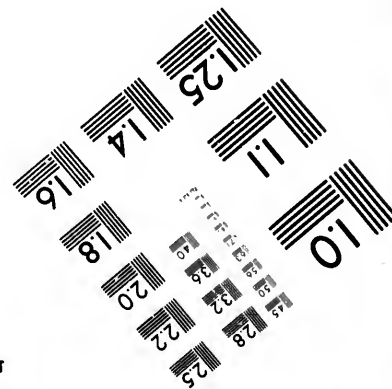
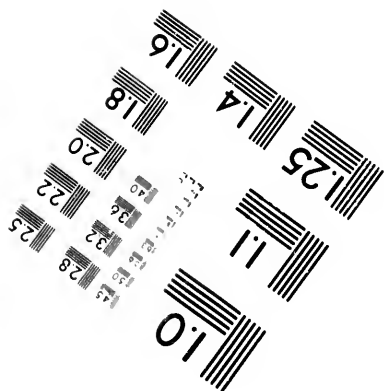
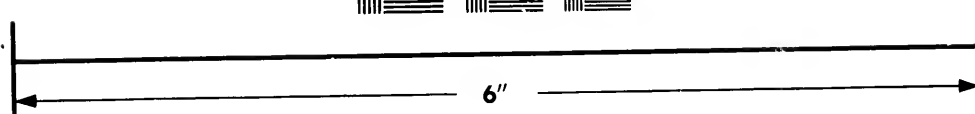
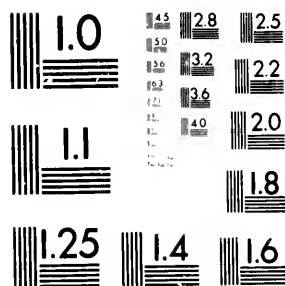


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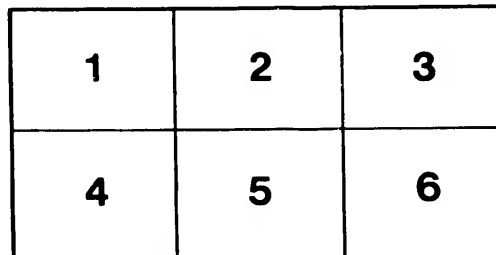
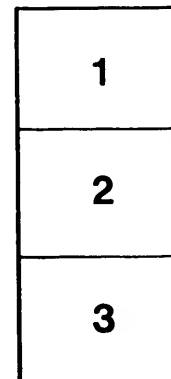
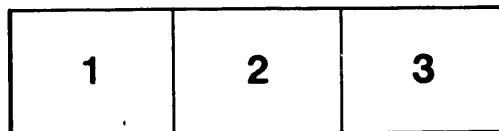
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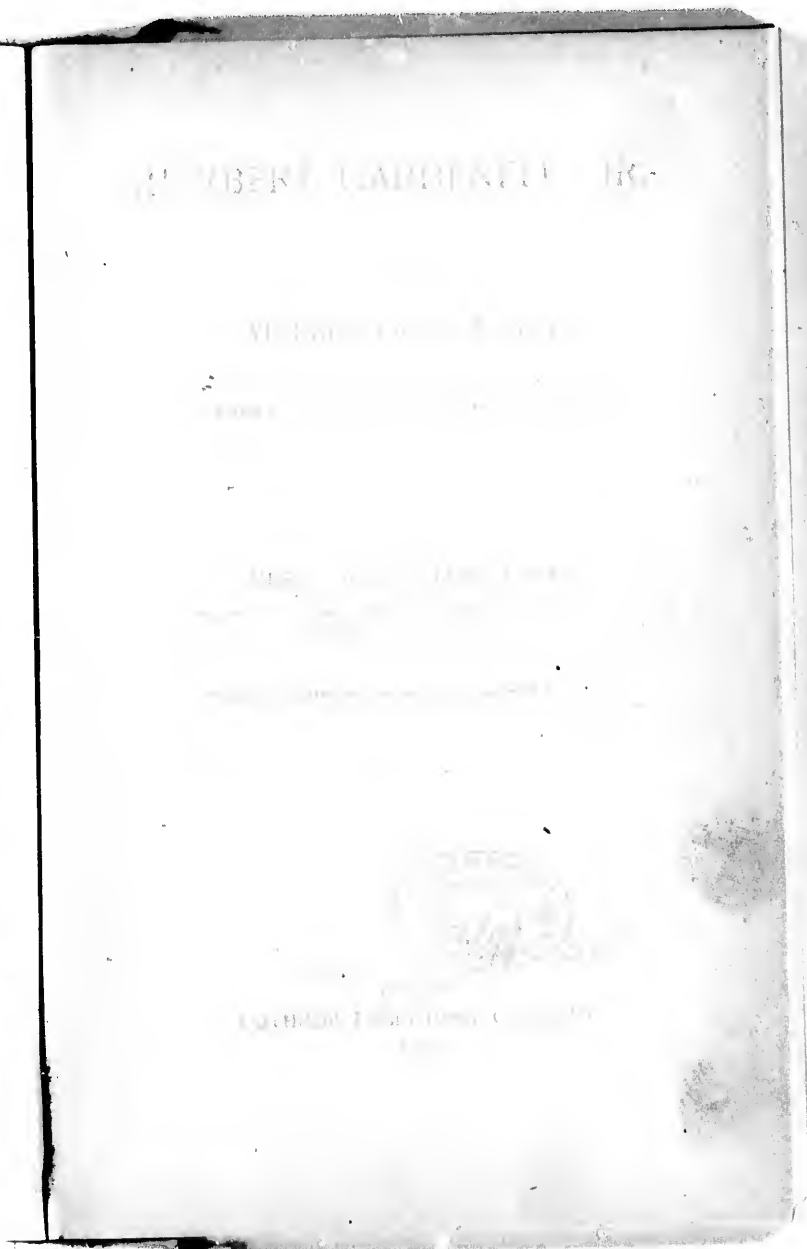
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"I want to see my happiness," he said. (See page 327.)



(See page 327.)





"(What to see my happiness," he said (see page 187.)

HERBERT GARDENELL, JR.

OR

YENSIE'S OLDEST SON

A SEQUEL TO "HERBERT GARDENELL'S CHILDREN"

BY

MRS. S. R. GRAHAM CLARK

*Author of "Yensie Walton," "Yensie's Womanhood,"
"Triple 'E,'" "Achor," etc.*

"Lord, Thy will be done—not this or that, but what Thou wilt."
—*Chrysostom.*



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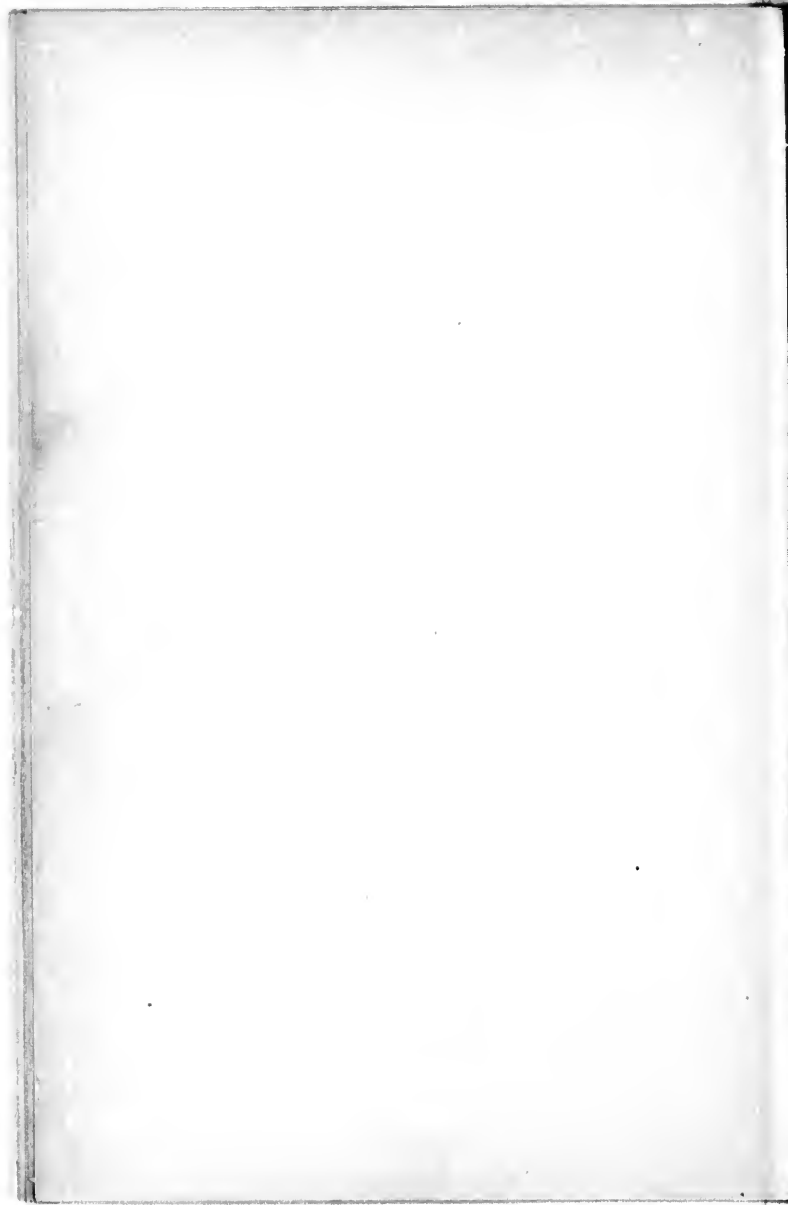
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TO
Dr. and Mrs. J. Warren Sowell,
MY KIND FRIENDS,
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR,
MRS. R. R. GNALAM CLARK.

300p 5.9



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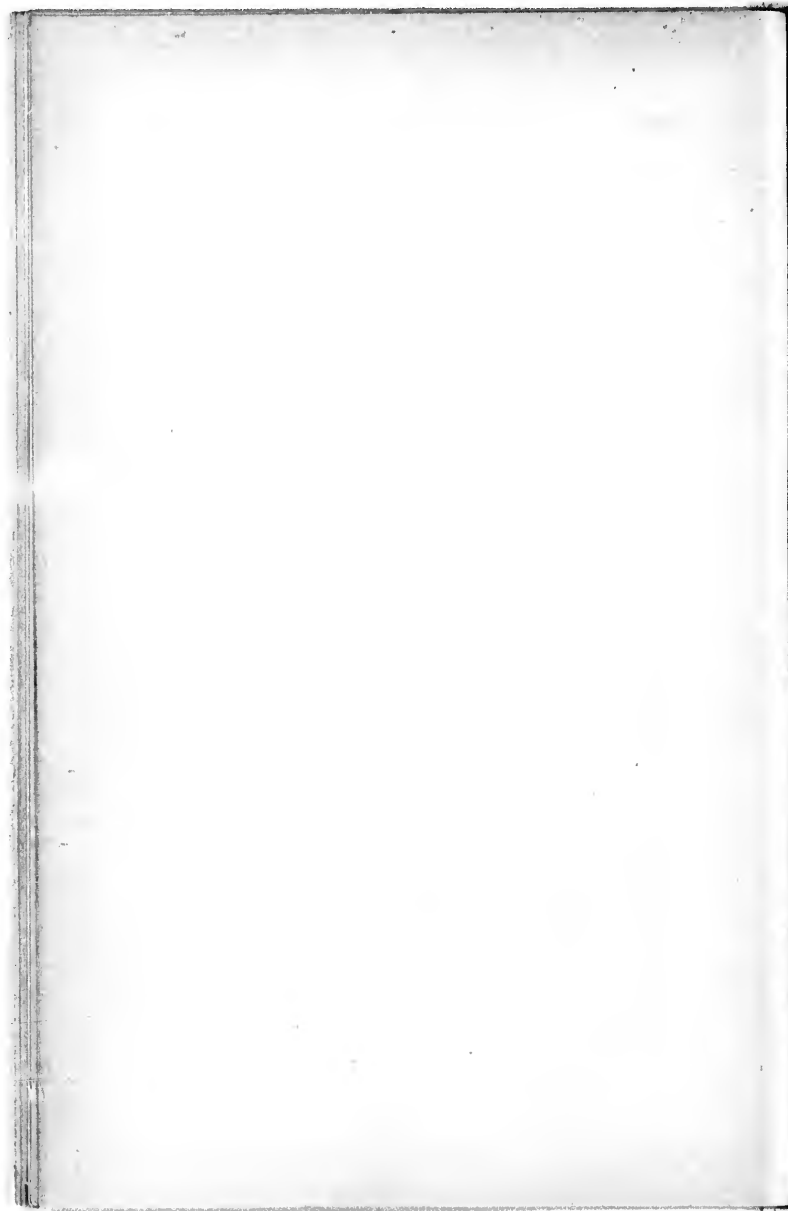
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HERBERT GARDENELL, JR.

CHAPTER I.

APRIL PICTURES.

"I said it in the meadow path,
I say it on the mountain stairs—
The best things any mortal hath
Are those which every mortal share.
The air we breathe—the sky—the breeze—
The light without us and within—
Life, with its unlocked treasures—
God's riches—are for all to win.

—LUCY LARCOM.

"FRED!"

"Yes, marm; thank you, marm; what would you like, thank you, marm?"

"Yourself, my ducksie. Come up and rest a moment."

A profound sigh from the bottom of the stairs, a merry twinkle in the blue eyes of the lady at the top, duplicated by another pair of eyes as blue belonging to a fine-looking, stalwart young man who was standing in the parlor door, just opposite the staircase.

"This moment, do you mean, Mumpsie dear, or some future moment when time is plenteous?" This from below.

"Now, my darling, this very minute. Put off your apron and come up to me; just for a little while, please," coaxingly.

"Don't wheedle me, Mumpsie dear; you know I can't stand it," answered the laughing voice. "I'd like to be obliging, but really I must be excused. 'Where duty calls or danger,'—you can finish the rhyme while I obey it. 'Work is pressing, time is flying'—trite but true"—*sotto voce*. "I'm afraid you'll have to be your own company this morning or descend to my level."

"Nonsense! I want to borrow you for a while. Drop your work."

"It won't drop, it's dough, and sticks!" in comical despair. "Bread and pies, dinner and dessert, cleanliness and order, all to be evolved from general chaos and the laws of evolution in one mortal's hands. Away with temptation! I can't be borrowed. With all due reverence, Mumpsie, I won't be borrowed, no, not for a moment," dramatically.

"Fred, how can you?"—the weight of the rebuke quite lost in the tremor of merriment that shook the lady's voice as she shook her head warningly at the laughing youth in the doorway.

"How can *you*, rather? The dough, rising in its wrath, threatens to overflow the pan; the vegetables *beat* their hands and *turn up* their eyes im-

ploring my attention, and wonder with me at such attempts to *cabbage* my time."

"Oooh!" The lady thrust a finger in either ear, but the prolonged exclamation was only greeted with the most musical of laughs.

"Did ever anybody hear of such a child before!" merry dismay in the questioner's voice.

"Fred you are naughty, disobedient, wilful. I don't want you; go back to your idols."

"Going, going, gone!" in exact imitation of an auctioneer's tone, accompanied by the soft rustle of a dress, and a young man leaning far over the balustrade caught just a glimpse of disappearing calico.

"She has gone back to her kitchen. Shall we retire gracefully from the field or descend and bring her up bodily? No," answering her own question, "the child is busy. I forgot there was bread to mould this morning. She thinks I am coaxing her up for a rest; I do sometimes. She overworks constantly; it is her way, and I have to look after her. No matter, my turn will come when she finds you here. She hasn't the slightest idea of your presence."

And the fair-haired, fresh-faced, pretty woman of five-and-forty put her arm through that of the young man, and leaning fondly on him, walked through the open door into the room beyond.

"Now," as they seated themselves in the cool parlor, "tell me about your mother and how you happen to be here."

"Mother was not well when I left home, has been rather poorly for some time," answered Yensie's son. "But I haven't heard a word from any one for a month or more."

"Herbert Gardenell, what do you mean?"

"That I have been a bohemian for some time past, here to-day and gone to-morrow, never quite sure where I would be next, so that my friends have not known where to address me."

"But here—surely they would write you here? And there hasn't a word arrived."

"No?" with a laugh. "That isn't wonderful, Aunt Jessie, though I am half afraid to tell you why. The fact is, I did not expect to come here myself two days ago."

"Herbert Gardenell, do I understand you? Visit the West and not come to us! What will your uncle say?"

"O, I'm here. Saying is useless now. You will simply have to make the best of me. I am doing the West on horseback, and for my health, and am not expected to have much of a programme, or to pay much attention to the proprieties. But, really, I got sick for a bit of something homey, so I came to you, auntie."

For answer auntie arose, and walking across the room, deliberately hugged the speaker.

"I should never have forgiven you if you had not come, you dear duplicate of your father. And now you are here prepare to remain awhile. Where is your luggage?"

"Ten miles distant. I just ran over to visit a few hours. A friend whom I have picked up on my journey awaits me there."

"Let him wait, or, better, come here and join you. I give you my word you shall not leave us under a month, and may as well surrender to your fate."

"Is Aunt Jessie among the prophets?" asked the young man smilingly. "And what will become of my riding?"

"Riding?—why, you can pursue that under my espionage. Fred is a superb horsewoman and acquainted with all the finest roads about here, and they are not few. She shall introduce you to the beauties of the place. It has changed a good deal since you were here. Elsie and Marian will be home in a couple of weeks, and you can see us all together."

The young man shook his head, but Mrs. Rogers paid no attention to that. She only drew her chair up to his side and inquired into the cause of his poor health.

"I'm not sure I have poor health," he replied, "I think, rather, I am suffering from the abuse of good health. It seems absurd for a great fellow like me to speak of illness. The fact is I have overworked. I have been supplying a couple of country churches and serving the Mission as well. I took no rest after graduation, and—well, Doctor Germaine ordered me off and threatened trouble if he saw my face under six months. Nothing

serious, auntie, but"—he laid his hand gently on one of hers—"but let any man sink himself for a couple of years in the slums of New York; wade through its slime, allow its needs, its agonies to reach his heart, and it will take much of God's wide world, the open stretches of earth and air, to restore him. Sometimes I felt myself a hundred years old—so freighted is every day there with years of woe—and only the Young Man at the right hand of God kept me by His Eternal Youth from premature decay and death. Aunt Jessie, the burden of so many sins and sorrows weighed me down. I could not seem to throw it off, it haunted me day and night. I do not wonder the world's sins killed the Son of God, so little of it would kill me."

"Is he not his father's son?" said Mrs. Rogers, tears in her eyes, as she drew his hand to her lips.

"I trust he is," replied the young man much moved. "But, Aunt Jessie, with all the little resemblance I know I have to both my heavenly and earthly fathers, I have learned this past year how much I lack of real semblance to either. Nothing so humbles me and nothing so exalts me, as the knowledge that, in spite of my deficiencies, I am still a son, a beloved son, and that I bear the family likeness."

Meanwhile, downstairs a maiden sang as she moulded her dough. Hers was a bright, piquant, rather than beautiful face: the cheeks round and dimpled, the brows dark and arching, the mouth

large and mobile, with teeth as white as milk when it opened in the laugh so natural to it.

The hair, off of the low brow, had a glow about it, a dash of red that made it warm and admirably fitted it to the face beneath, to which it clung in little natural puffs and rings. The gray eyes had the same suggestion of color about their usually merry depths, though just now they were grave enough with the thought that filled them.

"I wish I was like this dough, white and pliable, unspotted and easily moulded to His will," she thought. "I want to be good, I try, but I don't succeed," with a sigh. "I am just a blunderer. I wonder if mother really needs me? I am sure this bread needs moulding. I wonder over so many things, am sure of so few. If I were yielded wholly to God's will should I not know it better? But now I know so little only"—and here the sunny smile chased away every vestige of shadow—"only I know He loves me and I love Him." And then, clear as a bird's trill,

"O what a wonder that Jesus loves me,"

rang out on the morning air.

"Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,"—that had been her verse this morning. She pondered the little-big adverb as she lovingly patted the loaves and dropped them in the waiting tins.

"All!" Could it mean the bread, the dessert her father loved? "I make that for father, not

for Jesus." The white brows coming together. "Ought it to be for Jesus? How can I do that in His name?"

She had the sugar and butter in the bowl, and as she worked them soft her thoughts ran on.

"I might say grace over it. I often ask Jesus to make it turn out good. It is so nice to have Him in everything. I wish I always remembered. This pudding, this bread, in Thy name, Jesus," and then she broke forth into song again.

George Rogers' farm had added to, yes, nearly doubled itself, in the ten years since Herbert Gardenell—then a mere lad—had visited it last. A natural farmer, proud of his calling and his estate, everything was in the highest state of cultivation, and might well delight the most inexperienced eye. Acre after acre of precious grain stretched away on every side, fruit was abundant, vegetables not lacking. But the staple market-product was wheat.

The house was large, square, and commodious, without any outward adornment, but with an unmistakable air of substantial comfort and elegance. It was removed a distance from the stables and out-buildings, and stood on a little knoll, from which sloped away on either side the front graded lawns, beautifully green and smooth.

Behind the house the land fell away more abruptly, bringing the work-rooms in the basement. Not so bad a thing when windows and doors opened directly upon so much loveliness.

No rooms in the house had finer views or more refreshing, as the verdant slopes merged in the orchard beyond where the birds sang all day the summer long, and spring blossoms shed their beauty and fragrance. The flower-garden, too, was on that side of the house and added its rainbow of color to the general beauty.

Mr. and Mrs. Rogers were hearty, social, benevolent, large-hearted, and their dwelling seemed somehow to partake of these qualities. Every room in the house was large and light and cheery; the upper ones with windows reaching to the floors and opening on to the verandahs, and every appointment suggestive of wealth and comfort.

But neither parlor, library, drawing-room, nor chamber could outvie, in the estimation of the women of the family, the long, bright, cheerful dining-room finished and furnished in oak, its dainty table laid in silver and china; or the kitchen beyond with its yellow floor, flecked with sunshine, and its polished range reflecting all its surroundings, or the pantry with its rows of tins and its screened window opening on the wide-spread loveliness without.

This was Nason's domain, the one maid—for in a family of girls no more was needed. And never maid better appreciated the dignity of her position than this western spinster who ruled supreme, graciously permitting the ladies of the household to assist her when they so pleased, though she by no means considered their help necessary. She

preferred they should keep in their own part of the establishment, which she declared was above stairs. Indeed Nason was just a little jealous of interference, and rather resented the favor with which her young mistress's new departures in cookery were met.

But Nason was not there to frown or suggest this morning. The slight figure in its neat print dress, with arms made bare to the dimpled elbows, and hair pushed back from its flushed face, was not Molly Nason's. She never had such smiling lips and tender, brooding eyes. To Molly Nason

"A primrose by the river brim,
A yellow primrose was
And it was nothing more."

But Nason—as she insisted on being called, Molly was so common—was having a week's vacation to attend her brother's wedding, and Miss Fred, her rival in all culinary affairs, was having her own sweet will without let or hindrance.

And nature was having its own sweet will also, as this pretty, girlish bit of humanity well knew, as, mixing spoon in hand, she looked forth on the beauty spreading out from the window near which she worked.

The spring was wide awake this April day. She heard its voice in the chipper of birds and caught its glance through the opening apple-blossoms, and saw it nod as daffodils and tulips greeted each other and an early dandelion lifted its face to the

blue sky. All nature seemed joining the hymn that fell from the maiden's lips, and an artist might well have hesitated, had he been desiring to paint a symbol of spring, between the April face in the pantry window and the April scene on which she gazed.

But this girl was no idler. Her dainty fingers kept time with the rhythm of her song, and ere long the bread was in the oven and the dessert set away to cool, looking delicious enough to tempt the most capricious appetite.

