often Helen had to chide herself for half-wishing the girl were not with them ; there was not half the freedom between herself and the other two children when Grace was present ; she seemed always to act as a damper upon their spirits, and to check their confidence in their teacher. But Helen always strove not to show

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*LESSONS TAUGHT IN THE SICK-ROOM.*

the slightest partiality ; and that she succeeded was evident from the fact that Horace too often complained she always let Grace have her way, whether others wanted it or not. For such remarks he generally received a gentle rebuke from Laura, whose great fear seemed to be lest Grace should leave them again. The unselfish little girl never was weary of doing all she could to try and make everything pleasant for her sister. It often made Helen indignant to see with what apparent indifference her sister's many little attentions were received by Grace ; sometimes she could not restrain a reproving word when Laura was not in the room. About Horace, too, Helen felt anxious, for at Christmas he was to leave them for a boarding-school at a distance from home ; and she longed that some lasting impression might be made upon his heart—that he might not go forth into the world without a safeguard against the many temptations to which she knew boys were subject when placed among strangers, far from home and its influences. Many a prayer was offered up for the boy by his governess.

Their quiet life was unexpectedly broken in upon by the sudden, and at first alarming, illness of Grace. She had stayed out too long one evening, when it was particularly beautiful, and cold had settled on her chest, producing very alarming symptoms—alarming particularly to Mrs Gordon, who dreaded lest it should ter-

*LESSONS TAUGHT IN THE SICK-ROOM.*

minate in the same insidious disease which had cut down her husband in the prime of life. Mrs Gordon was one of those women who, when grief or trouble come, seem incapable of taking any active part ; and now she appeared overwhelmed with the thought that Grace would die. She firmly believed the child would never recover, and gave herself up at once to the most unrestrained grief, for she loved her children very dearly, particularly the reserved, quiet Grace, whom she always considered "such a superior girl." The poor mother little knew the harm she had done by her ill-concealed admiration of qualities which she should have been far from commending in her daughter. As she was utterly unable to control her feelings, she was almost useless in the sick-room ; indeed, so much did she excite the sick child, that at length she remained away entirely, yielding to Helen the office of nurse. It was then that Helen saw how much there was in Horace's character she had never dreamt of. With noiseless steps he would creep up and down stairs with messages, or sit, almost without moving, for an hour at a time, waiting to be of some use. Helen would wonder sometimes what she would do without him, he was so thoughtful and considerate, seeming almost to anticipate her every want. Laura was in great distress, and begged hard to be allowed to help ; but Helen, seeing that she would not do to be in the sick-room, committed to her the task

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*LESSONS TAUGHT IN THE SICK-ROOM.*

of comforting mamma, which she did her best to perform.

Grace did not die. Very, very slowly she began to recover, until at length she was able to sit up for a few minutes every day. By degrees her mother's spirits returned, and hope revived. She had resolved not to see Grace until she asked for her; but she had not long to want.

Horace had been reading to the sick girl one morning while Helen sat sewing beside her, when Grace, suddenly lifting those bright eyes of hers, which looked so unnaturally large and brilliant, said—

“Where’s mamma? I would like to see her.”

Helen rose, motioning Horace to follow, for she thought it better to leave the mother and daughter alone. Mrs Gordon gladly hastened to Grace; and what passed between them Helen never knew, but it was but the beginning of many hours spent alone together by the sick girl and her mother. Mrs Gordon had a peculiarly sweet voice, and she would read to Grace for hours at a time. There seemed to spring up between them an affection which before had been hidden under coldness and misunderstanding; and none rejoiced over it more than Helen Raymond. What pleasant evenings they all spent now in Grace’s room, working and talking together! Grace appeared a different girl since her illness, so mild and gentle and



*LESSONS TAUGHT IN THE SICK-ROOM.*

forbearing to all ; her very face looked changed, the cold, haughty expression was quite gone now. Sometimes she would take Helen's hand in hers, and say, while the tears filled her eyes—

“ Oh, Miss Raymond, how much I owe to you ! You have always been so kind and gentle with me. When I used to watch you sitting by my bed-side all the long, long night, I used to hate myself for all my pride and coldness to you ; but I hope that I will never again be as I was.”

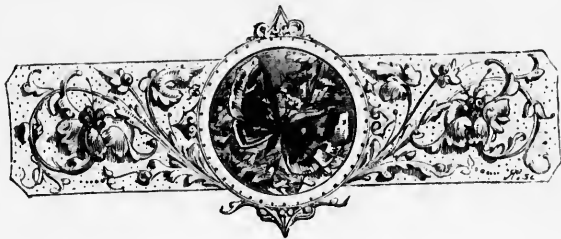
And Helen would kiss the pale, thin cheek, and think how true it was that His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### Mrs Gordon's Pleasant Plans.