Energetic women are generally systematic. Fred had her plans laid for to-day's work, and disliked to be thwarted in an undertaking. She had set her heart on the cleansing and rearranging of the serving man's chamber; it must be in order before Nason's return. The young lady had not been impressed with the maid's manner of caring for the room, and had gathered a host of little knick-knacks to brighten its appearance. She meant to begin with broom and mop as soon as the frosting for her dessert was prepared.

Alas for her scheming! As she dealt the sugar into the whites of her eggs her song went up, up, until it penetrated to where two people sat talking.

"She's a jewel," said the lady. "I could not do without her. Now that Nason is gone I am certain there wouldn't be anything in this house fit to eat if it wasn't for Fred, thanks to my bringing up. Oh! the time I had when I was first married and

my girl suddenly left me. Your uncle was a martyr. He ate what was set before him, asking no questions, for his wife's sake, and making no comments, though I will not say he did not occasionally make a wry face. I have my place, but it isn't at the cook-stove. Never marry a society girl, Herbert. She may do the best she can for you, but I fear she'll fail you on bread.

"I've insisted on all my girls learning a little about housekeeping, even Marian. You remember Marian, don't you—my little speckled gosling? She is just as smart as your father predicted she would be. It will always be a marvel to me where that child got her brains. She is off geologizing with a party of friends. Fred thought this was the time to spare Nason, who needed a rest and had a brother about to be married, though I fancy our acquiescence would have made little difference in her plans after she once decided them. It is only three days since she started, and it seems like a month. My poor little chick will be pretty closely confined until her return. It almost seems a revenge of fate when one remembers that I named Fred in desperate determination that there should be one boy in the family. I ought to have called her Benjamin rather, or something like it, something that would express the feminine of the son of my right hand. Let us go down and find her, Herbert."

CHAPTER II.

UNEXPECTED COMPANY.

"A spirit all sunshine, graceful from very gladness, beautiful because bright."

—CARLYLE.

ONCE below stairs, the young man was stationed in the entry while the lady sought her daughter. Through the open door, across the long, cool dining-room and kitchen, his eye caught a glimpse of the bright picture in the pantry beyond.

Bright! That was exactly the word that expressed the universal impression this young lady made on everybody. There was a warmth, a glow, a color about her that cheered and enthused the beholder instinctively, and brightened the very spot she occupied. Her mother often said laughingly that the only thing needed to make a dark room light was to bring Fredrica into it.

And now the piquant face peeped from the pantry door as her mother advancing, called her name. Flushed, sparkling, with a suggestion of mischief in the eyes and a hint of defiance in the voice, she said, "Here," as if answering to a roll-call.

"Mumpsie's poor little girl! her precious little drudge! her ownliest daughter!"

"Oh! what a wheedle wee it is!" with a ringing laugh as two lips were lifted to the mother's face. "What does it want, that it begins so judiciously?"

"Only its very ownest daughter to come up and brighten the lonesomeness of the parlors."

"Selfish Mumpsie! It can only be done at the sacrifice of duty. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" as the egg-beater whisked back and forth with merry recklessness.

"But I will help you by-and-by. It is early yet—I only want you a moment."

"And the little moments,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of Eternity."

sang the maiden, testing the stiffness of her frosting.

"But, darling, there's something special—a great treat in store for you."

Two hands were placed quickly over two ears, as Fred darted away, singing, "Yield not to temptation." She came back into sight presently, her precious pudding in her hands. "You may have a peep, mamma," she said.

"We have company, Fred."

"No!" a look of real dismay, as the face sobered for an instant.

"A gentleman."

"Tut," a laugh dimpling the face, "there isn't such an article within ten miles of this place, papa excepted." And a smile drifted over the grave face in the entry.

"Hush-h-h!"

"Oh, he can't hear. He's deaf in one ear, and can't see out of the other eye."

The tone of the girl's voice stirred the risibles of the listener until he feared detection.

"Fred!"

"Oh, it's no use to say Fred to me under such circumstances. Don't I know who it is? I despise him. Sunshine! What do you need of sunshine, when you have the full moon already shining in the room above? I will not see him, and that's the whole of it. I'm sick of his dangling after me, and 'dear Fredricaing' me. I'm not dear, and I hate Fredrica when he pronounces it, and he'd better be about his work if he has any, and if he hasn't he'd better go to Jamaica or Australia and find some. The very sight of his big round face and washed-out eyes turns my stomach, there!" and the speaker dropped the last spoonful of frosting on her pudding with decision.

"Fredrica!"

"Yes, marm."

"What makes you such a rattle-brain?"

"I'm not. I'm a sensible girl, and the moment I get the bread out of the oven, I'm going to

leave this house to your tender mercies, and run across lots to help father. You can boil the vegetables while you entertain Silas Crowden."

"Silas Crowden isn't here to be entertained."

"Thank goodness! I hope something awful will happen to him if he ever looks this way again."

"Is that right, ducksie?"

"No, it's wrong, but I should have to mean it if it was twice wrong."

"I forgot it until this minute, Fredrica, but your father told me last night, when he came home from the village, that Silas had slow typhoid fever, and was likely to be confined to the house for six or eight weeks."

The girl danced a pirouette, catching her mother about the waist, and whirling over the kitchen floor.

"I'm sorry to be so wicked," she cried, breathlessly, "but I can't lament his loss. He will have to submit to Miss Serena's gruels and graces at last, and it is hoped will note and appreciate her devotion, and accept the inevitable. Mumpsie, what a charming woman you are! I adore you! you make me happy! Shall I run upstairs and play you a tune to emphasize my appreciation and devotion?" And suiting her action to her words, the merry girl waltzed across the dining-room, through the hall, and bounded over the stairs.

Some one, who had stepped aside quickly, and hidden behind the entry door, followed, leisurely

and quietly, after the sounds of the piano assured him he could enter the parlor unperceived. She was singing, "Mrs. Lofty has her carriage," as he slipped up behind her and beside her mother, who greeted him with a smile.

"There!" with a twirl of the piano-stool, "I've almost forgotten—" then waves of crimson swept neck and face as she met the gravely amused eyes of the stranger.

"This is the gentleman I told you had come, Fredrica—your Cousin Herbert," said her mother.

The girl was almost reassured by the cordial greeting and warm hand-clasp. After all, he had not heard a word of her nonsense a while ago. That was a comfort, and she rallied her courage.

"I am very glad to see you, Cousin Herbert," she said, demurely.

"And yet unwilling to spare a moment of your precious time to welcome me," he replied.

"I did not know you had come. That was mamma's fault," shaking her head at that lady.

"She is not much changed, is she, Herbert? A trifle larger, perhaps."

"Not much!" in utmost surprise. "I should never have known I had met this young lady before, Aunt Jessie." The young-man's glance was certainly flattering.

"I see you are not much changed in feature," said Fredrica, turning the conversation from herself, "now that I have a good look at you; but how tall you have grown, clear beyond papa.

Mamma, why didn't you tell me Cousin Herbert had come? gentleman is such an appalling title."

Herbert laughed. Everybody laughed at Fred, because she said things in a way so unlike anybody except herself.

"Your cousin will hardly understand you, my dear," smiled mamma.

"I am willing to be misunderstood until he gets acquainted with the masculines of N—. You are going to make us a good long visit, I trust."

"As long as you will keep me," replied Mr. Gardenell, surprising himself and the plans laid so recently to go farther west in a few days, and Aunt Jessie smiled significantly.

It was a very pleasant company gathered in the parlor again after dinner had been discussed, and George Rogers's face shone with satisfaction.

"You look exactly as your father did when I first met him, and you must be somewhere near the age he was then. It makes me feel young just to see you. It was out at the corner he held his meetings and led me to Christ. I shall never be able to pay the debt I owe him. How I should like to look into his face. I suppose he isn't much changed."

"Not to me, sir. He neither grows old nor feeble, and I don't believe there's a gray thread in his hair."

"And your mother? Not well, you say? My, my, how time passes. I haven't seen her for years,

but I never think of her as any other than the young thing I used to hold in my arms and comfort when Aunt Sally Walton was trying her soul. I've had many a heartache over her, but not one since the hour she took her stand beside the man who would die to make her happy. Young man, your father and mother were the hero and heroine of the only real romance we ever saw lived out, Jessie and I."

"And the only one I ever wish to see lived," said Aunt Jessie. "It isn't easy to *live* romances," she added, "I'd rather read them."

"I don't know about that," was Mr. Rogers's reply. "There's something so substantial, so satisfactory, when the plot works out right in the real article, that we forget all that lay between."

But Mrs. Rogers shook her head. "I don't easily forget," she answered. "The heartache and the heart-break were real also, and so were the long, dark years. Women are not men, George."

Her husband smiled. "There's one little girl-woman among all you ministerial boys," he said kindly, "little Olive. She was a baby in arms when I last saw her. Let me see, she must be somewhere near Fred's age."

"Twenty-one last birthday," said Herbert.

"Is it possible? Then she's a year older than puss here."

And, "Is it possible!" echoed Mrs. Rogers. "She was only a wee thing in short dresses and sashes when I was last in New York. Do you re-

member, Herbert, how she refused to let me tie her hair-ribbon over because you had made the bow and sealed it with a kiss? The quaintest little bunch of sweetness, and so devoted to her brothers."

"She hasn't changed a bit in that respect, and has only improved in every other," replied the gentleman.

"There's a brother for you," laughed the lady. "Fred, how would you like such a champion?"

The young lady shook her head. "Don't ask, mamma; it's beyond me and takes too great a stretch of fancy. Cousin Herbert is the oldest child in his father's family, and at the head of the column, and cannot have the slightest idea of how uncomfortable a middle place may be. When there's so many before one it's hard to find opportunities for even the imagination to sprout. Think," with a doleful little sigh, "how any of you would feel to sit and hear these delightful people discussed and realize you had never seen one of them. There's Olive. I've wanted to see her all my life, but my turn to go East never came."

"It will, birdie," said Papa Rogers, comfortingly. "When I go you shall go with me."

"Oh, papa, I've taken that soothing draught so often it no longer has any effect. I have lost all faith in the coming age of 'when.'"

"It will appear, nevertheless," replied papa. "We'll make it come, if need be."

"Indeed we will," added Herbert. "I'll try

my hand at it; and I'm persistent, when I set out. In the meanwhile, you must comfort yourself with knowing me. I wonder if you remember when I was here before, as well as I do? I can see just how you used to look. Such a wee girl in short dresses, and with short hair parted on one side, and always determined to be counted in with the boys."

"That was mamma's fault. She almost made me believe I was a boy."

"Aunt Jessie," continued her nephew, "you almost took away my breath this morning, when this dainty little woman appeared, by saying, so innocently: 'Not much changed, is she, Herbert?'"

The lady laughed and looked her daughter over approvingly. "She's her mother's right hand," she said.

"And both her father's," added that gentleman. Whereupon the maiden arose immediately, and, going to his side, placed a kiss on his forehead.

"One might think Olive was here," laughed Herbert. "That is the way she rewards her favorites for their praises."

Awhile later, after Mr. Rogers had returned to the farm, and Fred to the kitchen and dinner dishes, Mrs. Rogers had much to say to her companion.

"Perhaps you think it strange I never took Fredrica with me when going East," she said, "but, the fact is, she couldn't be spared. She and I both away at once would be more than your

uncle could bear. She has always been his pet, besides being a natural housewife and care-taker. Think of it! The one I selected for my boy to develop such feminine tendencies! and that in spite of the fact that I parted her hair on one side until she resented it. Well, I am resigned to fate!"

"Elsie is our bookworm. It is a blessing she has found a man after her own heart. I suppose you know she is engaged to Professor Samuel Stewart?"

"Yes, you wrote mamma and she told me. You remember Elsie was Ray's ideal?"

"Yes, the dear boy. Then Marian—I want you to see Marian,—she's my baby and of course wonderful in her mother's eyes. She is not as homely as she used to be, but she is just as curious, and what she doesn't investigate isn't worth the trouble. If she had been a boy she would certainly have been an explorer or discoverer. As it is—think of it, Herbert, and the child not out of her teens!—she has the audacity to like Roy Burton. You remember Tom,—well, Roy is his brother and not twenty yet. He is not a student like Tom. Mrs. Burton says your summer here spoiled Tom for everything but college. But Roy likes the farm and will probably settle here, which will be one comfort if Marian and he continue to like each other.

"But there, I began on Fred and here I am stranded on Marian. I wanted to tell you about

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papa, my papa, who has taken such an extreme fancy for Fred, because she looks like poor mamma used to when she was a girl.

"It is strange none of us detected the likeness while she was a child. I think it must have been the tan and short hair that disguised her, for now that the discovery has been made everybody sees the remarkable resemblance.

"Two years ago we sent Fred to Mabel for the winter. Mabel was homesick, having only just been married, and beside, Fred wanted the advantage of a French teacher, as she had been studying the language at home. Her hair was quite long then and Mabel did it up after the fashionable mode, parting it in the middle. It quite transformed her.

"Aunt Jule was stopping in Chicago that winter and she was much struck with the child's likeness to mamma, who was Aunt Jule's favorite sister. She went home full of it, and papa came on here the following summer on purpose to see Fredrica. The child seemed to fit right into poor papa's stricken heart. He had been inconsolable since mamma's death, but Fred seemed to rouse and comfort him, and nothing would do but she must spend last winter with him in Philadelphia.

"He made it very pleasant for her, inviting Grace Germaine to visit with her awhile. He is much afraid she will not have everything her heart desires. He sent her that upright piano,

and last birthday a beautiful gold watch, and bids fair yet to spoil the little lady."

"Supposing she is of the spoilable kind, which I much doubt," said Herbert. "People used to predict that of Olive; the only girl, and such a pet with everybody. But somehow it didn't happen. She is simply the dearest little girl-woman in the world. The closer you hold her the better she grows."

"But isn't that due to the wise training she had, the firm but kind hand of so judicious a father and mother?"

"No doubt it is, largely," admitted the young man. "Yet I wonder if we all wouldn't improve if we got more of what the world denominates spoiling. Sugar preserves more things than vinegar, and we like them better. So love conserves virtue. It is my firm conviction that no petting which is the result of genuine unselfish love ever spoils its object; it improves it."

"Hear, hear," applauded a voice at the door, and a bright face peeped in. "Mamma is so afraid that Grandpa Crafton will spoil me. But he will not. He only makes me realize what a precious old darling he is, and hope I 'am not quite a stick. When one's sisters are all either belles, beauties, or women of talent, and one's self is so commonplace, a little spoiling is comforting and encouraging."

"To hear the child talk a person would never suppose her father had coddled her beyond all

telling and her mother lavished on her all the affection that her four brothers would have inherited, had they ever been born," cried Mrs. Rogers.

"True," laughed Fred. "But home-love is a little like a home-made dress, nice and comfortable, indispensable indeed, but hardly fitted for all occasions. Once in a while one wants something"—she hesitated.

"Better i" cried her mother, "the child wants to say better," putting her hands over her ears in mock distress.

"No, not better, mother, but different. Mabel and Elsie and Marian have that and more. So grandpa has his place and his grand-daughter's gratitude, thanks to the happy fate that gave me my grandmother's face."

CHAPTER III.

DARK CLOUDS.

"The strong must build stout cabins for the weak;
Must plant and stint; must sow and reap and store;
For grain takes root though all seems bare and bleak."
—EUGENE L'VE HAMILTON.

HERBERT GARDENELL'S stay at the pleasant home that opened so gladly to receive him, was destined to be much longer than anybody anticipated. The morning after his arrival he awoke with a strange languor holding body and brain. He found it hard to be companionable, and the stroll with his cousin, over a portion of the farm in the forenoon, so wearied him that he declined Mr. Rogers' invitation to accompany him upon a trip in the afternoon.

Truth to tell, the young man had been far from well for some days past, which was probably one source of the homesickness of which he had spoken to his aunt on his arrival. Unknown to himself a fever was creeping over him, and a kind Providence had led him, just in time, to the care and love he needed.

Next morning he felt worse, if anything, and

decided, at his hostess' urgency, to send for his baggage and friend, who still waited him in the next town. His friend forwarded his belongings, writing that he himself felt obliged to push on, reluctant as he was to part company with his fellow-traveller.

Herbert took an early opportunity to write home, saying nothing, however, about his lassitude and discomfort. It would soon pass away, he trusted, and in any case he would not alarm his parents. His great anxiety was to hear from them, so he begged them to write immediately, as he was hungry for news from home.

The letter was delayed, however, on its journey, as occasionally a letter will be. And so it happened that Olive Gardenell, who answered the postman's ring, held two letters in her hand that spring morning, and both addressed to her father.

They were both from N—— also, but one was directed in her brother's well-known chirography, the other in Mrs. Rogers'.

"O dear! I wish papa was here," said the girl, impatiently. "It seems as if I could not wait, it is so long since we've heard a word from Hervie. He must be at N——, but if so, why should Aunt Jessie and he write at the same time?"

Then she fell to examining the envelopes, and soon discovered that one had gone quite a way out of its straight course in reaching its destination, and had been posted fully two weeks before the other.

It worried her, she hardly knew why, and it was a very impatient little daughter who knocked at the study door an hour later, and about two seconds after she heard her father's step on the stairs.

"Letters! open them quickly, papa! Herbert's first," she said, following her rap immediately, without waiting for the usual "Come."

The gentleman did her bidding, taking her on his knee that she might read with him. It was very satisfactory, and she kissed it passionately as her father dropped it into her hands and reached for the other.

"If you were only here, Hervie," she sobbed, "everything would straighten out. As it is, I don't know how to live without you."

"Not with papa here, and a Greater?" asked Mr. Gardenell, gently, holding his daughter to his heart. "You are not alone, darling. I miss him, myself, more than I can tell, but surely we must all be glad that for a little while, at least, he is spared the sorrow that crushes us."

"I am selfish," she sobbed. "I keep thinking of how he would lift half the burden by his very presence. Yes, I am very selfish. Perhaps he need not know at all until the danger is over and mamma is better."

"Perhaps," assented papa, but not heartily, as his daughter hoped, but with a reserve in his voice that echoed her forebodings.

"This letter is old," Olive said. "Papa, you had better see what Aunt Jessie says."

Papa had not waited for permission, but was perusing the sheet with troubled eyes.

"What is it?" asked his daughter, pushing her head up between the paper and her father's face. "Any bad news, papa? why do you put on that look of fate?" the slender fingers smoothing the puckers between his eyes.

"Read for yourself, dear, and remember it is our Father who afflicts."

"O, papa, papa, papa! how can I bear it! Herbert sick, and with fever! what if he should die?"

"Read on, my dear. It is not a severe attack; a slow form of typhoid, your aunt writes, and the doctor trusts it will run low,—be more tiresome than dangerous. We must not forget how much worse it might be, little daughter. You and I must be trustful in the midst of affliction."

But the dear voice that spoke was low and broken, for this true heart was quivering under mighty pressures.

"And mamma, what if mamma—" Olive did not finish that question. "And Hervie gone—sick, too, and we unable to go to him—he has always had mamma before when he was ill."

"He has mamma's God, Olive."

"Yes, I know, but oh, papa, this seems too much to bear."

"He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," whispered papa. "I cannot see my way through these mists, darling, but I can trust the Hand that

leads me. It is not necessary to see as far as God sees, but only to trust as far as He sees. I thank Him. He requires nothing more than I can give."

"But, papa, it is all so new and strange: Herbert away, the boys at school, Ray in South America, mamma so sick she doesn't know us, and just you and I," she broke down.

"And God," supplied papa, "and His exceeding rich and precious promises." Then he took his girlie to his bosom and held her close, while he sang softly over her pillowed head these words from the German :

"Pain's furnace-heat within me quivers,
God's breath upon the flame doth blow,
And all my heart in anguish shivers
And trembles at the fiery glow :
And yet I whisper 'As God will,'
And in the hottest fire hold still.

"He comes and lays my heart, all heated,
On his hard anvil, minded so :
Yet in His own fair form to beat it
With His great hammer blow by blow,
And yet I whisper 'As God will,'
And in the hottest fire hold still.

"He kindles for my profit purely,
Affliction's glowing, fiery brand:
For all His keenest blows are surely
Inflicted by a Master hand.
And so I whisper 'As God will,'
And in the hottest fire hold still.

"I will not murmur at the sorrow
That only longer-lived would be :
The end may come and that to-morrow,
When God hath wrought His will in me.

And so I whisper 'As God will,'
And in the hottest fire hold still."

"Papa, I wish I was like you! I will try to bear patiently. I do want to love God's will, but I don't seem to be able. I thought I could never question or flinch again, He has been so near and precious to me. But when mamma's voice is gone and Herbert's, I find my boasted strength gone too, and I am only an added burden to your love."

"But one it could hardly spare these days, dearest." Then gently, humbly: "Olive, we all find ourselves weak under any real, present strain. God only is strong, and we as we take hold of Him. Don't berate yourself, darling, I often find my comfort in the comfort wherewith I try to comfort you."

And indeed they had need of comfort these days. Over the home, so many years guarded and favored, had fallen a terrible cloud. The mother, idol alike of husband and children, was smitten, and now lay hovering on the very borders of the grave.

She had long been ailing, losing strength. Months of weariness and exhaustion had been followed by weeks of almost constant distress and unrest; now very dangerous symptoms had appeared, and the doctors were both alarmed and puzzled. Two eminent physicians, one of them Mr. Gardenell's tried friend, Horace Germaine, hung over her: two nurses, one for the night, one for the day, were ever beside her. As yet neither of these

skilled helpers had given her anxious friends any assurance of recovery, any grounds for hope.

But Mr. Gardenell asked no man's permission to hope. That was his by the inalienable right of his second birth. A child of God could do no less. Night after night he knelt before Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death, presenting his petitions, holding his loved one up for His healing touch.

As Olive had hinted, they were peculiarly situated. Harry was in his first year at college. Eddie, who was preparing to enter, had been sent to Mr. Campbell's, whose namesake he was, at the beginning of his mother's illness.

She was extremely sensitive to the slightest noise at that time, and his father, feeling the sombreness of the home atmosphere unwholesome for the growing youth, sent him away as much for his own sake as his mother's. Both these boys knew their mother lay very ill; as yet they had not been informed of the extremity of her danger.

Raymond was in South America, representing the Mission Board of his peculiar denomination, and making necessary inquiries into its work. It was an unusual position for so young a man to occupy. But his honored father's long and close connection with the Missionary Board and its various enterprises, his large sympathies and critical knowledge of the fields and the workers, had much to do with this offer to his son.

Then, Gatty, the young preacher's wife, had

been failing in health, and travel in a warmer climate had been advised. This opportunity looked like a providential opening, and Raymond dared not reject it, troubled as his heart was over his mother's condition. After consultation with his father and much prayer, he decided to go, and was now with his wife and babe in a distant land.

They had heard from him several times. He was bearing them up before the throne constantly, for he realized how precarious was his mother's health. She was his idol, and he had been sorely grieved, when last he saw her, at her loss of appetite and flesh. Letters had confirmed him in his fears, and he waited anxiously to learn how she prospered.

So Olive and her father were the only members of the family at home to encourage and help each other. From Stanton Cartwright, Herbert's old college-chum, they heard quite often. They had not seen his face now for something like a year. He was dividing his time between teaching school and the study of medicine. "Plying one to get money to proceed with the other," as he wrote Herbert. "It is such an advantage for a missionary to be able to administer to body as well as soul, that I have decided to add physic to my long line of capabilities, and play Luke to my Paul." For these two friends hoped before many days to proceed to the mission field together; and Africa was their Land of Promise.

"I think we must write at once to Herbert and

Aunt Jessie," said Mr. Gardenell, after a second perusal of the letters. "And, my darling, you had better give brother one of your cheeriest epistles, without any allusion to mamma. It will be necessary for him to know something of her condition, as he would surmise more from her silence, if unexplained, than any of us would think best. I will try to tell him enough of the truth to ease his mind, without arousing his fears. The rest we must trust to God."

And Olive, summoning all her courage, full of tender solicitude for her brother, and filled with desire to see his face, wrote such a sweet, whimsical bit of an epistle as only she knew how to compose, and that met her father's fullest approbation.

She was a brave little woman, childish as she appeared at times; able to put aside her heart and her fears also, where another's good was involved, capable of highest sacrifice for those she loved. Some day, please God, she would learn to love the world, in some measure, as Christ loved it, and then she would sacrifice for those she knew not, as now she did for those she cherished.

It was well the letter was written and sent before the darkest days came, and before Olive was aware of the real extent of her mother's danger.

Indeed, she never quite knew this until it was past. For her father shielded her constantly, relieving the nurses himself after his wife reached the place of greatest peril; banishing his little daughter wholly from the sick-room, that she

might be spared what wrung his own brave heart, the deathly face and almost unseeing eyes of the suffering one.

He had many reasons to urge for this, thus reassuring the child. "Mamma did not often recognize any one now; it was better to spare herself all she could, and be ready to serve when her service would be valued. He was stronger than she and able to turn and lift mamma without help, when she needed change; and then she had so much to do."

Fortune favored him in his scheming, for, just now, the housework pressed Olive sorely.

The cook, who had been with them for years, had gone to join a brother in making a new home. She had deferred her departure for months, hoping her mistress would rally, but was forced at last reluctantly to leave them. So Olive was getting along with inexperienced help.

The second girl had left some time before, and she was doing that work herself; glad of anything that would take up time and keep her from thinking. Her anxiety affected both her sleep and appetite, and, had it not been for her father, she would have given up and been sick herself.

But he must be cheered and comforted. It broke her heart to see his white, patient face. She knew he spent most of his nights in his study, and hardly ate enough to keep a mouse alive. She wished she knew how to concoct the dainty little dishes with which the old cook used to tempt his failing appetite.

Olive had been out of school now for over a year. Mother and daughter had laid many plans for that year, but none of them had come to perfection. Among others this maiden was to have taken lessons in cooking and housework. There had been a day when her muffins and cake were in demand among the boys. But that was before she went away to the seminary and learned so many new things that such knowledge was crowded out. She meant to brush up and add indefinitely.

But, O dear, how the time had gone! What with visiting the sick and poor of Herbert's mission and papa's church, to say nothing of old friends, and a Sabbath-school class, and a secretaryship of the Y. P. S. C. E. Then Harry and Eddie made demands on her time, and Raymond had to be written to and visited occasionally. Best of all was dear Herbert, to whose plans and sympathies she was always so freely admitted.

He had fitted up the old nursery for himself as a sort of private study, the room off of it serving as his chamber. There she had spent many happy hours, sewing or reading while he wrote, happiest of all when he read to her some paragraph from a sermon or asked her opinion on some suggestive thought. She sang for and with him at the Mission, prepared him bandages and jellies for his sick, made clothes occasionally for his destitute babies.

Then mamma's failing health made it neces-

sary for her daughter to spend much of her time beside her. The lessons in cooking went unlearned, she became companion and nurse instead.

And now, alas, even this coveted employment was taken from her, and only now and then a glimpse of her mother's face accorded her—a glimpse that dismayed her more and more and sent her ever away with an increasingly heavy heart.

Would her mother die? How could they live without her? Oh for Herbert! This had been her secret cry for weeks; she had sobbed it out aloud in the seclusion of his study, with his old Bible pressed close to her lips. Any hardship would always be more bearable to Olive with Herbert beside her; he had never before been silent to her cry.

There was more in store for this little lady. The new Biddy in the kitchen was ignorant and easily alarmed. The gloom and quiet of the house oppressed her, there was something portentous to her in the coming and going of so many doctors.

Fresh developments of Mrs. Gardenell's disease were seriously disturbing her physician's expectations. Internal hemorrhage had set in, robbing her of what little strength yet remained, threatening to sweep away the last vestige of hope. A counsel of physicians was called.

The atmosphere of the house became dense with dread, the very air was pregnant with possibility.

Life was breathless in the presence of death. Bridget's last remnant of courage oozed away. Fear took hold of her vitals. It was useless to reason with her, to explain that there was nothing contagious in the disease. There was contagion in the dread, and it had seized her. The night the counsel met she refused to stay under the roof and was not to be found in the morning.

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CHAPTER IV.

"FOR HERBERT'S SAKE."

"Don't lose gladness ; every hour
Blooms for you some happy flower."

THAT night! How long it was! Would it ever end! How glad Olive was when at last she saw the first glimmer of daylight!

She had counted the hours as they passed, five, six. Surely Bridget would be back by this time. The child had not removed her clothes, all night she had lain in them. She rose now and crept down softly over the stairs. How chilly it was! She wrapped a heavy shawl about her, and tip-toed noiselessly across the long hall and down the basement stairs.

What a kitchen! No fire, no Bridget! It was early yet, she would be here presently. Olive ascended to the sitting-room and lay down on the couch. How dismal it all was! Oh for Herbert! She hid her face in the pillows and tried to sleep.

Did she get a nap? Surely the clock struck eight when next she counted its strokes. The maid would be here by this time. Another

journey to the kitchen. It was as cheerless, as forlorn as ever. No Biddy had yet appeared.

What did it mean? Could it be that Bridget had left them altogether? Olive went up to the girl's chamber on a voyage of discovery, and found that she was indeed forsaken. Every drawer in the bureau had been emptied, the clothes-press also, Bridget's belongings and her carpet-bag had disappeared. Poor child! She dropped into a chair and cried her fill.

But what possible use was that with the kitchen fire unbuilt, and not a thing ready for breakfast. She wiped her eyes and descended once more. She found her father clearing out the range, and to his look of inquiry answered:

"Gone, bag and baggage."

"Well, she was not much good. We will find some one else," said the gentleman comfortingly. "I guess we can manage to get nurse some breakfast, and then I will go to an intelligence office. I met Mary Ann yesterday. She is very much troubled because she cannot come to your help. But she has the house full of boarders, beside her own two boys, and says her mother is only one more to care for, and not fit to be trusted with any work these days. Perhaps Mrs. Longby will come and help you to-day."

"Oh, papa, please!" imploringly. "I would rather do anything than have her. Her tongue would distract me just now. I will manage until we find some one else."

They got some kind of a meal on the table between them. Then, as her father went to relieve nurse, Olive said: "Papa, I hardly dare ask what the doctors have agreed."

"I do not know myself," was the gentle reply. "When they left at early dawn they had come to no satisfactory conclusion. I expect Dr. Germaine at any moment. I spent most of the night at your mother's side. I think she is no worse."

"Nor any better?" tearfully.

"Nor any better. Only sometimes, not to go backward is an indication of slight gain."

That dreadful kitchen! Olive worked at it steadily for an hour, and then it didn't look much better. The ashes, the stove, the dishes. How did one person ever manage so much?

She left it at last to sweep the dining-room floor. She had just dusted that room to her satisfaction, and was proceeding to the sitting-room, when a rap came at the back door. A rap, surely, for it was repeated, and something in Olive Gardenell's bosom gave a thrill of rapture as she ran to answer the summons.

"Oh, Stanton, you old darling! I'm so glad to see you; come in. I've wanted Herbert so much, and now you've come, and that's the very next best thing." And there she was, crying and laughing and clinging to the young man's coat in an exceedingly delightful fashion.

"I'd have been here before this if I had known what a welcome was waiting me," he laughed.

"Are you so very glad, little girl? Let me play Herbert a little farther," lifting her up until her eyes met his, and kissing her right on her lips.

"Fie! Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Stanton Cartwright? A great fellow like you taking such an advantage. I don't believe I'd ever have liked you if you had acted like that before."

"Not even if it was for Herbert's sake?" queried the laughing young man. "You see, I never was hugged for Herbert before, and it struck in. There, don't frown. I'll be real good, as good as anybody can be who is not Herbert," taking her arm and leading her into the sitting-room.

"Oh dear, not in here, Stanton. You don't know—you can't imagine how parts of this house look. Mamma is very sick," with a trembling voice.

"I know, dear. I met Mr. Munson and he told me. That is why I went to the side door and knocked—not to disturb her with the bell."

"Oh, it's muffled—has been for weeks. But she wouldn't mind it if it was not. No noise can trouble her now."

"No, my poor darling, is it so bad as that?" said the alarmed gentleman, drawing her to his knee, and gently stroking her hair.

"Oh, but it is," she sobbed, breaking down utterly under his sympathy, and hiding her head on his bosom. "The doctors were here half the night, Ray is in South America, and Herbert sick

at N——. Oh, Stanton, my heart has been so heavy, and I'm so glad you've come."

"I'm glad, too," answered the gentleman. "But what can you mean by saying Herbert is sick? I had a letter from him a few weeks ago, and he was quite well then."

"Read this, and see." Olive drew Mrs. Rogers' letter from her pocket, sliding from his knee, and looking very much abashed.

"If I hadn't felt so badly I would not have acted so foolishly, Stanton," she said, apologetically.

"Don't excuse yourself, Ollie. It isn't necessary. I think I am an old enough friend of the family not to need apologies," he replied, smiling. "You must not force me to say I'm rejoiced you feel badly—that wouldn't be polite. Yet I cannot possibly regret that you have at last accorded me a few of the privileges I have so long coveted."

"It was for Herbert's sake," she said, timidly.

"Yes, I know," his brown eyes twinkling mischievously, "I owe it all to Herbert."

"And because you were so much together, I never see you without thinking of him."

"Couldn't you go just a step farther, Ollie, and add that you never see him without thinking of me?"

"No, I couldn't," she answered shortly, and flushing hotly. "I thought you wanted to read that letter."

She walked about the room, straightening things here and there, her hands trembling a little, in unison with the flutter at her heart.

"You must not let this worry you," the gentleman said presently, looking up from the sheet. "Herv is a strong fellow, you know, and young. Then these slow fevers are apt to be more tedious than dangerous. We shall have him all right presently. What are you doing, Puss?"

She was standing with her back toward him, idling.

"Nothing," she replied. "But I ought to be doing everything. I don't know where to begin. I'm the only person in this house that can work——"

"Except me," he slyly interjected.

"And there isn't a thing done," she went on, ignoring the interruption. "Cook left last night, we haven't a maid, and this room needs some sweeping and dusting. Then there's dinner to get," dolefully.

"Is that all?" cheerily.

"All?" flashing up. "What more would you want?"

"Oh, I'm not particular, only, Ollie, I can help you out with so much easily."

"You! what could you do?"

"Sit right here in this big chair and rest, while I show you how I can sweep and dust. Where is the sweeper? Oh, yes, I remember, in the hall closet."

He was out and back in a flash, a sweeping-cap that hung on a peg in the closet in one hand. He adjusted it over his brown curls at the mirror, and turned with great gravity to meet her laughing eyes.

"What makes you act so ridiculously, Stanton, and mamma so sick? It's wicked to make me laugh, even for a minute."

"Who says so? not mamma herself; she would be glad to know her little girl could forget her sorrow for a while. But I'm not making you laugh, I am getting ready to work."

And work he did. Olive watched in surprise, as with a few deft movements he took up the dust and threads on the carpet, rearranged the pillows on the couch, straightened the books on the table and what-not.

He borrowed her duster, and in an incredibly short time stood ready for something else, while everything in the room looked fresh and bright from his touch.

"You are smarter than any girl we ever had and much tastier," she exclaimed admiringly.

"Of course. What did you expect from my mother's son?" he laughed. "Now if you will take my arm we will descend to the kitchen, empty our sweeper and prepare for dinner. What are we going to have for dinner, mademoiselle?"

"Steak with vegetables; the only thing I know anything about. I believe there is a pie, baked yesterday, and papa will bring home fresh bread.

If it wasn't for nurse I wouldn't have attempted any dinner. Papa and I don't care for food."

"But I do," cried the youth. "Don't forget I am here now and must be fed, and you must eat whether you wish or not. If I don't broil a steak that will tempt you, then I am not worthy of my reputation as a cook."

"What a comfort you are, Stanton!"

"Am I not?" diving his head into the pot-closet and drawing forth a kettle. "Let's see, the vegetables are in the cellar, I suppose?"

"I suppose they are," assented Olive, following him like a child, diverted for the present from her sorrow. "Where did you learn so much?"

"At home, helping my mother. She was sick a good deal and could not afford help."

"What a blessing! not the sickness I mean, but —but—"

"The lack of help?"

"Yes, I wish I knew as much, but I am going to learn. Mamma thought I ought, before going out either into the world or the mission field."

"It certainly is a good thing to be handy," answered Stanton, bowl and knife in hand, as he began paring the potatoes. "Just think what a shining example I will be to the darkies in Africa, who expect their women to do all the work."

"You will have to eat a bit of this steak, or I shall refuse to help you wash the dishes," said this same young man an hour later as he set an appe-

tizing morsel before the maiden. "There, isn't that nice."

"I never tasted better," she affirmed, eating it with relish.

"And now, please," standing before her as she finished the last mouthful, "I beg your pardon for asking such a favor, but couldn't you give the cook just the tiniest kiss for his own sake and not Herbert's." Bending so close, it would not have been difficult to satisfy him.

"Perhaps I ought, you have helped me so much, but—but—" she hesitated— "I couldn't think of leaving out Hervie. It will have to be for both of you, Stanton."

"Then it will have to be double," he responded cheerfully, "but I shall not mind that."

CHAPTER V.

A PRESCRIPTION.

"There will be no Christian without a Gethsemane, but every praying Christian will find that each Gethsemane has its angel."

T. BINNEY.

MR. GARDENELL did not come home to dinner. He was closeted with Horace Germaine, and that gentleman's face was only less anxious than his own.

"We have done all we could, Gardenell," he said tremulously. "I do not need to tell you, who know what your wife has been to my life, that I have exerted my utmost skill to spare her to your love."

"I know, Horace, I know," the clergyman touched the doctor's hand lovingly. "But now, what now? Don't tell me you have given her up?"

"Into the hands of God," answered the doctor with emotion. "We have exhausted every available means, we know of only one other thing that offers any possibility of help, and it is so uncertain in her case that it is almost cruel to mention it to you."

"Name it," cried the gentleman under his breath, his extreme quiet bespeaking the excitement under which he was laboring. "It must be tried, however uncertain."

"It shall be tried," was the reply. "It is transfusion, the injecting into her veins of blood from some healthy person. Gardenell, I want you to understand me. While this operation has been successful in many cases, it is extremely doubtful whether it will be so or not in your wife's case, as her vitality is very low. If it fails I know of nothing else."

"It must not fail, it will not." I have asked for hope, just hope, and you give it. Horace," looking up into the doctor's eyes, "Horace, you know what I wish to ask?"

"Yes, and I emphatically refuse to listen to your request," was the prompt reply.

"And why?"

"You ask that? Listen. Because it is written 'Thou shalt not kill.' One drop of blood less at your heart would mean instant death."

Something like an unuttered moan passed over the minister's face. "The will of the Lord be done," he said brokenly. And his long-time friend put both arms about his shoulders.

"It is not like you to yield to despair while God lives, my dear pastor," he said. "I want you to know how gladly I would put my own life at her disposal did I dare. But some things are forbidden even to love. We are not to commit suicide

to spare the life of our dearest. If God sees that transfusion will avail, He will certainly furnish the needed substitute, and be sure I will leave no stone unturned to find a suitable person."

Mr. Gardenell had no heart to meet his daughter, and quietly let himself into his house, going at once to his study and his knees. No one could help him now but God. He forgot dinner, forgot sermon, forgot everything but his need and God's ability to meet it. He forgot even the hungry cry of his heart after his first-born. Like Olive he had learned to lean heavily on Herbert, his absence at this time had been a dire calamity. Horace Germaine had said :

"If Herbert was here and in his usual health, I would unhesitatingly use him," thus voicing the foremost thought of this father's heart. He was rebuked immediately.

"If—if!" Mary and Martha of old used that impotent little word too, but it was in respect to their Lord. "If Thou hadst been here my brother had not died."

Was he daring to put another in the place of his Christ? Could any other but God avert death? Was He straightened for means? Could it be possible he was learning to substitute any other for his Maker? Unconsciously placing his dependence on this son God had given him, rather than on the Giver Himself? Was it necessary for God to so smite, and so strip him of all his props, to teach him there was help in no other?

Humbled, broken, he lay on his face before his Creator. He would accept the will of God, he would not even prefer anything before it. He would ask only that it be fully accomplished in him and his. "Not my will but Thine be done," he whispered brokenly, and found the Saviour's added words trembling on his tongue: "If it be possible let this cup pass from me."

There was no sin in that spontaneous prayer. It had been purified long since by its passage through the lips of the Holiest. It brought to this man, by its very utterance, as it does to all others, something of the Divine Hope and the Divine Submission that stirred the breast of the Divinely-human Brother who first breathed it.

He remembered with a moan—this human follower of that more than human Christ—that for the one who first offered this petition, it was not possible the cup should pass, it must be drained. "Even so, Father," he said, and then his heart broke as the old story of Abraham and Isaac stood out before him, and the Spirit whispered that God spared His servant's heart and son when He could not spare His own.

His whole soul was melted under the realization of such love, and he lay with upturned face, over which crept smiles like rainbows amidst his tears, as his being responded to the mighty touch of his gracious God. Whatever should follow, he must always thank God for this hour of privilege, of revelation. Whatever should follow his hand was

firmly clasped in His who held the world and held his darling's life as well. He had proven the words of another: "Sand-banks and cliffs, whirlpools and tempests, dark nights and thick fog! And yet, on such a sea, I find myself as well as those who rest in the haven."

Perhaps it was the unusual company downstairs that made Olive oblivious to her father's homecoming. His step, however guarded, had never before escaped her listening ear. As it was, the two below waited in blissful ignorance of his vicinity until Stanton suggested that nurse must need her dinner and ought to be relieved.

This was a duty from which Olive shrank since her mother had been so low. She dreaded to meet the still, white face; it made her heart sink. The young man needed only a glimpse of her own face to understand this.

"I would go myself, Olive," he said, "only nurse might object to a stranger, one she had never met before. I will soon be in a position to relieve you."

"You do not think I am unwilling to do anything for mamma?" she answered. "You must not suppose it would be hard for me to take her place if I could. If I might suffer for her, instead of her, I would do it gladly! But, O Stanton, that sick woman up there isn't mamma. She is hollow and old, and has no resemblance to my mother. If you should see that face just once it would haunt you as it does me, driving away all sleep and peace."

But she went, and presently nurse appeared, and while she ate the delicious steak and delicate toast her gentleman waiter had prepared, he learned all he had wished to know of the sick-chamber and its occupant.

"Have the doctors given up all hope?" he questioned.

"Not quite. From something Professor Germaine dropped this morning I should judge he had decided to try transfusion."

"And you think it may prove successful?"

"I have known it to work wonders occasionally," she replied. "Mrs. Gardenell is very weak, her life seems to hang by a single thread. But be sure if anything can strengthen that thread it will be done. Such devotion as not only Mr. Gardenell and his daughter, but these physicians have shown, I have seldom seen equalled. They have fought desperately over every inch of ground she has lost, and if she dies it will be in spite of the most determined effort to save her."

It was not long after the dinner dishes were washed that Stanton made his next proposition.

"I am going out while you take a nap, Ollie. Can't you lend me a latch-key so I need disturb no one by my return?"

"No!—Yes! Oh, don't go away, Stanton!"

"Not even if business of importance demands my attention?" he asked.

"Why, if you must I suppose you must,"—slowly. "But come right back. It seems as if I could

not bear to lose sight of you, now you've really come."

"I will never forsake Micawber," said the young man, drolly. "I'm here to stay, Princess, to stay until the danger is past and your mother begins to improve."

"Do you really think she ever will?"

"I almost know she will," was the reply, and the glad light in the brave eyes did as much as his words towards assuring the girl, though she answered, doubtfully: "You haven't seen her yet."

"I don't need to," he replied. "I am so glad I am here and can take care of you all. Now, little girl, promise me to go straight to your room when I am gone, and lie down."

"I can't sleep if I do. I haven't slept for nights."

"Poor child! No wonder your nerves are shaky and you don't know how to hope. We shall change all that, please God. You will sleep to-day; you will try at least, to please me?"

"I hate to go up there alone, Stanton, the house is so still and so dreary!"

"Olive, if Herbert assured you that there was hope for mamma, and bade you go sleep, trusting his word, what would you do?"

"I would believe him; I would have to."

"And what more?" his eyes holding hers steadily.

"I would obey him."

"I take Herbert's place, do I not?" smiling.

"Now I assure you that I believe God has answered prayer for your mother, and that before long she will be herself again. I ask you because you trust God and believe me, to go lie down and rest; get strength ready for the days when she will need you. Will you obey me?"

"I will try."

"That's a good little Princess! Now I have a prescription which, if followed, will ensure you rest. See, I will write it down."

He took from his pocket a pencil and scrap of paper, and, after scribbling a few words, slipped it into her hand. "Read this on your knees when you reach your room, put it under your head for a pillow, and rest."

She followed him to the hall, held his coat and hat, lifted the soberest of faces for his farewell kiss, and winked hard to keep back the tears when he shut the door.

"I am foolish, weak, wicked!" she said. "Distrust of God must be the sin of sins; and I, somehow I can neither pray nor believe." She did not consider how the long strain of these weeks had been sapping her strength, as she thus condemned herself.

Mechanically she turned to go upstairs, her paper-slip forgotten in her hand. As she came to the study door she paused. Why not peep in? Perhaps papa was there. She did not expect to see his face, but it met hers. A face so radiant with some inner joy that she cried out, eagerly:

"Is she better? Do the doctors hope? Oh, papa, am I the only faithless one?"

He drew her to his arms. "Poor little one, your body clogs your soul! You are utterly weary. No, my darling, nothing is changed, mamma is no better: the doctors offer little hope. But God's will is sure to be done, and I know—I know without a shadow of a doubt"—a thrill of exultancy trembling through his voice—"I know His will is the best thing that can come to you, to her, to me."

And, clinging to his bosom, Olive shed freely the tears she had long restrained. Was not this the precursor of death, this strange uplifting of her father's spirit? Was not God preparing him for the blow so sure to fall?

The gentleman did not disturb her. His gentle hand stroked her soft hair occasionally, but he was glad she could weep; for youth there is healing in tears. By-and-by her sobs ceased, and she lay, weak and quiet, on his bosom.

"Did you come to papa for any thing special?" he asked then.

"No. I was going up to lie down awhile, and thought I would peep in. I did not know you had come."

"Let me take you to your room. Perhaps you can sleep now, my tired darling." And gathering her closer in his arms he carried her to her chamber and deposited her on the bed. He arranged the pillows under her head, drew a heavy wrap

over her and whispered, "now sleep and think no more," kissing her eyelids over her eyes. A moment after she was alone.

Almost too weak to move, she lay quite still, but she did not try to sleep. She knew now that her mother would die. She had feared it for weeks, at last she was sure. But she had no more tears to shed. She turned over wearily, and the little paper billet fell from her hand.

Stanton! She had forgotten to speak of his coming to her father, forgotten his message, his bidding. Lifting the tiny slip she read: "I will trust and *not* be afraid." Isa. 12: 2. The emphatic words were underscored.

She read the words over and over. Surely they were meant for her. Did not God think of this day and her sorrow, when He inspired His prophet to write them? Why not? If He wrote of the sufferings of Christ seven hundred years before His birth, took cognizance of her sin and prepared a remedy for it, why not of her woe also, and its comforting, though these words were written more than two thousand years before her sense of need?