"Help us, Lord! not these Thy poor ones only,  
They are with us always, and shall be:  
Help the blindness of our hearts, and teach us  
In Thy homeless ones to succour Thee."

HERE was much that was very happy in the return to The Cedars in the quiet twilight of the autumn day. The maples and oaks were resplendent in most gorgeous hues, from rich russet to brilliant crimson.

"Does it not look beautiful?" said Grace, as they drove slowly along. "Oh! I am so glad to be at home again. I wished so often, when I was sick, that we were here."

No one spoke in reply. Mrs Gordon felt very glad to hear Grace speak as she did, for she was generally the first to hail any absence from home with delight, and the last to wish to re-

*MRS GORDON'S PLEASANT PLANS.*

turn. Laura was wild with excitement, and even Horace exclaimed, "Well, it is jolly to be back again," as he sprang out of the carriage. Helen's pleasure was greatly marred when she heard from one of the servants of Linton's death, and the whole evening her thoughts were full of the poor little orphans. However, she said nothing to the others, as she wished their first evening at home to be as happy as possible.

Grace, who was tired with the journey, went to her room soon after tea, but the others sat up talking, until they were reminded of the lateness of the hour by finding Laura coiled up in an arm-chair fast asleep.

Helen found it impossible to visit Maggie the following morning, as there was much to do after their long absence. At dinner, however, she told the others of the Lintons' loss, and asked Laura if she would go with her to see them. The child willingly assented, while Grace said—

"I wish I could go too, if it was only not so far."

"Oh, my dear, you could never walk such a distance," said her mother.

"No, I am afraid not," returned Grace, sadly; "but before very long I hope I can go."

"I hope so," said Helen, stooping to kiss her, as she left the room to prepare for her walk.

They found Maggie in great trouble, as Will would very soon be without work; and what they were to do

MRS GORDON'S PLEASANT PLANS.

all through the long, cold winter, she did not know Helen hardly knew what to say, for she herself felt at a loss as to what was to become of the orphans. However, she comforted Maggie as best she could, assuring her that something would be done for them; and then she and Laura walked slowly and almost silently home, both full of thoughts about Maggie and Will.

That evening when the children had gone to bed, and Mrs Gordon and Helen were sitting working together, the former said—

“Laura has been telling me about these poor Lintons. What is to be done about them, Miss Raymond?”

“I am sure I don't know,” returned Helen, a little despondingly. “I was just thinking about them.”

“But something must be done before winter sets in.”

“Yes, I know. I was thinking of speaking to Mr Stirling about them. He always took a great interest in the children. About the time Johnnie died, he said to me it was a pity something could not be done for Will, he was such a bright, intelligent boy.”

“Yes, yes,” replied Mrs Gordon; “but Mr Stirling himself can't do anything for the boy. We must go to some one who can and will help us on. Now I was thinking about Mr Morton. We have always been good customers of his, and perhaps I could induce him to take Will as errand-boy. There would be a chance

MRS GORDON'S PLEASANT PLANS.

of his getting on in the world, and it would be easy work for him, as he does not look very strong."

"It would be very nice," said Helen, after a pause; "but it is a disadvantage to Will that he knows so little. He ought to go to school for a year first."

"But he can't do that, for he has to work for his living."

A few minutes' pause ensued, when Mrs Gordon said energetically—

"I'll tell you what he can do. There is a night-school here, held down in George Street; why could he not go to that? I would get him any books he wanted; and indeed there are several of Horace's which I dare say would be useful to him."

"That is just the thing," exclaimed Miss Raymond. "I am so glad you thought of it. I am sure you are very kind, Mrs Gordon; but the question is, can you get Mr Morton to take Will?"

"I think I can," replied Mrs Gordon. "But there is something else to consider, and I think I can manage that too, for you see I have taken a great interest in your *protégés*, Miss Raymond," she added, with a smile. "The children will want somewhere to live, for of course they can't stay over there; it would be too far for Will, if there was no other objection. I was thinking there is that poor woman who lost her husband by the fever,—you know her. She always

MRS GORDON'S PLEASANT PLANS.

comes to church so regularly ; her name is Brown. I think she has a large house, and would be glad to rent Maggie a room or two. We would go security for the rent," said Mrs Gordon, with another smile ; " and we will find Maggie something to do."

Helen could not speak at first, her heart was so full of thankfulness.

" Well," said Mrs Gordon, at length, " we can think over it, and see about it to-morrow."

" I think you have thought over it already to some purpose," said Helen, with tears in her eyes. " I cannot thank you. I cannot say half I feel."

" Good night, dear," returned Mrs Gordon ; and for the first time since Helen had come under her roof, she stooped down and kissed her.