Somehow the unfailling, ever-present care of her God took hold on her heart—His thoughtful love for the weakest of His own. "A sparrow shall not fall on the ground without your Father."—"Ye are of more value than many sparrows."—"The very hairs of your head are all numbered."—"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them."

Tears were slipping from under her lids now—gentle, helpful tears. The soothing had reached her soul; and with the hand holding the little preacher under her cheek, she fell into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER VI.

"SONS OF ONE FATHER."

"Your way may be closed, but His way is open. God knows all when you know nothing at all!"

CHARLES SPURGEON.

A RAP at the study door.

Mr. Gardenell had not heard any one approach, but he said "Come," and then sprang forward in astonishment to clasp a tall, stalwart youth to his heart.

"Stanton, my dear, dear boy, where did you come from? how glad I am to see you!"

"Thank you. I am glad to be here. 'Twould be a queer fellow who wouldn't be, after such a welcome."

"When did you come? Are you going to stay awhile? It seems almost like having Herbert home to see you."

"Just what Olive said the moment she saw my face."

"Olive! Have you seen Olive?" in surprise. "I was up to her room not five minutes ago and she was fast asleep."

"Good! she promised me to go to bed. She is

all worn out. It is lucky I happened around at just this time."

"Lucky! happened! I don't like those terms. But when did you see Olive? she was in my arms an hour before going to bed; indeed, I carried her to her room, and she never mentioned your name. When did you arrive?"

"Oh, sometime this forenoon. I was the Bidly who cooked dinner for this establishment, and waited on table," laughing at the gentleman's incredulous astonishment. "Ask Olive if she was not moaning over the work, when all the while a first-class cook and excellent housemaid was on his way thither?"

"Add a big sunbeam to your list of excellences while you are at it, Stanton," smiled the gentleman. "Your very presence is exhilarating. I am glad you are here with your quick wits. I am not to be trusted. I was to hunt up a servant for my poor little girl and forgot it. My talk with Germaine drove everything except one out of my head. I suppose my talk with Olive did the same for her. Of course you know of the sorrow that has befallen us, Stanton?"

The young man put his hand familiarly and tenderly over the one the clergyman had laid on his knee.

"That prince of preachers—Charles Spurgeon—says, 'Affliction is the seal of the Lord's election,' sir," he said. "I have just come, myself, from Dr. Germaine's office."

"And know all?"

"And know all," he reiterated, with peculiar emphasis on the last word. "You were right, Mr. Gardenell, when you found fault with my words, 'lucky' and 'happened.' Not luck, but God sent me here to take Herbert's place in this hour of need. I have already placed myself at the doctors' disposal. To-morrow morning they make the first trial. I want you to look forward to the result with largest hope and expectation. Dr. Germaine said his faith strengthened mightily with the first glimpse of my face. It seemed to him that heaven itself was interested in the saving of this precious life. We know it is."

Mr. Gardenell could not speak; too many were the emotions filling his breast. He bowed his head on the young man's shoulder and his tears dropped freely. "I thank thee, Father," at last he murmured; and then, again, "Am I not rich in the children which Thou hast given me? Stanton," he said, by-and-by, "Herbert could not do more than this."

"Why should he, sir? Are we not both sons of one Father?"

"Yea, and henceforth of two fathers," replied Mr. Gardenell brokenly.

"Thank you, sir."

"And who shall thank you, my boy? Stanton, did the doctor tell you why I was denied the privilege of giving part of my life to feed the veins of this one dearer to me than life?"

"Yes, sir," answered the young man, deeply moved. "He told me all, and also that for the present you preferred your family should not be acquainted with the facts."

"You can see my reasons," continued the older gentleman. "I was not myself aware of the truth until recently, though I feared it for some time past. It must not be breathed."

"It will not be, sir."

"I am sure of that. Do you know what a load you lift from my heart by your generous offer? The doctors no doubt could have found somebody to serve them for reward; but it is such relief to know no strange, no defiling blood will mingle with hers. Henceforth will you not be life of our life, flesh of our flesh? Whichever way the scales of destiny may turn from this day I have another son."

"I was bold enough to hope for that privilege before this event occurred," said Stanton, trying to speak lightly and thus hide his emotion.

"Had you ever a doubt?" asked the gentleman smiling.

"Not a serious one, to be truthful. Yet I have made haste slowly and with some questioning. Where his own heart is concerned one does not always relish being loved for another's sake, even if that other is his best friend," admitted the youth ruefully.

"Stanton," said Mr. Gardenell a while after, as he was preparing to follow the young man's advice

and descended to the dining-room, "Stanton, the doctor examined you carefully. You are sure this experiment will not harm you?"

"I wish it would. Then I might prove to you how much I owe you all. As it is I am suffering for speech; the excess of blood in my veins endangers my brain," with comical seriousness. "And besides being a positive boon to me physically, it is just what I need from a student's standpoint. You forget I am an aspiring M. D. with much to learn. This experience will be of untold benefit. Who knows, I may have to open my veins to some poor African some day, and may bless God for what I learn to-morrow."

The gentleman pressed the hand in his. "You are not suffering from lack of heart, Cartwright," he said.

"Nor of selfishness," asserted the young man. "The whole thing is a simple matter of personal gain, as far as I am concerned. There is only one thing I stipulate," he continued, hand on the latch, "and that is that Olive shall know nothing of this affair, at least not for some years to come."

"You can't imagine your cause needs bolstering and fear she might render a biased judgment?" said the father.

"It is best to guard against such a contingency. Mark you," shaking his head, "this is not humility. I should like to have her know this, should be delighted to have her feel indebted to me for the rest of her natural life. But this is where I

exercise self-denial ; I am determined old nature shall go under,"—whimsically.

"What a selfish mortal he is!" said Mr. Gardenell, smiling. "Nevertheless I promise," putting his finger to his lips.

When Olive descended to the sitting-room some time after, she found two gentlemen talking quietly together, one with a more restful look on his face than he had carried for months. "Stanton has done him good," she thought.

"Now that you have come, daughter," said this one, "I think if Stanton will excuse me, I will leave you to his care, and call on Miss French. In my own selfish sorrow I have quite neglected her in her illness. I will try not to be gone long."

And two bright young faces accompanied him to the door, and two pairs of bright young eyes—one brown, one blue—watched his form out of sight down the long street ; and then two very satisfied young people dropped into chairs and gazed smilingly into each other's faces.

CHAPTER VII.

AS ONE THAT SERVETH.

"Her soft hand put aside the assaults of wrath,
And calmly broke in twain
The fiery shafts of pain,
And rent the nets of passion from her path."

—WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

MISS FRENCH was a sick parishioner. Her past negligence had not been noted; too truly were his people sharing with him his sorrow to find fault with his actions.

Seated in the invalid's boudoir answering questions, something said about the strain on Olive suggested to Mr. Gardenell their need of help. He stated the position of affairs, inquiring of his hostess if she knew where he could find an intelligent woman to assist his daughter, for a while at least, until he had leisure to look further.

Even as he spoke a young lady was ushered into the room.

"Mr. Gardenell—Miss Erdley," said Mr. French, in introduction. The gentleman was impressed with the quiet beauty of the young face.

"I beg your pardon," said this stranger, "but I

caught enough of your conversation, as I entered the room, to understand its drift. I think I can serve you for a few weeks, Mr. Gardenell, if you can put up with such services as I can render. I am a fair housekeeper, and can cook ordinary food."

"And lift burdens from weary hearts, I see," smiled the gentleman, gratefully. "Miss Erdley, I do not know how to thank you sufficiently for your kind offer. Nothing could be better. It will be such a comfort to my daughter to have the companionship of one so nearly her own age."

"But I shall have to go home each night," she said. "My mother is something of an invalid, and would need me then. I feel sure she will spare me during the day."

To say the gentleman was relieved is speaking mildly. He could not have hoped to procure so refined a helper. After a few necessary preliminaries he departed, leaving his card and address with this new friend, who promised to be with them early the next morning.

"You have secured a jewel," said his hostess, as she accompanied him to the door. "Lenore Erdley is as pure and sweet as she is strong and helpful. She is, moreover, a perfect lady, but circumstances make it necessary for her to earn her living. She never did housework before. I was amazed at her offer."

Miss Erdley herself was somewhat amazed when she found herself really engaged to do Mr. Garden-

ell's work. It had been the farthest thing from her expectations, when she presented herself at Mrs. French's door to inquire after her sick friend.

As Mrs. French had informed her pastor, this girl was a lady, both by birth and education. Though it would be hard to conceive how she could be herself and ever be less, however born, or however educated.

Her mother, whose only child she was, had been a woman of the world, whose god was fashion. A belle, a beauty, with every accessory of ease and elegance at her command; the petted wife of an adoring husband who gratified her every whim, Isabelle Emerson Erdley had yet been a cold, selfish, ambitious woman, loving only herself.

Into her life of luxury came calamity. She was widowed now, half sick, quite poor. Suddenly everything had been swept away, husband, wealth, health. She had become a weak, wretched, irritable invalid, never happy, never even content.

Faded, worn, a shadow of her former self, shrinking from the eyes of everybody, ignoring her friends; ashamed of her poverty, her surroundings; at variance with her fellows and her Maker; she was determined to live an isolated life, with no companionship but her child's.

This child, whose birth she had cursed, was all this woman had left of her past. Little as she had welcomed its coming, when once it was really hers, it took on value. She had pride in its beauty, its dress, its name; being hers it was therefore

an Emerson; being fair it was therefore endurable. She named her babe to suit herself—small matter to the father whose joy was not in its name but itself. Lenore Emerson Erdley! Such a big name for so small a thing.

The father called his treasure Lee, for short; so did her school friends later. The child liked it better than the full name. But abridgments were vulgar in her mother's estimation: her daughter was always Lenore to her, often Lenore Emerson.

At first Mrs. Erdley's friends attempted to break down the reserve she had built about herself; they sought her with words of sympathy and condolence. But she refused herself to their entreaty; left their ring unanswered, and when some, bolder than others, succeeded in reaching her presence, she coldly left the room. Finally they left her unmolested, and, apparently, forgotten. Her child shared largely in her fate.

It was a dreary life for a child to live, but Lenore lived it and prospered, in spite of it. She soon found that her mother was jealous of the few friends she made; was determined that no schoolmate, however humble, should visit her. She was seldom allowed to visit any one. So she became slow, at last, in forming friendships she could not foster. The girls would only misunderstand her, she thought, if she sought their favor and never returned their kindnesses. Only a few of her mother's old-time friends kept her in remembrance,

and occasionally she called on one of them, as she had this afternoon.

Many girls would have come up sour and morose in so uncongenial an atmosphere. But this was far from the case with Lenore Erdley. Quiet she was, modest as a violet, gentle as softest summer zephyr, but neither shrinking nor bashful.

In spite of her life of isolation she loved all human-kind, and was tenderly interested in the lives lived all about her. She could not enjoy the companionship of her equals, neither could she draw as closely as she wished to those who were not. But she had the faculty of noting and sharing in the pleasure, as well as sorrow, of every sentient thing. Her humble home brought her in contact with humble people, with simple joys and griefs. And her simple heart was interested in it all. To be sure her mother frowned on any seeming friendliness with what she termed "such common people." But Lenore felt they were common people themselves, and no one could restrain a sympathetic look, a smile or nod. And all the neighbors came to know and love and feel a certain pride in "the little lady."

Little by little their small patrimony—the remnant left to them of what was once opulence—melted away. There was nothing left to them but this maiden's hands—those soft, white, little hands.

In vain the mother argued, wept, pleaded. A daughter of hers toil like the vulgar people about

them! There was nothing else to do; the woman's unreason was madness. It was beg or work, and there could be no choice between such evils.

It is true Lenore was educated, and capable of teaching. It is possible that in time she could have obtained a position in some school. But she had few friends and no time to waste. Necessity was upon them before she was aware, so successfully had her mother hidden their circumstances.

By chance she heard of an up-town milliner, one of whose girls was taken sick, and at once she applied to fill the vacancy.

"Have you ever done anything of the kind?" asked the puzzled Madame, taking in at a glance the dainty apparel and ladylike appearance of the applicant.

"I trimmed the hat I wear," was the modest reply.

"I will try you," was the decisive answer, and Lenore Erdly took her place among American working-women.

She soon became a favorite in the establishment, in spite of her reserve. Madame found her taste exquisite, and parted with her reluctantly, when, at the end of several weeks, her old girl returned.

"I shall need you later, no doubt," she said, as she paid her. "I will give you the first vacancy should you desire it. Most of my girls depend on their wages for their support, or I would let some one go and keep you."

And Lenore smiled this side and sighed that

side of the office door. Did Madame think that she was working for amusement or to satisfy some freak? Were not two depending on her labors?

That was yesterday. She had prayed much since then, and trusted too, which sometimes is better. Somehow amid these unpropitious surroundings, this girl had found Christ—or He had found her—and she was ripening into a peculiarly noble Christian woman. With no helpers but God and His word, and the occasional droppings of the prayer-room and sanctuary, she was developing virtues that many might envy, and holding a closeness of fellowship with her Saviour that few more favored attain.

She had wondered a little just how her prayers were to be answered—wondered without a shadow of worry, and with a conscious thrill of gratitude, so sure and so near was the coming aid. She knew Mr. Gardenell by reputation, he was the beloved pastor of these, her friends. She had heard him preach. The moment she heard his words, she was certain he needed her, and God had sent him there for her. That assured, she did not question what next.

Of course her mother objected: "A menial, Lenore," she said, "a menial, a servant and to a nobody, a common preacher! you, an Emerson, with your social birthright!"

The girl only smoothed the thin hair from the wrinkled brow, wrinkled, not with age, but care—

and placing a kiss between the two troubled eyes, answered gently:

"Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all—I am among you as he that serveth."

"Why will you quote Scripture to me, Lenore, when you know it simply tortures me?"

"I beg your pardon, mamma. It is meat and drink to me, and I forget. But how can any one humble himself, mother, since Christ has so stooped?"

"We are in the world, the world, Lenore, and are judged by its standards. The Bible is obsolete, in fact if not in seeming. Who lives by it today? a few feeble folk, like you. The world, the cold, heartless world, what does it care for its precepts, or for you or me?"

She muttered awhile longer to herself, and then said impatiently: "Get me a few grains of morphine, Lenore, just a few, I must forget my misery. You always manage to upset my poor nerves," she went on fretfully, "and they must have some support."

"Not just yet, mamma dear," replied the girl cheerfully, though a look of pain contracted her brows. "We are going to have supper now, something nice, something you love, guess what?"

"It isn't pine-apple, Lenore, it can't be that. I've wanted it so much, I've really dreamed of it."

"Just that, and it's a beauty. Don't you want

to watch me s'ice it, and then here is some of the nicest sponge-cake you ever tasted."

"Emma French has not dared to send me of her charity?" cried the woman in alarm.

"No, indeed, not she. I am the culprit, little mother," bustling around and talking cheerily while the table was being laid and drawn to the woman's side. All this in the hope of helping her forget her misery, and the remedy for which of late she called incessantly.

The use of morphine was no new thing to Mrs. Erdley. To her daughter's knowledge she had used it more or less ever since her husband's death. While under its influence was the only time she was ever bright or happy, and it was only then that she seemed interested in others. When quite a child Lenore had been sent for it, though always with a note or prescription. She was still expected to furnish it, only in increasing quantities, quantities that of late aroused her gravest fears.

This girl's recollections of the past were very vivid. Young as she was when her father died, she cherished his memory with tender adoration. Children are natural character-readers. She often recalled her father's grave, not to say grieved, face when sent from his wife's side, with some stinging remark. The child realized that the affection the man lavished so unstintedly was accepted as her mother's prerogative, not her delight. Yet it was never wanting.

He was some years older than his wife, and of a gentle, retiring disposition. There were days when he would come to the nursery and lifting his little one to his bosom walk the floor with her folded close. And Lenore knew even then, in a dim, childish fashion, that her mother's unkindness had driven him from her side, to seek in his child the satisfaction his heart craved.

His death had been very sudden. He had been poorly for some days, but not seriously so. One day he remained in bed, and his daughter would never forget the gray look on the quiet face when she went to kiss him good-night.

She went immediately to her mother and begged her to go to papa, "he looks so dreadfully," she pleaded.

"You will take yourself off to nurse, Lenore, I will attend to your father at my pleasure," was the haughty reply.

Ah me, what a change between the speaker then and now! The next morning when the child awoke it was to learn her father was dead.

Terrible were the days that followed. Mrs. Erdley's agony was something unspeakable. She shut herself into her room, even her little daughter only seeing her occasionally. But those who caught a glimpse of her face were filled with consternation. Lenore clung to her, kissing her hands and her lips, begging her not to die too, for the pale, haggard face was suggestive of nothing but death.

People wondered. They had not supposed this woman so devoted to her husband. This proud, disdainful, selfish votary of fashion henceforth retired from the world and refused to be comforted.

Later it was found her husband had died bankrupt. Then she sold her fine residence and its elegant furnishings, and with a small annuity, hers before marriage, as her only support, she moved into a few rooms, and died to the world that had known her.

As Lenore grew to young womanhood she wondered much on that clouded past. What caused her father's death? Was it a broken heart? Had her mother known of his liabilities, his coming failure? Had she upbraided him for his lack of success and killed him with her unkindness? That patient, deathly face, and her mother's haughty one, the night before he died, haunted her. And something in the manner of her mother oftentimes, an uneasiness, a dread, an almost terror, an evident remorse, wakened in her daughter's bosom fears she dared neither cherish nor name. Of one thing she was certain, something beside pride had made her mother a recluse.

But no word of those other days was ever spoken by either woman. Patiently, tenderly, the daughter bore with this wreck of life, denying her no good thing she could obtain, reluctantly administering that without which the exile

felt she could not live, and with which life was a constant death.

For Lenore never got over the horror it gave her to see her mother under the power of this drug. The long stupor, the ghastly face, the following exultancy and phantasy of joy were to her alike hideous.

That it was a deadly poison not only to her mother's body and mind, but to her soul, this young girl knew. She had sought most desperately in every way to break up the habit. She had even consulted a physician. In vain. The woman clung to this idol with the tenacity of despair; she would not be robbed of her only solace. She was alike deaf to appeal and reason, and Lenore fell back on her only hope—prayer—and waited.

CHAPTER VIII.

WITH THE DOCTORS.

"It's her sport and pleasure to flout me !
 To spurn, and scorn, and scout me !
 But ah ! I've a notion it's naught but play,
 And that, say what she will, and feign what she may,
 She can't well do without me."

—THOMAS WESTWOOD.

"How is Miss Muffet this morning?"

"Pretty sleepy, I thank you."

"Does she need any assistance, such as I can offer?"

"Yes, if you are an excellent coffee and muffin maker."

"Try me and see."

"Did you know I had a helper coming, Stanton? Miss Lenore Erdley. Papa says she is a lady in reduced circumstances. Are we not fortunate?"

"Very. Only I feel unappreciated. My valuable services will no longer be needed after this new-comer appears."

"Don't air your ignorance, you foolish boy. You will be just as much in demand."

"Ah, indeed! very glad to hear it."

"Listen! I shall not want Miss Erdley to know that I am an ignoramus I am. You are to furnish schedules for dinners, and advice as to the cooking of various dishes, or any other information she may require of me."

"Bunch of deceit! Am I expected to behold you in such iniquity? Remember the dignity of my position, I am a minister. Ah, there goes the bell. Answer it, please, Ollie, as the call-boy, footman, or whatever you please to call him, has his big apron on, and is acting as cook."

It was Miss Erdley. Olive was charmed at the first glance, and so was Stanton, though he felt rather in the dark as to this stranger's opinion of a young gentleman with an apron strung about his neck like a bib, both sleeves roiled up, and both hands white with flour.

It was a vision of life such as Miss Erdley had never even conceived. But something in her had affinity to the same, and they were cordial friends and co-workers immediately.

It was the last morning Stanton was seen in the kitchen for some time. He left the girls with the dishes after prayers and disappeared, neither did he answer the summons to lunch. Olive, disconsolately, plied her father with so many questions that he was forced to tell her so much at least: "The doctors have taken Stanton into their councils."

"Stanton! why papa what can he do?"

"That remains to be seen," answered papa

quietly, but something in his heart was singing just the same, for Dr. Germaine had wrung his hand as he left the house, whispering:

"The beginning argues well, Gardenell. The countenance and pulse have both improved under the operation. I've taken Cartwright to Herbert's room. He needs to be quiet for a while, he'll be all right in an hour or two."

At the end of one hour Mr. Gardenell opened his son's chamber door and looked at the youth, as dear as a son, resting upon the bed.

"How do you feel, Stanton?"

"Only a little giddy. I'm not used to it yet, I'll be all right presently, and it's going to be a success. I did not lose consciousness so far but that I heard the Professor's 'thank God' and Dr. Ford's low: 'The circulation seems undisturbed yet, the pulse improves.'"

At the late dinner-hour Stanton appeared. He seemed much himself. A trifle paler, perhaps, but not enough so to attract attention or to escape a "good scolding" as Olive called her after dinner brush with the young man.

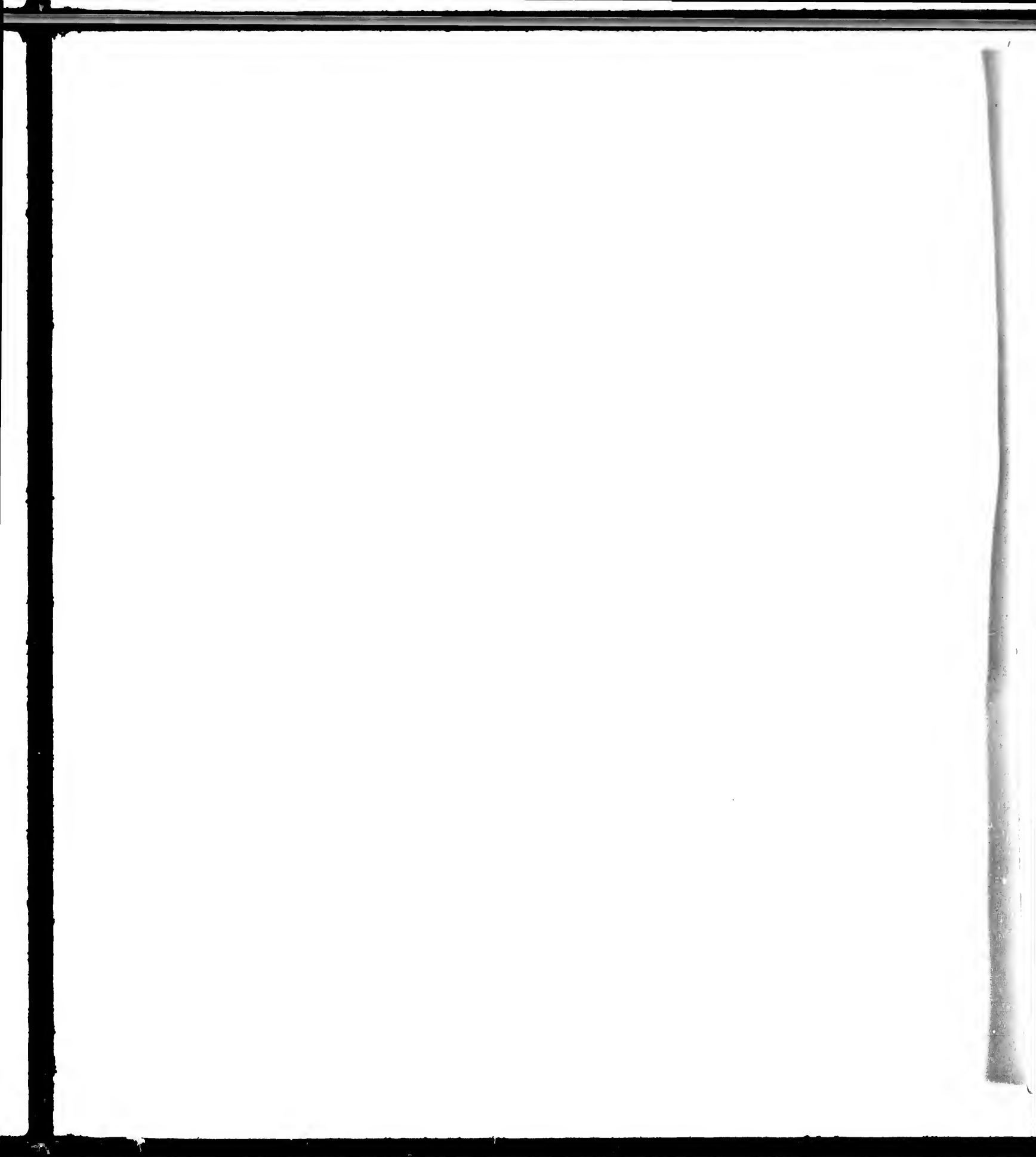
"Stanton Cartwright, I thought I could depend upon you."

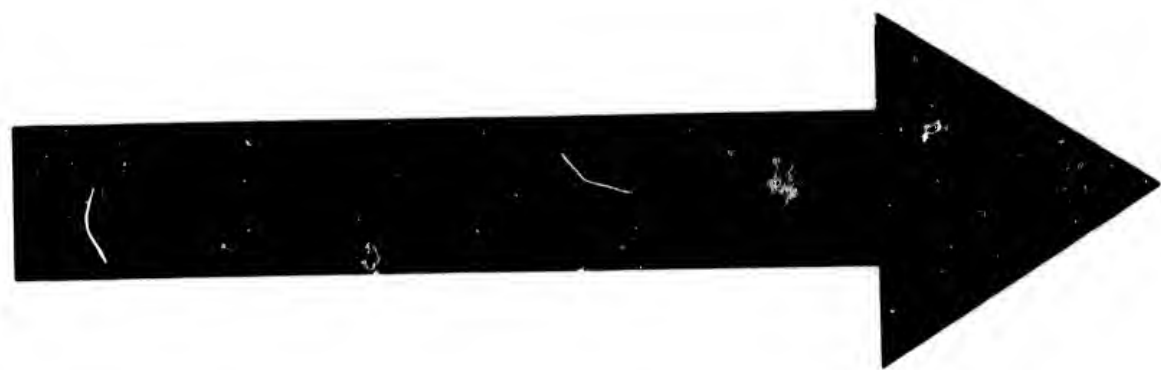
"That's phat I thought meself, mum," with utmost gravity and inimitable brogue.

"Are you not my servant?"

"Till death and afther, sure."

"Behave yourself and be sensible. I want an account of how you have spent this day."





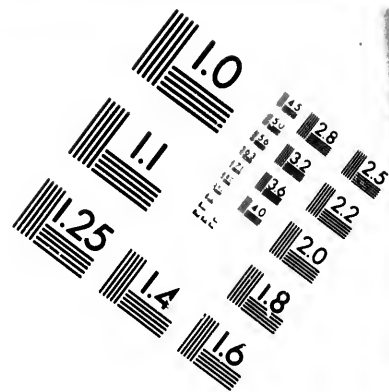
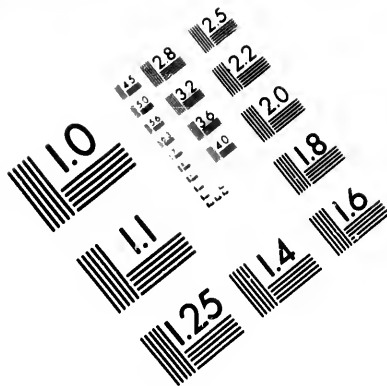
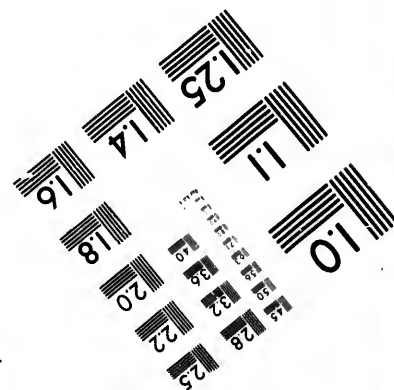
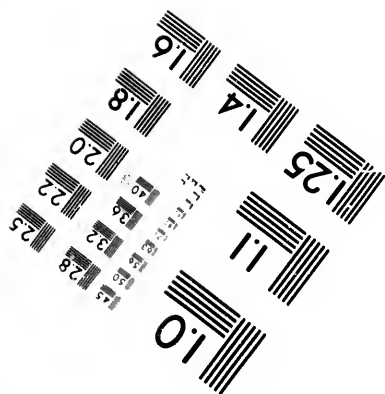
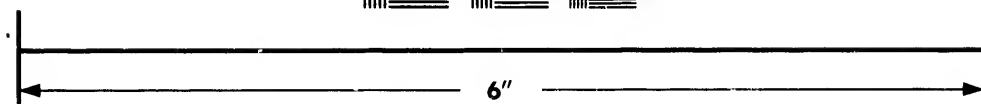
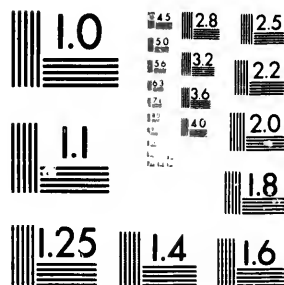


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The young gentleman lengthened his face comically, drew himself to his full height, and put on a serious, thoughtful air.

"Let me see. I rose sometime after sunrise; bathed and dressed myself; descended to the kitchen and made coffee and muffins for breakfast; shook hands with Miss Erdley; ate more or less——"

"Stanton Cartwright, why will you be so absurd? Do I not know all that?"

"It's a part of my day," answered the gentleman meekly.

"A very small part," severely. "Why have I missed you ever since breakfast?"

"Because I was not here."

She stamped her little foot impatiently. "Why were you not here?"

"Important business, Miss Gardenell."

"Indeed! Reports differ. Papa said you were with the doctors."

"Which is also true."

"What did they do? why should they need you? Is mamma much better? Papa appears so relieved yet says 'wait, we must have patience,' to all my questioning. Do you really believe she will recover, Stanton?"

"I do indeed, my heart is full of hope, and you must be as happy and glad as you can be, Olive, and thank 'Our Father.'"

Only one situated as was Mr. Gardenell can estimate the anxiety with which he waited the

doctors' verdict the night after the operation had taken place. Only one long divided between hope and fear can measure his relief when that verdict was favorable.

Dr. Germaine visited the patient several times during the day and again last thing at night. "It works like a charm," he said, looking the satisfaction that filled his breast. "If another injection proves as successful, I think I can predict certain recovery. Gardenell, under God, you owe a good deal to young Cartwright."

"I do, indeed," was the reply. "He has been for years like one of my family, henceforth he is a beloved son."

"He expects his reward," smiling.

"And would do as he has if he did not. He is unwilling Olive should learn his part in her mother's recovery lest it affect her decision."

"Nonsense! that was a foregone conclusion long since, or my eyes deceive me. He is a grand fellow. I can't help feeling in this case that the equableness of the man's temper, his quiet hopefulness, were somehow communicated to the patient and helped produce such marked results. Olive ought to congratulate herself. Good-night."

"Good-night."

"Go to bed and sleep for once," added the doctor, pushing his head in at the door for another word. "You will need to husband your strength until Yensie begins to recover. Now the nurse serves as well as you and better. Once more good-night."

The next day was bright and clear, a day to drive away fogs of whatever sort. Olive's voice, so long silent, was the first thing that greeted her lover's ears as he wended his way kitchenward. Lenore was before him, his services unneeded.

"Isn't it too beautiful for anything," said Olive, greeting him with a shining face. "I even feel like forgiving you this morning and offering you the privilege of a walk. It is too pleasant to stay at home when one can frame an excuse for a tramp. The spring always gets inside of me."

"Me too," answered Stanton. "I wish I could accompany you, Ollie. I will to-morrow, if you will accept my excuses for to-day."

Her face fell. "Another engagement, I suppose," she said pettishly.

"I am sorry to say it is, you forget the doctors will be here to-day."

"And you forget they will be here to-morrow."

"But I make a previous engagement with you now, Puss, just as I made one yesterday with them. I shall keep them both."

She felt perverse. "I make no promises," she said, turning to the window, "I might not keep them. Neither will I give up a pleasure at hand for one that may never come."

"I wouldn't," he answered imperturbably, her small ire rather amusing him. "Go to-day by all means, you need the change, the air. I will see about to-morrow."

"You have great assurance, Mr. Cartwright, your abilities in some directions are astonishing."

"Aren't they, though?" laughing, "Honor bright, Ollie, did you ever see a fellow just like me?"

"I am sure I don't wish to see one."

"Just right," complacently. "Another would be one too many. I am resigned to being the one and only gentleman of the sort of your acquaintance. I think I am rather fine looking, don't you?"

The tone of his voice, the way in which he surveyed himself in the mirror opposite were irresistible. Olive laughed, he had gained his point.

"I wish you would be sensible occasionally, Stanton Cartwright," she said. "And I trust you do not think I mistake your antics for wit."

"What is the matter here, this morning?" asked Mr. Gardenell, appearing at the door. "One would fancy Raymond was at home and receiving one of his periodical lectures."

"If you please, sir, it's only me, sir, and not Raymond," answered Stanton meekly. And the gentleman laughingly led the young man to his seat at table, tendering him his sympathy.

"You must neither aid nor abet him, papa," said Olive, "or I shall count it treason. He utterly refuses to accompany me on a tramp this morning, though I have condescended to invite him."

"I refused with thanks," said Stanton.

"Even thanks are poor sauce to a disappointment," answered the girl gayly, restored to her usual humor. "Papa knows I was never content to take anything but the best."

"Hear, hear!" applauded the youth. "I leave it to the judgment of this honorable company if two tramps are not better than one tramp."

"That's according to the character of the tramps," interposed the elder gentleman humorously. "We've had tramps call here whom we would much prefer should not be duplicated."

Olive clapped her hands. "Caught in your own trap, sir fox!" she cried. "And perhaps papa refers to a certain tramp——"

"Who already this morning has repudiated all desire for the distinction of a double in your estimation, as you can bear witness, fair lady," retorted Stanton with a glance that sent Olive's eyes to her plate, while a flush dyed her cheeks. And that provoking young man looked as if he enjoyed her confusion.

"I hope you will take a walk this morning, Olive," said her father later. "The very taste of this air is refreshing. Call on Mary Dunbar or Alice Whipple or some of your friends. You've been housed so long they will hardly know you. Don't hurry back, Miss Erdley can get our lunch without your help and you can lunch down street. We shall not want to see your face before dinner-hour."

"And be all day away from the only member

of my family I have left? O you designing papa, I believe you want to get rid of me," cried Olive, unconsciously coming nearer the truth than she dreamed. For, aside from Mr. Gardenell's desire to see his daughter cheered and refreshed, he felt it best she should be out of the house until after this second and last operation was over. And Mr. Cartwright endorsed his policy.

There was nothing very dangerous in this sharing his blood with another; and Stanton Cartwright had no exalted ideas of his heroism or devotion. It was to him simply a matter of duty, over which he had not a second's hesitation when once he found he was in a condition to render the service. It was as much a shrinking from Olive's gratitude and reverence as any fear that she would consider it a reason for regarding him with special favor that led him to hide from her the facts. He hoped she regarded him with special favor without any such reason.

He was a noble, manly fellow, used to taking life in a very real and serious fashion, but with a vein of humor and a natural cheerfulness that would always bring the best side of a thing uppermost; and tend to lighten deprivation and hardship.

Reared in poverty, strong and brave by nature, he courted rather than feared sacrifice and danger. The ambition of his life was to preach Christ in the regions beyond, where the evangel of the Kingdom had not yet penetrated. To this he had

unreservedly dedicated his youth and strength. Next to his devotion to his Master and his work was the mighty love he possessed for Olive Gardenell. Her image had held his deepest heart since his early college days, and he was sure he could never call any other woman, wife.

He had never said this to her. She always seemed shy of any special approach. They had been much together; not only in the past when he and Herbert were chums, and he spent weeks of his vacation at New York or Bloomingdale, but also in these later years since Raymond Gardenell had married his sister and Stanton was regarded very much like a member of the family.

It was hard to divine Olive's feeling towards him. She treated him much as she did Herbert, her favorite brother. When they were at college together she divided her notes pretty evenly between them; and now that they had graduated still added postscripts to her brother's letters and even went so far on occasions as to honor this friend with epistles whose size was one of Raymond's standing jokes.

That she had more than a sister's regard for him, or that he could teach her to have, he never seriously doubted. She was such a child yet in her own estimation and that of her friends; was so entrenched in the love of her own, so petted and adored by brothers and parents, that it was hard for him to talk to her of love, or seek to lead her into new paths.

When he made the slightest approach to such subjects she was either unconscious or coy; misunderstanding all he said, either really or in seeming, or shrinking from him as if he had made her afraid. On the other hand, as a friend, especially as Herbert's chosen companion, she was open to all his advances, ready to bestow on him many little privileges, and show him many favors. Yet, it must be confessed, never so many as since his coming at this opportune time to their encouragement and succor.

He had come to her at this time on purpose to open his heart: to learn the extent of her feelings towards him. He must know whether, in the near future, when he expected to sail away to some far-off land, he could take with him the choice of his heart. He would assure himself to-morrow, so he said to himself, as he watched the maiden turn up the street that spring morning.

Aside from the faintness or giddiness, which soon passed away, the only inconvenience Stanton felt from the operation of the day before was a soreness of the arm, where the radial artery had been isolated. It felt stiff and tender, and he found himself almost unconsciously favoring it, shrinking from the near contact of anything.

To-day there was to be another incision and a larger quantity of blood conveyed to the patient's body. Yesterday the amount had not exceeded twelve ounces, to-day it was to be at least eighteen. So slowly and equably had the fluid been trans-

ferred to the heart of the sinking woman, that no disastrous disturbance of the circulation had accompanied it; and it was hoped the added supply would put her not only beyond present danger, but well up the scale of probable recovery. You can see why both Mr. Gardenell and Stanton Cartwright might wish Olive out of the house until this last experiment was over.

But Olive did not stay away long. She found only one of the friends she called on at home, and, much as she enjoyed the air and motion, was yet conscious of a certain uneasiness, as if she was neglecting duty. After a short ramble she turned homeward and reached the front door to find her latch-key missing. Stanton had forgotten to return it.

She would not ring and disturb Lenore at her work. She went around to the side door and entered unperceived. As she went out to leave her cloak and hat, a letter on the hall table met her eyes. It was for her and in Herbert's handwriting; he must be better. She would take it right to his room, among his books and belongings, and open it there. No one knew she had come; they could eat lunch without her. She would cuddle down on Hervie's couch, and read it and cry over it if she pleased, undisturbed by any one.

She went up noiselessly over the stairs. Papa and the nurse would be engaged at this hour. The doctors were probably in her mother's room. She turned into the side corridor and paused. An

unexpected sight greeted her eyes. Her father supporting Stanton Cartwright, whose face and lips were bloodless, his eyes half-closed—supporting and leading him towards Herbert's room.

She did not move, hardly breathed, until the door closed after them. Then she ran swiftly to her own chamber, shut and locked the door, and flung herself on the bed.

What did it mean? What had happened? Ought she to have asked? Ought she to have shown herself, offered her assistance? Impulsive as she was by nature, she knew not what had withheld her from rushing forward, begging to know the worst, sobbing out her terror and surprise. What really detained her was the hardly acknowledged realization that they would not wish her to know; that Stanton Cartwright and her father were concealing something from her. She lay some minutes, filled with contending emotions, for the time forgetful of the letter in her hand.

"Dear old Herbert!" she sobbed at last, "you always trusted me. If I could only have you I would be content." Then she opened her precious epistle, and read:

"MY APPLE-BLOSSOM:

How I miss you! The perfume coming into my windows this minute reminds me of you; as also the pink and white beauty, recently brought from the orchard, and looking at me from the vase on

my table. I am hungry for a sight of your precious face.

You need not worry a bit over me, or let anybody else do so. I am not very sick, or I could not write, and am improving fast, as Aunt Jessie would tell you were she writing. You can't imagine the kindness of my nurses. Even you and dear mamma could not wait upon me more assiduously and tenderly.

"I suppose Stanton is with you by this time. I can't help envying you all. A letter of his has been forwarded to me from my last stopping place, saying he expected to start for New York in another week. He ought certainly to be there. Be good to him for my sake, blessed old fellow!"

Tell him to take my place, as fully as possible, and give him a big hug for me. Don't leave papa out, or precious mamma.

Ollie, I begin to think mamma must be very ill, since she has not written me one little word. Even the languor she suffered so much from last year could not have prevented that.

"But don't tell her I said so for the world; but, like the dearest little sister man ever had, which you are, write me a truthful statement of her condition. Aunt Jessie has looked so grave at every mention of her name, spite of attempted cheerfulness, that I am sure there is something held back. It will not harm me to know the worst. I can trust God, and I am sure He can do as much without me as if I were by her side. If I had not been able to trust Him, how wretched my fears would have made me.

"I have not questioned Auntie or Fred. It would only grieve them unnecessarily, since they deem it a part of their duty to keep me in ignorance. But my Olive knows me better. We bo-

lieve in knowing the worst and fearing nothing, sweetheart, since God lives and loves.

"I must not write another word. Rea has opened the door, and is shaking her head ominously, inquiring if the doctor gave me permission. As if I could wait for that before writing to my own little sister. I wish you knew Rea. She is almost as sweet as another little maiden I know. She wants to see you, and shall, some day.

"Good-bye. Kiss darling mamma over and over for me, and when I come you shall have your share from

"BROTHER HERBERT."

"P. S.—Rea is my pet name for Fredrica. That name does not suit her, neither does Fred; she is a bright, sweet girl-woman, like you, Princess, so I call her Rea. Again, good-bye.

"HERBERT."

CHAPTER IX.

IS IT A CALL?

"The greatest luxuries of life are not possessions, but experiences. The higher a man gets in his being, the less covetous he becomes for something to own, and the more ambitious he is for wealth within."

—SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES.

"Surely there may be delay without frustration."

—GEORGE MACDONALD.

OLIVE kissed her precious letter and cried over it a good deal; because she felt so mixed up general; her feelings must have expression.

"I'm not worthy of his love, or of anybody's," she said. "Stanton is his best friend, and I've been almost hateful to him because he has a secret; and—and I've almost felt hard towards papa, too. I wish I was better. If Stanton dies"—lip trembling—"then what shall I do? He looked as if he was dying," and down went the brown head, and the rain fell copiously.

She felt better after the shower, and took to her Bible and her knees. The long strain of months was telling on her body, and she blamed her soul. It was little matter where her need

lay, since she had found her medicine, fitted as well to body as soul, to soul as body; Earth's cure-all, Heaven's gift!

At the feet of Jesus she left her anxiety, her perplexity. He was Herbert's Saviour, Stanton's, her father's, her mother's. His promise was for each of them as for her. "My God shall supply all your need."

It was quite late that afternoon when she descended to the sitting-room, and with quiet heart and serene face lay down on the couch. She heard the door open, a moment after, and knew, without looking up, who it was entered the room.

"Are you asleep, Olive?" The hushed voice could not have disturbed lightest slumber.

"No, I am only resting," opening her eyes slowly, and with almost a shudder. How would he look? She could not forget the ghastly sight of a short time ago. Could she believe that sight now? Had she dreamed it all? Here was Stanton Cartwright, her old friend, exactly himself, unless, indeed, with the exception of a slight pallor, such as she had noticed yesterday at dinner-time.

He smiled as her eyes met his, and sat down in an easy-chair. Did she imagine it or did he guard his arm as he seated himself? She felt like a person who has suffered from an hallucination and hardly knows what is fact or fiction.

"What is the matter, Stanton?" she asked. "Are you sick?"

"Me!" in utmost astonishment. "What a question!"

"You look pale, and you did yesterday at this time. I'm afraid you are not quite well, and you act as if your arm was sore." She was regarding him with keen, scrutinizing eyes.

"It is a little stiff," he admitted carelessly. "Nothing to speak of, however."

"Did you hurt it, or is it a touch of rheumatism? Shall I bathe it for you? Isn't there something I can do?"

"Not a thing, thank you. I wish there was if it would please you, Olive."

"Please me? Stanton, it could not please me to see you suffer."

"No, I beg your pardon; I did not mean to insinuate that. I suppose it would please you, however, if I were suffering to give me ease, relief?"

"Of course."

"Thank you. I am just as grateful as if you had."

She did not lie back on the couch from which she had risen at his entrance, and her lips quivered a little.

"Stanton, I wish you would lie down here; it would do me good to see you stretched out comfortably as if taking things easy. I don't believe you ever think of yourself. Most men seem to be stretchy, all but our men. It isn't once in an age we can coax papa down for a rest. Mamma and I

feel quite elated when we do. You and Herbert are just like him."

Stanton smiled, nothing loth to be counted in with "our men."

"If it will really please you, Puss, I shall be delighted to accept your offer."

She watched him as he dropped down, and was again conscious of the care with which he shielded his arm.

"Bring your chair close, Olive," he said; "do not compel me to turn to look in your face. If I am expected to be lazy, I will be real lazy."

She laughed and drew a rocker to the side of the couch. "How delightful!" she cried. "Your six feet do not seem so formidable now, even if they do appear to increase by extension."

He passed his hands over his ears. "Is it a pun?" he inquired. "or have you found many things, Ollie, that do not increase as they extend?"

She shook her head reprovingly. "Interruptions are never polite," she laughed. "Mark the power of strategy. This giant who used to tower above me is on his back and at my mercy. I realize something of the glory of conquest in seeing you at my feet."

"Olive, I have been there for years," he said with meaning.

"Please be reasonable, Stanton, and let us talk nothing but common sense," she said, flushing slightly, however.

"I thought that was highest reason," he made answer; "and I have nothing commoner to my own sense at least."

She frowned and he laughed roguishly. "See, I will be very proper and ask after your morning walk. Did you enjoy it?"

"The walk? yes, somewhat. But the calls were a failure." Everybody else had availed themselves of the fine weather as well as myself."

"We shall guard against such disappointment to-morrow," he said, "by providing our own company."

"Perhaps," she assented with some dignity, "if we go." And then meeting the humor of his twinkling eyes she smiled too, deciding that dignity was quite thrown away on such a graceless masculine.

"I suppose you spent your morning with the doctors as usual?" she inquired, and he was conscious of a most penetrating glance.

"I did," he answered unhesitatingly, and with no apparent perturbation. "But I shall not be in so much demand hereafter. Ollie, you must not be so jealous of the doctors; they have not diverted an atom of my interest from you."

"Jealous!" scornfully. "Mr. Cartwright, you are the most presuming gentleman of my acquaintance. One would think the honor of your company an overwhelming favor."

"It is well-nigh," he answered humorously. "I hate to deprive the doctors of so rare a privilege,

and yet I cannot but be aware of how you languish without it."

What was the use of being angry with the rogue? Olive condescended to coax. "Please be good, Stanton, I want to have an earnest talk with you this afternoon. I want to know whether you really help the doctors or not."

"I try."

"But what can you do? Is it anything special or only ordinary help? and in either case why will not papa do as well? or is it because he is so overworked and tired?"

"What an interrogation point it is! Has it forgotten that the parson aspires to be a doctor as well?" putting on offended dignity. "Or, Olive, is it possible," regarding her with serious enough eyes now, "that you really think so little of me that you have forgotten how I have been pegging away at medicine this last twelve months?"