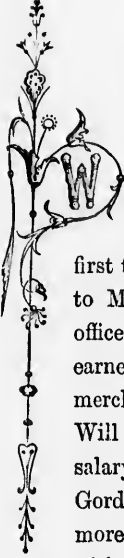
Helen lay awake far into the night, thinking and planning for Maggie and Will, her heart glowing with thankfulness for all her Father had done for her ; and among her happiest thoughts was the remembrance of Mrs Gordon's good-night kiss. It reminded her of other days and her own old home.




## CHAPTER XVIII

### A Farewell to our Friends.

"Life is only high when it proceedeth  
Toward a truer, deeper Life above ;  
Human Love is sweetest when it leadeth  
To a more divine and perfect Love."

HEN Mrs Gordon had once devised a plan, she was not long in carrying it out, if it was possible. Accordingly, the first thing on the following morning, she was off to Mr Morton's, and with him, in his private office, she was closeted for an hour, engaged in earnest conversation. The result was, that the merchant, after some hesitation, agreed to take Will as errand-boy, giving him also a small salary, somewhat less, it is true, than what Mrs Gordon at first proposed, but, perhaps in reality more than she expected. Mrs Gordon's next visit was to the Widow Brown, and with her

*A FAREWELL TO OUR FRIENDS.*



also her mission was successful, and two comfortable rooms were secured for the orphans. But Mrs Gordon's work was not yet done. She had another plan which she had been working in her busy brain since she had left home ; it resulted in Maggie's obtaining a situation as daily nurse with a friend of Mrs Gordon, who agreed to let Maggie go home for an hour in the middle of the day to cook Will's dinner, as the Widow Brown's house was but a short distance off. Full of spirits, Mrs Gordon hurried home to report to Helen, who, delighted, could scarcely wait until the afternoon, when, accompanied by the three children, she went to tell Maggie of all that had been done for her. For some little time, the bewildered Maggie could hardly comprehend the showers of explanations and delighted exclamations that were poured upon her from all four, Laura pressing her hand in hers, and saying every few minutes—

“Oh, I am so glad ! Maggie ! won't it be nice ?”

While Maggie scarce knew what it was that would be nice. At length, however, Miss Raymond thought it better to interfere, and quietly and clearly explained all to the astonished girl. Maggie could hardly speak for thankfulness ; she clasped her poor little thin hands, and the tears would come, though she tried hard to choke them back. When her visitors were gone, she took down the empty little nest from its place on



*A FAREWELL TO OUR FRIENDS.*

the shelf, and, with thankful heart, thought of how her Father had provided for them a home, and again came to her mind the sweet words, "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

Before Christmas there were many changes. Horace had gone off to school, but not before Helen felt good hopes that he was influenced by that blessed Spirit who alone could preserve his youthful feet from straying, and guide him into that narrow path whose ways are indeed pleasantness—whose end is assuredly peace. Long before that festal season, Maggie and Will were settled in their new home, and busy with their new duties—duties which were rendered light by the thought of the evening together; and then, as Maggie said, there was always Sunday to look forward to, when they both went to church and Sunday-school—Maggie to Mrs Gordon's class, for she no longer feared or disliked her. She had long since learned to know what a kind, motherly heart lay hid under the somewhat abrupt manner which used to repel when it would attract. Mrs Gordon, too, was changed; she had learned many lessons during the past year. That happy Christmas-time did not find many happier homes than The Cedars,

*A FAREWELL TO OUR FRIENDS.*

nor a happier heart in it than that of Helen Raymond.

This narrative will have more than accomplished the purpose for which it was written, if it leads any one who may chance to read it to think seriously on the greatness of the influence all exercise, whether such influence be for good or for evil; of how much willing hands may find to do, let them be ever so feeble or small; and that no work on earth is so blessed as that done for Him whose reward will be, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord!" What joy can be like that, unspeakable and full of glory—that joy which is at His right hand, and those pleasures which are for evermore?

"Be kind to one another;  
This is a world of care;  
And there's enough of needful woe  
For every one to bear:  
But if you ease the burden  
That weighs another down,  
That work of Christian charity  
Will lighten half your own.

"Be kind to one another;  
Scatter the seeds of love  
Wide o'er the fields of hearts, and rich  
The harvest wealth will prove:  
A wealth more truly precious  
Than aught beneath the sun,  
Which India's diamonds could not buy,  
And yet—how lightly won!

*A FAREWELL TO OUR FRIENDS.*

“Be kind to one another,  
Not to the good alone ;  
E'en to the cold and selfish heart  
Let deeds of love be shown.  
So shall ye be His children  
Who rains His gifts on all,  
And even upon the thankless ones  
Bids His bright sunbeams fall.”

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