"I had forgotten, truly," her face clearing suddenly. "I think mamma's sickness has put everything else out of my mind. And will it help you a great deal to be closeted so much with these men?"

"I trust it will. All knowledge ought to mean gain, both to ourselves and others."

"Is it the old method and practice or something new and unusual that has so interested you, Stanton?"

"Something quite new, at least to me, Olive."

"Could you tell me about it?" asked this

daughter of Eve, in what her brother Raymond would have called a wheedling tone.

"Not just yet, dear. Some day, perhaps."

"Stanton," impatiently, "how would you like an answer like that to some question that interests you very specially?"

"Try me and see," he retorted quickly. "I have the question ready, Ollie, and I don't believe I'd object."

"Well, I object to such foolish talk, and I can't see what mystery there need be about a little knowledge, except indeed I am too foolish, too obtuse to learn. I do not wonder either," dejectedly. "I've been thinking only to-day of how you and Herbert are straining every point to be ready for the largest kind of life-work, and I—I am idling away my time."

"Not at present, dear. Be just with yourself."

"No, not these last few months, but before that, Stanton. It is over a year since I graduated, and besides a few extra studies with Herbert, a few lessons in cutting and fitting from Miss Moses, and my music and visiting with papa and Herbert——"

"Quite a long catalogue," he interrupted soothingly.

"But how much will it count in preparing me for my life-work?"

"Everything counts that makes us better able either to do or be or bear, and that is learned for the Master's sake and with His benediction."

"But Africa, Stanton, Africa! You have your medicine, and Herbert his linguistic abilities and research and acquaintance with languages and nations, Harry his mechanism, and all of you your preaching. What have I?"

"Power to teach the women to cut and sew their simple garments, and the children to read and write and cipher: the gift of song and touch that will rouse in the hardest man desire for heavenly things and inspire the missionary to greater effort. Surely, Olive, that is blessed preparation for the Lord's 'Well done'."

She lifted a flushed, enthused face. "Stanton, I think, I hope, I almost know, sometimes that I shall go to Africa as well as you."

"I trust you will my——" He stopped the word of endearment before it fell.

"I know I shall if Herbert goes," she continued. "But, well, I suppose I should not want to go without him."

"Not if God asked you to go, Olive?"

"Well, of course, if I knew God called me I would have to go."

"Would it be hard for you to go anywhere for Jesus, Olive, even if you had to go alone?" he continued earnestly, scanning the young face.

"Yes," she hesitated. "It would be hard. But—but I think I could do it for Him. Yes, I know I could and I would," with grave determination. And just then came a light tap on the door and a gentle "May I come?"

"Of course you may," cried Olive gladly, as a sweet face surrounded, by little clinging rings of brown hair, peeped in. "Lie still, Stanton," peremptorily as the young man with native courtesy started to rise in greeting to the new-comer. "I will wait on Lee myself. Sit right here in my chair where you can help me watch this culprit, and I will get another for myself."

"I beg your pardon, but I heard your last question, Mr. Cartwright, and Miss Olive's answer," said Miss Erdley, and the two looking at her perceived that her usually pale face was flushed with a kind of glory. "You were talking of missions, and I could not but hear. I wanted to come in and see you talk. If"—and she spoke quickly, eagerly, as if the words were pressing for utterance—"if any one was so honored of God as to receive His call to such work and free to follow it, who would ask higher joys?"

Stanton's full smile answered her. "No mortal who ever knew His love," he made reply.

"But does He ever call where we cannot follow?" asked Olive.

"Oh, Mr. Cartwright, answer that!" cried Lenore, driven out of her usual reserve. "There are times when I so faint for the privilege, it seems almost like receiving a call."

"If Herbert—Olive's brother—were here," answered Stanton, "he would say that to see a need and have wherewith to meet it constituted the highest call. He thinks men need very decided

calls to stay away from the foreign field rather than to go to it, since the 'Go, thou,' is a command and has been given to us all."

Olive hardly heard his answer. She was watching the play of emotion on the mobile face before her.

"I know the need, its awfulness almost breaks my heart at times," said the lady, and her voice was tremulous. "I have what will meet it fully, I am sure of that; I've tried it for myself,"—eagerly, a delicate flush tinged her cheeks. "I have thought sometimes I would willingly give half the years of my life for the privilege of telling during the other half, to those who never knew it, the power of Christ to save. I think," solemnly, "I would be willing to die on the shores of some far-away land, if only in dying I might show those lost ones how death is swallowed up in Life—Life Eternal."

"Surely you are called," cried Olive.

Stanton drew himself up to a sitting posture and extended his hand. "As a missionary of Jesus Christ I bid you welcome to our company. I trust there is nothing can hinder your going."

She did not seem to see his outstretched palm. She let drop the hands that had clasped themselves together in her lap and stood upon her feet. She looked as if ready to flee.

"Hush!" she said, "hush! You must not ask me, I must not ask myself. It is like a glimpse of heaven to one who cannot enter." And she was gone.

The young man looked into the face of his companion. "If anything should come up to hinder me, Ollie, I should feel like that. Would you?"

The question was asked tenderly, earnestly, and the maiden rose quietly and slipped out of the room. She could not answer it. But some vision of life's heavenly intent had reached her yet bound soul and lifted it upward toward larger possibilities.

She would not forget the present tense in voice as well as word, as Lenore's creed dropped from her lips: "Death is swallowed up in Life." Beyond its utterance was its reality. An incarnate Easter!

CHAPTER X.

HIS MOTHER'S GOD.

"Every sorrow hath its bound
And no cross endures forever."

—P. GERHARDT.

AT dinner-hour there was a very quiet group in the dining-room. Lenore Erdley was paler than usual and seemed preoccupied. Only Mr. Gardenell appeared like himself; the great burden that had been lifted from his heart made him cheerful, and he kept the conversation from lagging.

As they pushed their chairs from the table Olive handed her brother's letter to her father. His face lighted. "Herbert's own handwriting, he must be improving," he said.

"Have you read this to Stanton, yet?" inquired the gentleman as he finished the sheet.

"No, sir."

Mr. Gardenell passed the epistle to the young man. She saw the shadow of a smile flicker over his face as he read, and knew what was lurking in the eyes she avoided as he quietly returned the letter.

The two gentlemen excused themselves after

supper and, arm in arm, ascended to the study. Miss Erdley finished her work for the day and bade her friend good-night with more than usual tenderness. Olive sat alone.

She brought her writing-desk to the window, she would have a chat with Herbert; it was a comfort to turn to him, even on paper, the natural receptacle of her woes. Let us peep over her shoulder.

“YOU PRECIOUS OLD HERBERT.—How I love you and long to see you. I envy Aunt Jessie and cousin Fred every day I live, but what good does that do, I wonder?”

“Yes, Stanton is here, and he is such a comfort, only I wouldn’t have him think so for the world—and so much like you, only not quite; and we could never have lived through the last week without him.

“Papa says I may tell you how very sick mamma has been now that she is getting better. He looks as if ten years had rolled off of his back since yesterday. He is almost as young and boyish as Stanton from sheer relief, for mamma knows him, and wants him beside her; and she has asked for me, and I am to see her to-morrow. I am so glad.

“Of course you don’t know how dreadful it has been, the house shut up, the bells muffled, and everybody feeling that they must move so quietly even after it was unnecessary, because somehow the dread had got inside us, and we could not be ourselves. Then you know Bessie went West some weeks before mamma’s worst attack, and the new girl was green and ignorant. She got frightened when so many doctors were called.

She was so superstitious that it was no use to tell her there was nothing contagious about the disease. She knew better, knew we would all die; the gloom and the fear 'jist takes away me heart, sure,' she said, so she took her body off too with all its belongings.

"You can imagine how papa and I felt all alone in this house without any help but such as Mrs. Ellis, the charwoman could give, and two nurses to be fed. We hadn't even a maid, for I had planned to do the second work before all these things happened. Your letter and Aunt Jessie's came both on one day, and about two weeks before matters reached their climax. So I could neither send for or write to you, my comfort, and it did seem I could not bear it when they shut me out of mamma's room. Papa's face grew so white and sad I dared not burden him with my loneliness and dread.

"And then, the morning afte. Bridget left, before I had been a day alone, who should come, just in time to get dinner for me, but splendid old Stanton. He's better help than any girl we ever had. Tho way he straightened out the house, made coffee and muffins and broiled steak, was surprising. I was so glad to see him, and it seemed so much like having you that I just hugged him, and he has imposed upon me ever since in a very unmanly fashion.

I have one thing against him. He is keeping a secret from me. The day after he came he was closeted with the doctor for several hours, and the next day, too, and he hasn't told me a word about it. Not that I have really asked, but he knows I want to understand it, and I don't believe I shall forgive him. He dropped a few crumbs of com-

fort. You know he is studying medicine, and he thinks it will help him to be with these learned men. That's for Africa. And he asks me questions that I cannot answer, and looks at me in a way that opens to me all my private wickednesses and weaknesses and makes me feel I shall never be fit either to go to Africa or to stay at home unless the Lord does more for me than He has.

"Herbert, I think you and Stanton, and papa and mamma have a different kind of religion from mine. Any way it acts differently, and yet I know I love Jesus. I was so thankful for the Sunday-school lesson on the blind man of John 9 : for I do know one thing, Herbert ; I can *see*. Yes I can see well enough at least to discover all my own deficiencies, and I never had so many as since Stanton Cartwright was in this house. Not that he has been angelic, and I lose by comparison. I haven't discovered the first speck of a wing yet. But in spite of all his fun and teasing, there is something about him that makes everybody that knows him want to be better.

"If I write much more there will not be room for papa, and he wants to add a few words. I hope he won't read this, for he quite aids and abets Stanton in his secrets and plans. Papa loves him as much as you do, and so do I, only I don't think it wise to let him know.

"Write to me very soon. If you were here all would be right. I am always good when I am with you. That is one reason I want to go with you to Africa. I may be able then to do a little for Christ ; without you it would take most of my time to look out for myself. Give my love to Aunt Jessie and Fred, and take a great big lot for yourself. Get well fast for the sake of your

"OLIVE.

"P. S.—I forgot to tell you about Lenore Erdley, our new helper. Isn't it a romantic name? and she isn't a bit like anybody else; she's better. We only have her until we get some one else, but I hope we shall never get anybody, because no one will be like her. She's just *beautiful*. I love her dearly, and so does Stanton. He admires her. She is like a real story being lived out before your eyes. And she is your kind of a Christian, too.

"There, I haven't told you anything about her. I can't. She loves missions just as Stanton and you do, as if her heart were already over in some distant land. She has a secret, too, I'm most sure. You can see it way back in her lovely gray eyes, and yet she is so quiet and tender, and happy. O dear, I wish I was like her. You would all be proud of me then and I need not be ashamed of myself.

"OLIVE."

It was quite dark before the letter was finished. Olive had lighted the gas to see the last page. She wondered what her father and Stanton could be doing, and if they had quite forgotten her. She crept up over the stairs and halted at the study door. She could hear deep, manly voices, and her desire for companionship overcame her pique as she knocked.

"Come," said papa, recognizing the rap, and in the dim light she was sure she saw Stanton Cartwright with one arm thrown about her father's neck sitting on the arm of his great chair. That was no strange attitude for any of her brothers, even Herbert or Ray, grown men though they

"OLIVE."

were. But Stanton—there was a flash of almost jealousy as the young man came to the door and led her to her father's arms.

She flung herself on the broad bosom, nestled her face in under his neck, and kept very still.

"I have not disturbed you?" she whispered.

"My darling, you never disturb me. I had forgotten it was so late, and Lenore must be gone." But she quite knew she had interrupted their conversation.

They began again after a little—she wondered if it was on the self-same subject—and the deep, calm, quiet voices lulled her to deepest repose. They were discussing missions now, whatever had been their previous theme: missions and men. Olive knew her father was an authority on such matters; she was used to hearing the various fields discussed—Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission, Paton and Tanna, Mackay and Uganda. Listening, interested as she surely was, she yet fell fast asleep and was carried by her father to bed as so often in her childhood days.

As the young man opened the study door for their egress and waited in the dusk for his friend's return, is it strange that he questioned whether he had a right to take this young, untried life, from such tender, sheltering care, into the hard, dark places they had just been discussing, where his strong, true heart panted to follow his Master?

Herbert Gardenell, Jr., had written the truth when he assured his loved ones that there was

nothing dangerous about his illness. He was sick enough, however, to satisfy himself and alarm his aunt.

The weariness, the languor, the feverish exhaustion were well nigh as insupportable as actual pain would have been. Then, too, he had a haunting consciousness that something was withheld from him, that all was not well with the friends at home. Had it not been for his trust in God this anxiety might have seriously changed the character of his disease. As it was he committed his dear ones to his Maker and, day after day, as the fear returned, enhanced by the shadow of delirium, he laid it back on the Mightiest with his old-time watch-word as well as Stanton Cartwright's and Isaiah's, "I will trust and not be afraid."

Immediately after the reception of Mrs. Roger's letter, telling of his son's illness, Mr. Gardenell had written that lady, in reference to his wife's condition. Olive, as you will remember, wrote at the same time to Herbert, carefully shunning any allusion to her mother. She wonderfully succeeded in soothing and amusing her brother. He kept this "love-letter" as he called it, under his pillow for days.

"That green-eyed monster has fastened on my heart," she wrote, "and it is Cousin Fred he maligns. Poor me! what would I give to be in her place. I want her to be very kind and good to you, as good as I could possibly be, only I am sure

I cannot bear it if you are as grateful to her as you would be to me, or if you give her too lavishly of your smiles and thanks."

And who could ask better care than this invalid received. Mr. and Mrs. Rogers and Fred vied with each other in anticipating his every wish, and there would have been nothing too difficult for any member of this household to attempt, if there had been the barest chance of its adding to the comfort of their beloved patient.

But Herbert required little. And this Aunt Jessie declared caused her greatest solicitude. His uncomplaining patience and grateful consciousness of every smallest kindness filled her with gravest fears. Could anybody so good recover from illness? Would he not die after all? She told her husband privately that it would bring her instant relief if Herbert would only get cross just once.

Mrs. Rogers had carefully concealed from him his mother's condition, but not as wholly as she supposed. His father had thought it best to tell him a portion of the truth. It was necessary. His boy was too well acquainted with his mother to believe anything but inability would keep her from his side if he suffered; only actual impossibility could keep her from pouring out her heart to him on paper. No word from her would mean, "I cannot hold my pen." It was better to tell him what he must guess.

"Your mother has not been so well since you

left home," he wrote. "Her strength diminishes rather than increases, but we are trusting God the record soon may change. Meanwhile Dr. Germaine thinks it not best to inform her of your illness and thus add sorrow to her weakness. She does not suffer much pain, let us thank God for that. I know her son can trust his mother's God, and for her sake, as well as mine and his own, keep a steady heart, obey every direction of physician and nurse, making haste slowly that it may be surely."

Since then his father had written but once and to Aunt Jessie. The patient knew nothing of this letter, but his heart was uneasy, especially so at times, and he tried to stay it on God. "He knows," he would whisper to himself. "He knows and He can help. Just hold her close for my sake to-day, Lord. Rest her to-night, Jesus, rest her sweetly, and let her wake better in the morning."

And Mrs. Rogers, catching some of these words, thought his mind wandered, and went away to weep and pray.

But he was gaining. He began to improve from the hour Stanton's letter reached him with its hearty cheer and overflowing life. "I am going to New York, old fellow, congratulate me. I wish you were there, but can better afford to miss you than somebody else whom I very much want to see. I am going to risk my fate. Wish me good-luck."

Oh, the relief of it! The letter had been forwarded to the sick man from his last halting-place

and was two weeks old when it arrived. His friend might even now be with the dear ones, taking his place. The comfort of the thought! Weak as he was, he began a letter to Olive. It took several days for its completion, and was hardly despatched before a telegram from Stanton reached him, sent the afternoon of the young man's arrival in New York.

"Here to hold the fort. Don't worry. Take a strong dose of Isaiah. I suggest chapter twelfth, also the fortieth, twenty-ninth to thirty-first verses inclusive."—Stanton.

Something helped Herbert, perhaps it was the prescription. Aunt Jessie seemed inclined to think Stanton Cartwright a first-class physician, judging from the effects of his medicine. From that day her patient gained steadily.

Convalescence has its charms. After a while Herbert was able to sit up a little and listen while some one read to him.

Later on he was permitted to walk about the house, then the grounds, by and by short drives were allowed, and he began to prize his privileges. Elsie and Marian had been home for some weeks, to say nothing of Nason. And all of them were at his disposal, ready to come or go at his beck and call.

How sweet the air of early summer. It stirred with life. The invalid took great breaths of it and never tired. It was blessed to live, be well, be strong; and every day now new vigor came to his

body, new light to his eyes, fresh color to his face.

This was especially true after he received that last letter of Olive's with its precious enclosure from his father. His heart was set at rest, for he knew all now. His mother's danger, her recovery, his friend's part in the same, and the delicacy that preferred to keep the facts from Olive. Did ever any man before possess such a friend as his? His heart swelled with grateful pride.

The pæan of praise with which his father closed his epistle reached the reader's soul, stirring all the sluggish currents of his being until they leaped anew to claim life's duties and rewards.

CHAPTER XI.

"I DON'T LIKE QUESTIONS."

"The sweetest sound our whole year round ;
'Tis the first robin of the spring !"

"Some measure love by gold,
By endless time, by soundless sea ;
But I—I love you well enough
To leave you, love, if needs must be."

—FREDERICK J. FARGUS.

"Is there a young lady here, who wishes to go with me this morning ?"

The day was bright, the hour early, the speaker Stanton Cartwright, as he walked into the dining-room where two girls were busy with their work. There had been a week of damp, chilly weather, wholly frustrating the plans he had made for a tramp, but surely this day had dawned for just this purpose.

"Have you an answer for Mr. Cartwright, Lee ?" asked one.

"Not I," with a quick, mirthful glance. "I am far too busy, even if I were the invited party. But there isn't a single reason why you should refuse."

"Hear, hear," applauded the gentleman. "Get

on your wraps speedily, Olive, we must not miss a moment of this golden morning."

"I haven't decided to go with you yet."

"But you will; it isn't in your heart to crush the fond hopes of a fellow-mortal unnecessarily."

"That depends upon who the fellow-mortal is, and whether he is capable of being crushed. I intended to spend this forenoon with mamma."

"Mamma prefers you should spend it with me."

"O-o-o-h!" The prolonged exclamation savored of distrust.

"I have just come from her room. She is glad there is a happy day before us both, and gave me permission to carry you off."

"Did one ever see such a—a—"

"Fellow-mortal," suggested Stanton, but she broke out in another vein.

"Your fond hopes at least do not intend to be crushed, since they provide for every contingency."

"How pretty you are, Olive,"

"Your compliments do not strengthen your cause, Mr. Cartwright."

"Not they. My cause needs no strengthening. The crocuses and daffodils under the parlor-window are unanswerable arguments. There's a robin by this time in the apple-tree at Bloomingle, and you and I are going to investigate his house-building as well as the old house and buildings."

"O, Stanton, are we going to Bloomingle? Is it time to think of preparing the house? When will mamma be strong enough to be moved?"

forgetting her dudgeon in delight, as she fairly danced up and down in front of the young man.

A mischievous gleam shot through the brown eyes. "You and I are going out there to reconnoiter this very morning, Princess. Which means just thirty minutes in which to catch the train. We'll talk over mamma's removal on the way; the doctor's favor it as soon as possible."

"You blessed boy! I'll be ready in five minutes."

And two pairs of eyes met smilingly as the slight figure whirled out of the room. The smile on two faces broadened until it dropped in a laugh from the lips of one as her happy voice came back to them in snatches of song. "Is she not worthy of all love?" asked the brown eyes looking up inquiringly. "Yes, to one strong enough and patient enough to win and mould her," answered the gray.

"I am able," said the deep, rich voice of the young man, answering the unspoken answer. And the clear, earnest, speaking eyes swept him over comprehensively ere the lips replied: "I believe you are." So Lenore became Stanton's confidante.

It was a delicious day, every breeze a caress, so tender and so loving was it. The sun warm, not hot, spread a golden glory all around; the sky blue and cloudless, crowned the budding green of tree and field, as these two set out together. Nothing could dampen their ardor, even the dust and the heat of the cars were delightful because a necessary part of their outing.

The old house, how good it looked! Olive ran hither and thither among the hedges and trees hunting for birds'-nests, laughing in a very tremor of delight, when Stanton's prophecy proved true and two great robins flew out of the apple-tree.

"Oh, you darlings!" she cried, "you are the very same that were here last year. I know you, both. Are you glad little mamma will be here again to feed you this summer?"

She followed Stanton into the house, watching, while he threw open blinds and windows and dusted a chair for her occupancy. He threw a heavy shawl about her, declaring the house chilly after being so long shut up, bidding her sit quite still until he built a fire in the open grate. "Then we will have dinner," he said. But she followed him out after dried leaves and branches with which to start the blaze, and soon it was roaring up the wide-mouthed chimney, filling the room with its cheerful warmth.

"Isn't it nice, I like picnicking," she laughed, as she helped him prepare lunch, dictating over the setting of the plates and cups. It was a merry meal. Afterwards they went for wild-flowers, returning in time for a rest and talk before starting for the train.

"I hate to go back to the city," she said, "I wish mamma was coming to-morrow, don't you, Stanton?"

"Yes, dear," he answered abstractedly. He

was thinking that the day was most gone, and the avowal he had planned unmade.

"What makes you so dull?" she asked, detecting the preoccupation of this slave of her every whim. "Is anything the matter?"

"I have a question to ask you, Olive," he answered seriously.

"I wish you wouldn't," she cried, taking instant alarm.

"But I must; I came on purpose to ask it."

"I wish I had known that, I would have stayed at home."

"Olive, why do you think I came to New York this spring?"

"To help us," she answered naively.

"But I didn't know you were in trouble until I got here."

"No. I never thought of that. Stanton, you didn't come on purpose—on purpose—" pathetically.

"Yes, on purpose—on purpose," he replied laughingly.

"Oh, I hoped that was so far off! You won't make me say yes?" imploringly.

"I will not make you do anything you do not wish, Olive. Am I in the habit of compelling you against your will?"

"You've had your own way since you came; I know that. I wouldn't have come to-day only you made me."

"What! Olive, didn't you want to visit Bloomingdale?"

"Yes, I did, but I wanted just as much not to come with you."

"Honor bright, little girl," looking steadily into her eyes, "Were you not glad of an excuse to put aside your displeasure?"

"Perhaps," she admitted, his glance confusing her.

"And why did you hold any such feeling against me? Was there reason for it?"

"No, there was not," she answered frankly, after a minute of silence while he waited gravely for her reply. "You and papa had something between you that you did not tell me, and I wanted to pay you for your lack of confidence."

"Olive, what a daughter of Eve you are!"

"I don't see as I can help that, being born a woman. And it isn't manly of you to twit me of my sex, as I did not choose it."

"True," laughing. "Especially when I wouldn't have you any different for the world. It is delightful to have you so interested in all that concerns me."

How he made everything serve his purpose!

"I'm not sure I am," she declared with spirit.

"I am," he replied. "And, Olive, if you will answer my question as I wish, I will answer any number of questions you may put me, whatever the subject."

"Will you?" eagerly. "Oh, Stanton, I'd like

to, only I'm afraid I can't, your question is one I must not answer."

"Only five words and easy to understand, Olive. Will you be my wife?"

"I can't. Oh, Stanton, I truly can't," in evident distress. "It's mean of you to ask me. It is for Herbert's sake I've been good to you, and loved you, and now you want to take me away from him, and papa and mamma. I cannot go, and it isn't kind of you to ask me."

"Perhaps it isn't." From his soul this young man, whose face showed how deeply he had been hurt, admitted the truth of her arraignment.

The girl took one swift glance at the face that had paled in spite of all self-control and hid her own in her hands. "I hate questions. They spoil all the good times. Why couldn't things go on as they are forever?" she moaned.

He had been premature. The flower of love, as every other flower, must take its own time in which to mature. Had he been trying to force its growth? Because the perfume and color of full bloom and fruitage enriched his own heart, had he reason to demand it in another? No. He was wrong. He should have waited, would wait, and trouble her no more. They would go back to the old pleasant life. She should be unmolested, unafraid.

Something of this he said to her. And she listened, hardly hearing, but realizing through all her being that she had failed, not him alone, but herself, since she could not measure up to the ex-

pectation of this perfect love, this perfect manhood. If he did not win his answer, he at least won her deepest homage. If she could not give as he had asked, as he had given, she appreciated in that hour the magnitude of the gift offered her acceptance.

Her before-time friend, with all the fascination his grace and wit and worth had ever had upon her, never approached the man who to-day opened his heart to her so freely and in such tender solicitude, not for his own welfare, but her comfort. She was convicted that afternoon of such weakness, selfishness, unworthiness, that she wondered, not that she had rejected him—there was nothing else for such as her to do with such an offer—but that he had ever thought it possible she could understand him or his destiny.

That far-away shore and its teeming millions were reality to him, a life of self-sacrifice among them, not heroism, not matter-of-fact duty, but happy, natural choice, since they needed him. The danger, the self-abnegation, the daily crucifixion, seemed never to have impressed him until now when he looked at them in their relation to another. His tender, humble acknowledgment that he had not weighed all these sufficiently, or the separation from her dear ones, before thus speaking, touched her profoundly. She had done just right, he said. Out of her heart and the facts she had spoken, and he thanked her. And only one thing could grieve him now, and

that to know she grieved or let any word he had spoken or any thought of him trouble her.

Then he busied himself in stirring up the coals to toast some bread, playing cook once more, declaring they had time for a rustic supper, and then farewell to Bloomingdale.

But all his banter and gentle acts of love only deepened the wound in her heart. "Farewell!" She felt a chill come with the word, playfully as it was uttered. Where would he be when she was enjoying the pleasures of this summer resort?

She ate but a sorry supper in spite of his cheer, and sat quietly passive while he packed up the goods and sat down at the organ in a last effort at raising her spirits, to sing a class song Herbert and he had often rendered for her amusement. At last they must go. He rose and walked toward her with her cloak and hat in his hand, ready to help them on.

"You must not feel so badly over this, Olive," he said, the sorrow of her face smiting him sorely. "I shall not forgive you if you upbraid yourself. I am not so badly off after all, since I may still love you. You are willing I should do that, are you not?"

"I should feel *dreadfully* if you didn't," she whispered from under the hand over her eyes.

"Thank you, and never feel *dreadfully*, Ollie, for I shall always love you first and best."

"But you think me very unkind and mean?"

"Not I. Why should I? For telling me the

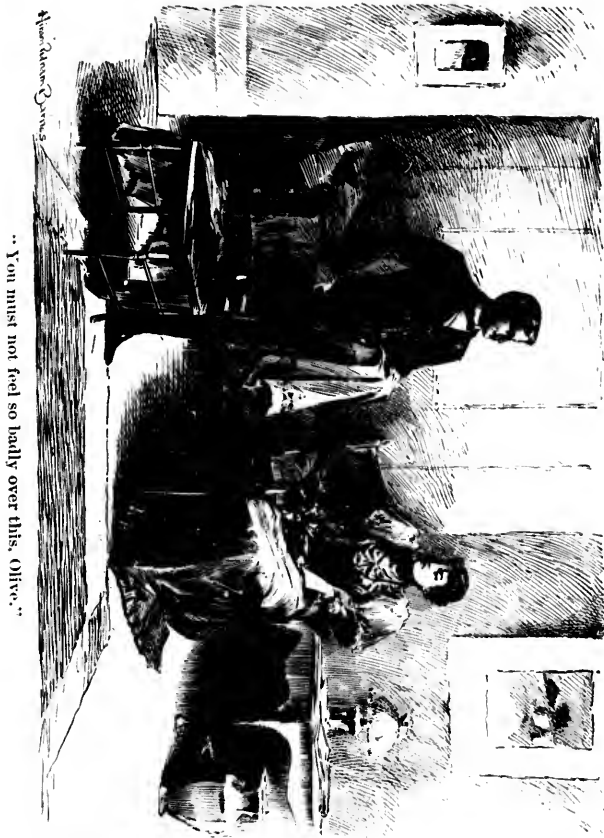
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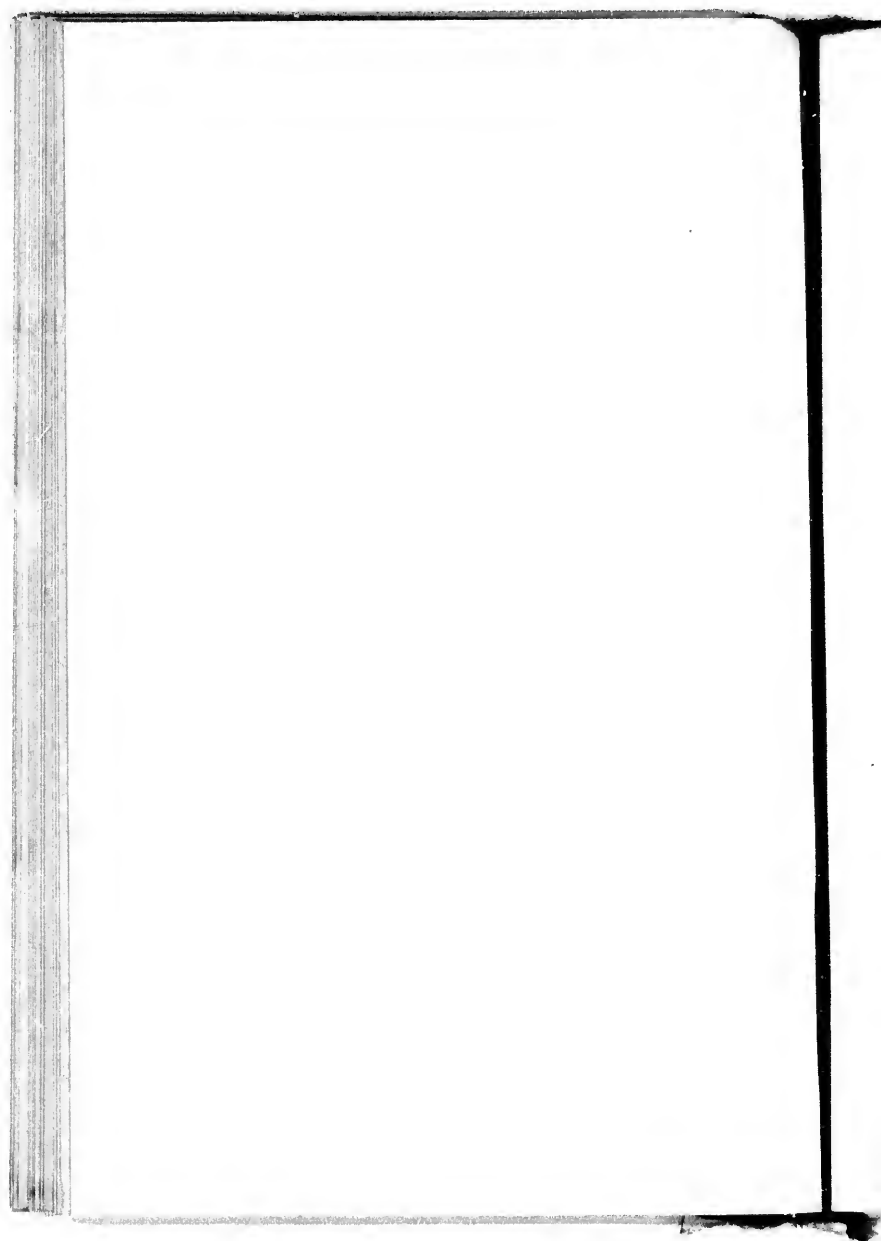
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truth? I wouldn't have you do otherwise. Are you to blame for not loving me any more than I am for loving you?"

"I did not say I didn't love you, Stanton," this from the voice behind the hand.

"No, pardon me. I simply meant not loving me as I wished, as I love you. Some day, dear, you will love some man just so dearly. Then you will understand why I dared make such a proposal; then you will not consider it too hard a thing to do when he asks you to be his wife."

"He never shall," eyes flashing wide up to his, hand falling to her lap. "I shall hate him if he does. I shall never love anybody as well as I do you, never anybody but just Herbert and papa."

A smile broadened over the gentleman's face. Was ever stranger wooing than this? Ever more inscrutable maiden.

"So much," he said, "Well, I am glad, and yet hardly enough to forsake all for me?" a suggestion of questioning in his voice.

"No," gravely, hesitatingly, "I do not love you as I ought, I do not *adore* you, Stanton," stammering guilelessly. And by a mighty effort the young man held his face imperturbably grave as she looked up with her troubled eyes. How fortunate that a moment after he could step behind her to arrange her cloak and give vent to that wicked smile that was clamoring for expression!

He stooped to lay those smiling lips on her shining crown ere he placed the dainty hat over it.

"I wouldn't worry, dear," he said soothingly. "You are not responsible for the impossible, and God will bring it all right." And, overcome by his tender sympathy, she threw both arms about his neck and sobbed out on his bosom the distress she had tried to conquer.

"There," she said at last, lifting her head. "You have been my brother so long, my second Herbert, that I cannot give you up or yet be proper with you, even when I have to refuse you and cannot be all you wish me to be. You will have to forgive me and forget me if you can."

"Impossible," he answered gayly, "and unthinkable. But we will have to make quick time unless we intend to remain at Bloomingdale over night."

CHAPTER XII.

GOOD-BYE.

"'Tis only when we dare not hope
That we are truly poor."

It was a very silent ride home. Stanton tried to avoid Olive's eyes when he saw his glance troubled her. He attempted to interest her in what was passing, but gave it up after a few futile endeavors. He had brought sorrow to this child-woman, whom he had truly desired only to bless, and his sympathetic heart ached.

He chided himself severely. He had not been right to think of taking her from such a home as hers to such a work as his, teeming with hardships and peril. After all, was not his a selfish love! Selfish love! What a contradiction of terms. His heart said "No" emphatically to this suggestion. He loved this girl so truly, so unselfishly that to be sure he could not take her with him, was almost relief in spite of his disappointment.

Disappointment! He had heard somewhere that the letter H put in the place of the D gave the correct rendering of this word. Not disappoint-

ment but His appointment. This consecrated Christian had no doubt that this maiden's way was for him God's appointment and therefore best. Was it God's appointment also that to this bright young life pain and questioning should come through him? This was harder to believe, harder to accept.

They found Miss Erdley waiting to be relieved that she might return home. She asked after their day, and Stanton answered her. He helped Olive off with her wraps and put them away, opening the door for Lenore and bidding her a quiet "good-night."

When he returned to the parlor Olive was gone. A few moments after, pausing before Mrs. Gardnell's door, about to enter, he heard the maiden's voice. She was talking about Bloomingle, trying to give her mother some idea of its springing beauty, but all the spring seemed gone out of her young voice.

He passed on to the study. Mr. Gardenell was not there. He had time for a quiet hour of thought and prayer, and a retrospect of the afternoon's conversation. It had its comic side and he appreciated it. In spite of his pain he smiled there alone in the dusk.

"Anybody here?" Mr. Gardenell touched the electric button as he spoke, and a tall young man started up under the flashing light.

"Well?" There was a question in the little word as it dropped from the gentleman's mouth, as Stanton

Cartwright, with the reflection of his recent smile still on his lips, stood before him.

"I do not love you as I ought, I do not adore you, Stanton." With a gleam of irresistible humor the youth repeated Olive's very words in her very tone.

"My poor girlie! she is a baby yet, at least in heart," said her father. "Really, I don't see as you can do any better than let her grow awhile." And then both men seized each other's shoulders and, standing at arms' length, laughed till the tears stood in their eyes, the position was so droll in spite of its pathos.

And at that very moment Olive was sitting disconsolately and alone in her chamber, shedding tears over the pitiableness of her position.

"It is mean of Stanton Cartwright to think I can give up everybody for him. Why can't a man be content with his own sisters and not be after other people's?" With a wicked little flash of indignation. "Oh, dear, I hate to hurt his feelings, for he is just the best man I ever knew except Herbert, and I'm afraid he is very miserable. I'm sure I am, and I suppose I've really jilted him. What an awful word! I never intended to do such a thing as that. And Stanton, jilt Stanton!" Another little weep. What a pity she could not have seen those two strong men laughing unto tears over the ludicrousness of her jilting!

Olive was quite prepared to see a broken-hearted youth the next morning at table. She had thought

so much over the affair that she quite dreaded to descend to the breakfast-room, and sat quite a while summoning up courage for the trying ordeal. And there was Stanton, his very self. Bright, self-possessed, with not a melancholy or reproachful glance. She might have doubted yesterday had ever been but for his pleasant talk with her father about the house and garden. She concluded the gentleman did not care so much for her after all.

As she entered the sitting-room after prayers, she caught bits of a conversation that made her dubious.

"You think you must go immediately?" This from her father.

"Yes, sir, unless I can serve you by remaining, I think I had better start to-morrow. I would like to see Mrs. Gardenell safely at Bloomingdale before going away, but as it is not yet certain when she can be moved, duty seems to call elsewhere."

"Going!" Olive's face and heart fell, she resorted to her father ere long.

"Papa, what makes you let Stanton go away?"

"Why, my darling, we cannot always claim his time. He has his work to do in the world, and must prepare for it."

"But I don't see how we—you can get along without him and Herbert gone."

"I hardly see myself, dear, but we must not be selfish. I am grateful to God for loaning him to us so long. Only He knows what it has meant to have him with us these past days."

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"Keep him a little longer, papa, please. You can. I heard him say he would stay if you needed him."

"Do I need him, Olive?"

"Why, yes; don't you, papa?"

"Suppose I turn the question over to you, little daughter. Of course you do not need Stanton. A man who could so selfishly imagine a young lady might give up father and mother for a place by his side!"

Her face flushed, she hid it on her father's arm. "Papa, it does seem a great demand for any man to make."

"It does, indeed. Too great, dear, where love does not warrant it. But I asked as much of a woman once and was not denied."

She looked up shyly into his face, a mingling of curiosity and surprise on her own. "Oh, mamma you mean. How strangely it sounds, as if she could have ever been anything but mamma. It seems as if she must always have belonged to you."

"She did, but it was years before I found her, and, Olive, she was neither angry or dismayed because I recognized her as my soul's best self."

The maiden was silent a moment, her face hidden again.

"You are different," she whispered presently, "you are Papa Gardenell, and have a right to ask and take."

"I was not Papa Gardenell then," was the

smiling reply, "but a heart-hungry young man with a great hope and a great fear. It was your mother's 'yes' that crowned me with fatherhood, Olive."

"I'm glad she said it," answered a very low voice. "I would never forgive her if she hadn't. I should have *hated* any other father but you."

And then she ran her face clear in under his chin and wet his neck with her tears, because he laughed at such a ridiculous speech, as who would not.

And Stanton went away, his bright, frank face unclouded, his honest brown eyes looking straight into hers as he said "good-bye."

"If you ever feel like changing your mind, Ollie, just write me a word and make me glad. Oh, I shall be glad, even if you don't," he added, seeing a shadow flit across her face. "Glad that you are your own true self, loving truth too well to forfeit it, even to please your friend. You must not think you have hurt me," he went on, reading her heart better than she knew. "See," straightening his tall figure, and throwing back his broad shoulders, "I am big and strong, and able to bear hard things. I covet them. I have my mission and my God, and," his rich smile illuming all his face, "abundance of hope. I cannot be, I am not discouraged or dismayed. When I ask in God's will, I always expect an answer in His time. I can wait."

Then he was gone, his kiss on her face, over

which tears streamed so fast, she could scarcely follow his form down the street. How grand, how manly he was. Never before had he seemed such a hero in her eyes. Straight on he strode; would he not turn, look back once? He reached the corner, another moment and he would be out of sight. Breathlessly she waited for one farewell glance. Yes, it came. His smile, flung back like a sunbeam, made a rainbow of her tears. It seemed to her as if lightning flashed from his eyes to hers. Before she could answer it, was recovered from the shock of it, he was gone, but he had left behind him something of himself hidden in the deepest depths of her heart.

Strange, but the fear that she had wronged him, the haunting uneasiness, the consciousness of pain and heaviness went out of her with the incoming of that smile. His prayer was answered, she was comforted, and he had comforted her. She would miss him, oh, so much, so constantly, think of him every hour of every day, reproach herself a little sometimes that she had not better appreciated him. But the weight was lifted from her heart, the clouds scattered, the sun appeared. Her father wondered a little at the radiant face she lifted to his an hour later.

That night she told her father of that smile, sitting on his lap and smoothing with her fingers his graying hair. "He is happy, papa, really happy. If I did not know that, I should be wretched, but I do know it, I am sure of it. Isn't it strange how

miscrably unhappy I was until he was fairly gone, and then, at the last instant, as he disappeared, the burden went also, and I felt satisfied, assured that he did not need me, was sufficient unto himself."

Mr. Gardenell did not undeceive her. There was time enough. Let her own heart reveal to her its secret. That "golden smile," as she called it, would do its own work, had already begun it. Like begets like. Souls big with maternity reproduce their kind. From his study window he had caught that parting glance and guessed its object and its source; he had no doubt of its mission.

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CHAPTER XIII.

DEEPER LIFE.

"It is the lives like the stars, which simply pour down on us the calm light of their bright and faithful being, up to which we look and out of which we gather the deepest calm and courage.—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

"His blessing comes not from our work and labor, but from yielding ourselves to His will."—LAULIER.

"COUSIN HERBERT, I should like to have a little talk with you."

"I know of nothing which would delight me more," was the reply, as the young gentleman looked up from the book in his hand to the maiden, who stood, half bashfully, before him. "It is kind of you to wish to let cousin a bit farther into your life. I assure you he appreciates it."

"He finds something to appreciate in everybody," she replied, shaking her head smilingly. "I wonder if that is the reason everybody appreciates him?"

"Do the,?" Thank you. Sit down here beside me. Aunt Jessie said she would be gone an hour; that will give us time for a long chat," seating her

in a low rocker. "There," dropping into an easy chair, "now I am ready, Rea."

She flushed, hesitated, and finally burst out, "I am so little, Cousin Herbert."

He smiled. "Not an unpardonable thing in a woman. I would hardly like to have you as large as myself, Rea, though I suppose I could bear it."

She laughed. "Now you are teasing me," she said, "and I am very much in earnest. You must not make fun of me, Herbert."

"I will try not to," he answered.

"I am not like you," she began again, and met his smiling eyes.

"Just what I remarked a moment ago. Let me assure you again that I am glad of it."

She half rose from her chair. "Shall I leave you?" she asked. "Am I, then, such a bit of folly that you have no earnest words for me?"

"Indeed no," he replied, detaining her. "Teasing is one of our family propensities, and has grown by exercise. You seemed so much like Olive bemoaning her shortcomings, I could not deny myself the pleasure of retort. I was always the receptacle of her woes."

"Then, perhaps, you will know better how to deal with me, only I want to forewarn you I am not in the least like her."

"Oh, you are not! Perhaps I am the better judge of that since you never saw her face," answered Herbert.

"I draw my conclusions from such members of the family as I have seen. She cannot be what I am. So insignificant, untalented,—I simply am and do nothing!"

"Except?" replied her listener. "Who is mother's right hand and father's comfort? Who carries the care of this big house?"

"Yes, of course such things—but they don't count."

"Where?" he inquired, "here? you know how they count here, and they surely count in heaven, little woman." He was grave enough now.

"But," she hesitated, "everybody lives two lives, the home life and the outside or world life. Of course I am necessary to father and mother and the girls. But the world, or even this village, what do I do for them? What can I do for either? I wonder and wonder. I look the ground over carefully, but I haven't one talent."

"Really?" asked Herbert in pretended astonishment, for she was near to tears. "If this is true, Rea, there is nothing required of you. But you are the first person I ever found so situated."

"Well," she admitted brokenly, "at least my talents must be very small."

"Let me remind you of the words of our Lord: 'Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?' Can you have less, comparatively speaking,

than seemed those loaves and fishes before the multitude that waited for bread?"

"But Jesus was there."

"And is He not here?" he asked gently.

"Not just the same way, Cousin Herbert."

"But as truly, surely."

"To you? Yes. That is what troubles me. Not that you have Him—His very presence—but—that I have not, Herbert." She lifted her tearful eyes to his. "I cannot recall any one conversation you have had since coming to us such as people would call religious, but you are never near, in the room or even house, but that every one feels tenderer, holier, nearer heaven and God, realize not only the truth of His love and care but His presence, Himself, nigh at hand and not afar off."

"I should be sad to know it could be otherwise," he made gentle reply, "for He is ever with me."

"I know it, everybody knows it. Your presence brings Him near. John our hired man tacitly admitted as much the other day. 'I declare,' he said, looking after you with such love and reverence in his eyes as no one ever saw there before. 'I declare the angels themselves would want to wash their feathers when he was around.'"

"I am only a sinner washed myself," said he humbly. "God forbid I should ever come between the vision of my fellows and their God. He ought to meet men first in every consecrated life."

"You need not fear," she answered quickly. "None so ignorant but he must know your life is

something beside the product of human endeavor. Even I know that there can be no life of power without a God within it."

"Amen," said Herbert.

"But this is what troubles me, Herbert, I too am a sinner washed and forgiven: Yet my life has no such power to either attract or help; the hidden spring is not in it."

"Perhaps because you washed only your sin and not yourself in the Blood," he replied tenderly. "There is great difference between the two things, Rea, and both are necessary to highest results. If I had not long since handed over self to Christ for crucifixion your words could only have done me harm this afternoon. But as it is I glorify God who, out of such a weak, selfish human heart as mine is naturally, could yet make a vessel meet for His use."

"How shall I get there?" whispered the girl.

"By surrendering your whole life, spirit, soul and body once and forever to the Lord Jesus Christ. Solemnly and unreservedly placing and *leaving* yourself in His hands to be and bear and do all His will. Then keep your eyes off of yourself, your feelings, everything that makes up the old self life and on to Jesus. Let Him take care of you, your death to self, your resurrection to life. Once fully His that is no longer your business. Your business is to count that done which He consents to do and rejoice evermore."

"But what if I should shrink afterwards, draw back?" under her breath.

"He will hold you to your purpose if honest, and wait patiently until you are still enough in His hands to let Him complete His work. There is no danger on His side, and it is all His side when all given to Him. He will never yield again what is once truly given to Him; but we can hinder, delay the work by our vacillation and impatience."

"What if something in me refuses to be bound to the altar?"

"Ask Him and trust Him to bring that thing to willing surrender and never worry about it. Rea, we can do nothing but *will*, that is our one great endowment. It is for you to will yourself wholly His, and it is for Him to make you so. And if you are not yet absolutely willing, if you are willing to be made willing He will bring it to pass. Give yourself to the utmost of your ability, freely and fully, and where you can no longer *give*, where something within holds back, ask Him there to come in and *take*. He will do it. He is only waiting an invitation to enter and occupy all your being, filling you with the perfume of His grace and blessing you with the fruitage of His love."

"Herbert I want to do this now, will you pray with me?" And the Lord hearkened and heard.

Did the young man imagine it, or was there from that day an added loveliness in this girl's life? If it was imagination many shared it with him.

"Herbert," said her mother, "what spell have you wrought on Fred, do you not notice how pe-

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"Jessie," said Mr. Rogers to his wife, "If our little girl keeps on she will soon have wings. She was always good enough, but there's something different about her and I'm not sure it's healthy."

"Nonsense," answered his wife. "She feels the strong spiritual atmosphere Herbert brings with him and grows fast as flowers will under favorable conditions."

"How sweet Fred is of late," said Marion to Elsie. "She grows more like you, thoughtful, and quiet as if there was a joy inside that held her still. I wonder if it is Cousin Herbert! He doesn't talk much about religion, and yet he never talks anything else. It is all through everything he says and does; there is not an inch of him that does not make you feel God. I've seen him smile at Fred as Mabel does when she is encouraging baby to walk, and Fred looks sometimes as if she was near to adoration. She had better be careful since he is a cousin."

"He is no such thing," answered Elsie. "We like to think we are related to the Gardenells, but we are not. Papa was only the adopted son of old Farmer Walton, and Aunt Yensie was his niece. They were thrown much together as seeming cousins, and papa petted and stood up for her in so brotherly a fashion that she always regards him as such. She's very lovely. Mamma says she was always papa's ideal of womanliness."

"What in the world are you here for, Miss Fred? It's no place for you, and you know I don't like your interference."

"It isn't interference, it's bread, Nason, and I'm setting it so you may have time to go to meeting to-night."

"As if I cared anything for meeting. I'm none of your pious kind."

"But you will be, won't you, old blossom, if only to please your baby girl? If you'll be good and sit still I will braid your hair, and that will be ready."

"I declare for it," muttered Nason to herself, as she changed her dress and arranged her bonnet, "that girl will make a fool of me yet if she keeps on. I just can't resist her of late. She's getting too good," drawing the back of her hand across her eyes. "I'm not sure I like it. My mother always said the good die young." And the members of her own household were not the only persons who noticed how fast this young life began to ripen.

CHAPTER XIV.

TWO SUITORS.

"Love, Earth's lord, must have his lordly will."—PAUL H. HAYNE

WITH the exception of Nason, busy in the kitchen, Herbert was the only person in the great farm-house. Mr. Rogers and his men were busy in the fields, Mrs. Rogers and the girls had taken a long drive to call on a family recently come to these parts and neglected thus far through the illness of the before-named gentleman. He had been pressed to join them, but excused himself, as there were letters he ought to write.

The first page of the first epistle was hardly completed, however, when, glancing up, he discovered a tall, lank, awkward-looking specimen of humanity coming up the walk toward the house. The stranger mounted the front steps and walked across the piazza directly to the window and peered in as if seeking to see somebody. His eyes met Herbert's with evident disappointment.

"I s'pose Fredreeky's round somewhere?" he inquired anxiously through the screening.

At the sight of the big, round face, and prominent light eyes, Herbert was reminded forcibly of his cousin's description of Silas Crowden, the morning of his arrival at the farm. When "Fredreeky" fell from the man's lips he had not a doubt of his identity.

"No; she has gone away this afternoon."

"I s'pose she'll be back soon?"

"Not until quite late, I fear."

The man left the window and came round to the door, walking in and helping himself to a chair.

"I s'pose," he said, beginning his further remarks with the expression used twice before, "I s'pose now you're the chap from the East that I've heern tell on? You was took sick, it seems?"

"Yes. I am from New York, and have been sick, as I believe you have been also, Mr. Crowden. I am glad to see you are improving in health as well as myself."

Mr. Crowden's face lighted. He felt flattered. This stranger had heard of him. Herbert, on his part, was also reaching favorable conclusions. This man was not so ill-appearing after all as one might have supposed who heard Fred's description of his charms. He certainly had little beauty to boast—"full moon" exactly expressed the cast of his countenance—he was certainly rough, ignorant, uncouth, and inclined to self-importance, but, as this gentleman judged, neither gross nor lacking in a certain manliness of intent and purpose however misapplied.

"Waal, yes, I am gittin' along, thank ye. You're a parson, it seems, and a cousin of Fredreeky's?" going on with his investigations.

"I am certainly a minister," answered Herbert smiling, "and Miss Rogers calls me her cousin, but there is no tie of blood between us."

"Ghēwhacky! yer don't say so. I s'pose now you're fond of her?"

"I certainly am," admitted the gentleman smiling.

"An' she sets her eyes by you; everybody says so. They say as how she waited on you by inches when you was sick."

"She and Mrs. Rogers have certainly been devoted nurses, no man could ask better."

The westerner looked puzzled. How much did this non-committal young man care for this maiden? "You're pious," he said slowly, "gal's run to religion. I never had none to speak of, though it's a good thing. Fredreeky's pious, an' it's not the worst thing in a gal, especially when she's the purtiest and smartest thing for miles around. I 'spose now she really likes you, Mr. Garden--Garden--it's something about gardening?"

"Gardenell," suggested Herbert, wondering where all this would tend.

"I'm a good mind to tell you the whole buz'ness and ask your advice; that's what you parsons are for, I take it?" frankly. Again the young man smiled, he had found wiser men than Silas Crowden with the same idea of his vocation.

"I shall be happy to help you if it is in my power, Mr. Crowden," he said.

"Wall, I don't know as 'tis 'zackly, but you can jedge for yourself. I think a good lot of Fredreeky, I might's well own that up fust thing, for it's true."

"That's honorable," said Herbert. "No man need ever be ashamed to own an honest love for a noble woman. It honors him and her alike."

The man's eyes shone, he extended his hand. "Good for you, parson; you'll do, I'm thinkin'. Wall, as I said afore, I like Fredreeky, and I'm well fixed, with a fust-class farm and a lot of cash and cattle, and all that, and a woman who is after me hot foot, only I had my heart sot on this one, do you see?"

"Yes, I see."

"T'other one she's a good cretur, a real good cretur, and nussed me through the fever, an she's as sot on havin' me, as I am on havin' this one."

Herbert nodded. "I think I understand your predicament, Mr. Crowden. Your heart seems leading you in one direction and your judgment in another. You cannot help a certain leaning, a certain tenderness, for the woman who has proved her devotion to you, and yet——"

"You've hit it 'zackly, Mr. Garden; I'm in a sort of mixed-up state of mind, and t'other one is pressin' me hard, an' it's got to be settled at once."

"I see. Now I wonder whether you will take my advice after I give it?"

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"Sartin sure, unless it's too big a dose to swallow. Mr. Garden, you think my chances are purty slim with Fredreeky?"

"Well, yes. I think they are. You have heard the old saw, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.' A woman who has already proved her devotion by nursing you through a severe illness is not to be lightly esteemed."

"You're right there, parson, solid right. I've thought of that myself, even if she isn't so young or so handsom as this one. But my heart is awful sot on Fredreeky. She's skittish and offish. But the stuff's there, I allow, and get her once to likin' a fellow and she'd stick to him through thick and thin. I won't say I'm not well puzzled atween em both, t'other one being allays arter me, and I bein' allys arter this one."

"I judge from your estimate of my cousin, Mr. Crowden, that you have a mind of your own and one capable of seeing two sides of a question," said Herbert with the wisdom of the serpent, thinking he saw a way to serve Fred and her would-be lover at one and the same time. "Now I put it to you as a gentleman, is it quite fair for a man to thrust his attentions on a lady after he finds they are disagreeable to her?"

Mr. Crowden winced, but he offered no remark, and his adviser proceeded.

"You can understand that a person of Miss Rogers' temperament is subject to strong prejudices and apt to misjudge any one who presses her too

closely on any question. After a second's consideration too, you will see that she is very unlikely to change her mind when once made up. In my judgment the best way for one in earnest to win her favor would be to act moderately, indifferently, in fact let her alone until she makes some advance herself. If a friend of mine were so unfortunate as to be out of favor with her, I should advise him to use extreme caution if he desired to be reinstated in her affection. The less he troubled her with his presence and attention the better for his cause."

"I guess you're right, parson," admitted his listener, slowly. "But this here question's got to be settled at once. A fellow that's pressed himself can't be over and above cautious. Yet I s'pose it's hardly worth while for a feller to waste time a follerin' what he's never sure of ketchin'."

"Just so," assented Herbert, "especially when one more appreciative is waiting a nod to follow him."

"You're right there, young man, solid right. That's just what the t'other one is doin', waitin' anxiously for a nod, and givin' me a nudge now and agin, to let me know she's waitin'. I declare to it, I'm a mind to settle the whole thing this very night, an' give her the nod and ease her mind, for she's a worritin' over the thing and no mistake. She's a good cretur, Mr. Garden, and a good housekeeper and manager; a man could do worse. I s'pose now Fredreeky'll be settlin' in the East?" questioningly.

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"I really don't know, Mr. Crowden. I think she will be apt to settle wherever her heart leads her."

"P'raps you'll ride over and see me before you go East, Parson," said the Westerner, on departing. "I'd like to show you over the place, and I'll introduce you to the t'other one. P'raps," rather shamefacedly, "you'd be willin' to hitch us, seein' as I've taken your advice?"

"Gladly," answered Herbert, heartily shaking hands with him. "Let me know when you need my services and they will be freely yours."

As the family were about to leave the late supper-table that evening, Nason broke forth: "I think I saw Si Crowden hangin' around this afternoon, Miss Fred."

"Si Crowden," cried the girl, in dismay. "Is he able to be out again? What did he want?"

"Ask those that saw him," answered the woman with a meaning glance at Herbert as she left the room. Of course all eyes were turned toward the young man.

"My advice and my services," he answered to their questioning.

"Advice!" cried Elsie and Fred in a breath.

"He's one of Fred's admirers," volunteered Marion. "Poor Fred is one of the unfortunates with whom everybody falls in love."

"Mal!" said her sister, reprovingly.

"What advice did you give him?" asked Mr. Rogers, guessing the probable situation.

"I advocated enthusiastically the cause of the

devoted female who nursed him in sickness and is ready to cheer him in health."

"Did you win your cause?"

"Most surely, and an invitation to officiate at his wedding."

"Are you going, cousin?" asked Marion, clapping her hands, ecstatically.

"Certainly, and I will take you with me if you are good. Rea, you have lost one follower forever."

She rose with a flushed face and came to his side. "Are you sure?" she asked.

"Quite sure," he answered, smiling into her eyes.

"How can I thank you?"

"Get your wrap and take a turn with me in the orchard, where I can answer you better."

"Don't go far, children," cried Aunt Jessie, as she saw them stroll off under the trees. "Remember, Herbert, you are not strong enough yet to be out after sundown."

He turned and wafted her a kiss. "Yours obediently," he laughed.

An hour afterward as they stood together on the piazza, he said to this same woman, "Aunt Jessie, I have a great favor to ask you."

"It is granted before asked," she answered gaily, extending to him her hand.

"It is not your hand, but your daughter's, I ask," he said, taking the little palm nevertheless between both his own.

"Herbert! It isn't possible! You can't be in love with my Fred?"

"Aunt Jessie, it is more than possible, it is certain that I am in love with my Rea," he replied, smiling at her astonishment.

"You don't know how happy you make me. I am flattered, honored."

"Let me return your words with interest, you best auntie in the world, but you must not forget it may mean Africa for your darling."

"Yes, I know," she answered with a sigh, "but surely God has grace for me as for other mothers—for yours. And, Herbert, I know I would rather have her with you in Africa than with anybody else, though next door." And she put up her arms and drew his face down and kissed him.

"Fred, my boy, my only son, I am proud of you, and want to kiss you," cried this woman a little after as she entered her daughter's room, surprising her in her night-robe. "Do you know," taking the girl in her arms, "that you have won the grandest heart that beats in any bosom in all this broad United States? What! crying! and yet the possessor of such wealth. Fie on you! Herbert did not weep when he told me his joy."

"But he is big and could shine it out of his beautiful eyes, and I am little and have only my tears," looking up humbly through them. "It seems like a dream, mother, a beautiful dream that can never be quite true. It is surely impossible

that I should ever really be his wife. I cannot tell what it means to me that he should say he loves me. I cannot think it. I can only feel it and hold it close to be sure it is true. I could not believe it at all only he has said it, and that makes it indisputable. But, mother, grand and noble as he is, he does not love me as I love him. He cannot. It is impossible, because I am so unworthy of much and he so worthy of more than any woman could possibly give, though she render all, as I do. I who was never so insignificant as now."

"Oh, what reasoning! As if the worthier could not offer most. Look up, my pink, be sure Herbert Gardenell could never choose insignificance. His choice has crowned you. What a wonderful woman I must be," laughing and kissing the maiden's cheek, "to mother such daughters, the lowliest of which has proven herself fit for the peerage of heaven!"

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CHAPTER XV.

AFRICA.

"O my heart as white sails shiver,
And crowds are passing and hands stretch wide
How hard to follow, with *that* that quiver,
That moving speck on the far-off side!"

JEAN INGELOW.

"There amid the droppings of celestial speech,
Think you we may forget each said to each
'Good-bye, dear Love, good-bye?'"

S. R. G. C.

It was some weeks before Mrs. Gardenell was able to be moved, and then her physicians hung over her with the utmost anxiety. Had they not feared the heat of the city they would hardly have consented to her removal on any condition. But no evil attended it, and she gained fast under the delicious country air and fare. Slowly but surely she was coming back to life and her family, and their joy seemed complete when at last she could lie on the couch in their midst, joining in their conversation and song.

It was a sorrow to the whole family when they found Lenore could not accompany them to Bloomington. Mr. Gardenell had, before this, furnished a competent cook, sure that the entire charge of the

house too was much for the slender girl. They had prevailed on her to remain with them, however, doing some of the lighter work, for she had grown very dear to the members of the household. Mr. Gardenell regarded her very much in the light of another daughter, and treated her with the affectionate consideration he always tendered Olive. His wife had come to depend much on her firm but gentle touch, her quiet voice and step, and, as she grew stronger, both girls took turns in relieving nurse, and in reading to her. To them each this stranger had become one of themselves—a part of their family life.

It was to Olive who was descanting on the beauties of Bloomingdale, and laying plans for their future enjoyment, that Lee first said it would be impossible for her to go. Her words were met by a storm of regret, and grief, and argument.

"I cannot, will not, go without you," Olive declared.

"Mother cannot, must not, do without me," Lenore returned. "Indeed I must not think of it. There is an opening for me at Madam's. I am no longer necessary here; you can get along without me."

"Now you are cruel," was the reproachful reply. "As if we could ever do without you again. As if your work was what we cared for and not yourself." And Lee kissed her friend, trying to comfort her, assuring her that never before had any love been as satisfactory to her as was Olive's, that

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never before had any spot so seemed like home, that only because she knew it to be the will of God had she been able to look forward to this parting herself. Unable to move her from her purpose, Olive appealed to her father. He promised to do his best, and summoned Lee to the study.

"My dear child, I am sorry to hear you feel unable to accompany us to Bloomingdale; can nothing change your decision?"

"Nothing, sir, since I have not decided for myself," she answered modestly.

"We will make it very pleasant for you, Lenore."

"I do not doubt that," she replied. "I have never been happier than since I came to live with you. But you know we are to choose, not ease, but God's will."

The gentleman laid a gentle hand on her head. "You have been an apt scholar, Lee, since you have learned so much so early. But I have been wondering if your mother could not go with us too."

"You are kind, but it is impossible."

He smiled. "I have not tried my persuasive powers yet. Perhaps I can convince her how much the change will benefit you both."

She looked very much startled.

"O no, sir, you will not think of that, you will not, you must not, try to see mamma. She would never allow it." The distress in her voice was most real. Olive was right when she declared her friend had some secret sorrow.

"I certainly will do nothing that can grieve you," he hastened to say. "I am your friend. Lee, and you have been a great blessing to us. We dislike to give you up, but will not trouble you. Is there no way I can serve you, my child? Would you not like to teach?"

"Indeed I would, and I have been thoroughly educated."

"I have a friend who keeps a select school for young ladies. She needs a German teacher. I suppose you are not acquainted with that language?"

"It is my mother's favorite tongue I seldom read to her in any other. Is this school in the city, sir?"

"No, it is in another part of the State."

"I could not go, Mr. Gardenell, I thank you very much for your thoughtfulness," she said.

"Then it seems I cannot help you at all?"

"Mr. Gardenell," she replied earnestly, "you always help me just by being yourself."

He smiled kindly.

"Let me have your address, dear, I may be able to get you an opening in one of our city schools some day. In the meantime do not forbid me the privilege of remembering you in little ways as I do Olive." He took her hand in his. "What you choose to withhold from me, my child, I do not ever wish to know. But the privilege of a friend, a father, in caring for you, I covet. Do not deny me that."

She stooped impulsively and kissed the hand that held hers; he felt a tear fall on it.

"All that concerns my own life I would gladly open to your inspection," she said brokenly, "did not the life of another, bound up with it, close my lips. But your love," with a sob, "Oh, I thank you for that. I shall go out into life stronger and better because of it—*richer*," drawing a long breath. "I never knew, until I came here, what human love might mean. Earth can never be dark or drear to one who has a friend on earth and a friend in heaven."

He kissed her tenderly, asking God to bless her. How barren this child's life must have been on this earth side, how evidently luxuriant on the other, since she had become what she was! And when she went to her room and her mirror and looked at her own face and gently touched it. She almost dreaded to wash the spot where a father's kiss had fallen.

Her father had failed. Olive was disconsolate.

"It takes away half of the joy of Bloomingdale," she cried. "Just as I find a sister—after waiting for her for years—she is taken from me. It's too bad."

"And do I lose nothing?" queried her friend, in gentle reproof. "I feel as if I could poorly spare you, Olive. But I'm so glad I've had you a little while. It has been like a bit of fairy-land to be with you in this home. It will color all my

life, it can never be gray again. I shall always have these blessed days to remember."

"You will let me write to you," said Olive, suddenly conscience-smitten with her friend's sorrow and her own selfishness. "You will let me share with you all of Bloomingdale a pen can carry, and you will promise to come out if only for an occasional day?"

"Perhaps," assented Lenore doubtfully. "You may write if you send the letters to Madam's, and I'll come for a day if mother can spare me," and that was all she could promise.

Bloomingdale and Herbert! for he came the next week after they got settled there. He did not delay long after he was able to endure the journey. He felt he must see his mother.

"I can recruit at old Bloom," he answered to Mrs. Roger's suggestion that he should delay awhile longer. "The sight of mother is all that is necessary to complete my recovery."

Of course the young man told his parents and sister immediately of the new ties he had assumed, and Olive at least was inconsolable. She upbraided him with failing her.

"I never could have believed you'd love somebody else, Hervie," she sobbed. "There I jilted poor Stanton for your sake, and now—and now——" further than this she seldom got. And no words of his seemed to bring permanent soothing.

But time, that great healer of everything— hearts included—came to her help. After a few

days her sorrow grew less, seemed indeed forgotten for long stretches together, until a letter from Fredrica or some other circumstance brought it to her remembrance.

It was genuine joy in spite of all drawbacks to have her brother at home. The evil day was yet far off; she would enjoy him while she might. She had needed and was ready for a rest. They had plenty of help, she could be as lazy as she pleased, and the boys, Herbert, Harry and Eddie, three devoted cavaliers, were assiduous in their attentions to her and mamma. If it had not been for Stanton Cartwright and Fredrica Rogers she would have been perfectly happy, she told herself, and she tried to banish them from her thoughts.

Lee came for a day, but Herbert was away, and, unfortunately, as his sister thought, did not see her. She was very anxious he should meet her friend and pass his opinion upon her. Why could he not love Lee? She would like her for a sister.

It was a delightful day to the visitor, however much she would have liked to meet one of whom she had so often heard. Mr. Gardenell and his younger sons did everything in their power to enhance her pleasure. What with games in the morning, a ride, and a quiet hour listening to one of the gentlemen read in the afternoon, and a delightful song in the early evening before train-time, her day was pressed full. It gave her food for many happy hours afterward. How favored Olive was, what a vision of ideal home-life she had en-

joyed, how kind of her heavenly Father to give her these tastes of blessedness! What must it be to abide in such an atmosphere. Olive's letters were a great delight to the lonely girl. She was a charming correspondent, wrote often, and always of the things occurring about her and of her own peculiar trials and temptations. She had made a confidante of Lee, and into her heart she poured all that moved her soul. It was a peculiar experience, Lenore's first girl-friend. She loved, adored, crowned her. It was good for her, the new interest enlarged her life, taxing her prayers and sympathies in a natural and therefore healthful manner.

So summer ended, and early fall came, and with it a letter from Stanton with unexpected news. He was to start within a month for Africa. It was like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, striking terror to Olive's soul, bringing a tender, brooding awe to Herbert's, who had never dreamed his friend would go forth without him.

"It is very sudden," Stanton wrote, "but you know I am always ready. It seems they need some one at once and I have been selected. I am not sorry. Your new relations might delay you, old fellow, and in any case you do *not* need me as you might if going alone. It appears to be God's way for me and, therefore, my way for myself. I will have to spend most of the time left me here with mother. There are many things to be attended to before I can leave her. I shall probably have only a few hours with you all before sailing.

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He knows best. We will have all eternity in which
 to talk it over. Pray for me.

"STANTON."

October already. Another month and he would
 be gone, and she would only have one more little
 glimpse of his face. Olive felt the solid earth reel
 beneath her; how could she let him go from her
 forever? Oh, how her heart trembled, though
 her lips were kept so still.

She grew suddenly anxious to get back to the
 city. A week ago she would have deprecated
 such a move, have urged that her mother—almost
 her olden self again, beginning to pick up her
 past duties and privileges—needed yet a longer
 sojourn in the pleasant country haunts. But now
 every other consideration was lost in one; to be
 where she could see most of and be nearest to
 Stanton Cartwright when he came.

And he came. But, oh, for such a moment as
 it seemed to her! The sound of his voice sent a
 sort of madness through her blood, the glance of
 his eye made her heart quiver, and her eyes droop.
 She lived a sublime torture, an agony of joy in the
 few hours he was with them and life, for a time,
 lost all its worth when he was gone.

They were all together in the parlor that one
 night of his stay: father, mother, Herbert, Harry,
 Eddie and herself. Her poor trembling self, watch-
 ing him furtively when unobserved, her whole
 being a sort of human sponge absorbing his every

look, and word, and act. The evening fled so fast! To-morrow he would take the steamer and say "good-bye" as now he said "good-night." She envied Herbert with his arm about his friend's neck; her mother, with her lifted face and clinging kiss; her father's embrace and, "My dear boy." Even Harry and Eddie could take liberties with him she dared not. Yet he belonged to her as he did to no other, to her, even though she had shut him out with her own hand, shut him out from herself forever.

It was a gentle good-night, a tender pressure of the hand. But she fled from it as from a blow and spent the whole night tossing on her couch, mourning because she could not weep.

He was in the house, near her. She knew the room, the bed, in which he slept beside Herbert. Only a few steps if she willed, an opened door, and she might look upon his face. But to-morrow—to-morrow all her world would sail down the bay and out to sea and she would be desolate—desolate.

She heard the first fall of his step in the hall next morning. She had been listening for it for hours. She must see him once alone, if but for a moment, must say one last word before his departure. Yet she hardly dared go out to meet him, let him quite pass her door before she stopped him with her low, broken, "Stanton." He halted, turned and came to meet her.

"Good-morning," he said, with one of his rare smiles. "Do you want me, Olive?"

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"Yes, oh, yes! I want you to forgive me, to—
 to—" how strong is woman's pride. "Oh, Stanton,
 is there nothing I can do to please you before you
 go?"

"I think there is," he said, and she glanced up
 eagerly. How wan and haggard and hollow-eyed
 she looked! Poor little girl! would she never
 cease blaming herself for the past? He took both
 her hands in his gently. "I want to leave you
 two prescriptions, and you must promise me to
 take them daily until I return. One you have
 taken before, 'I *will* trust and *not* be afraid.'
 The other is 'All things work together for good to
 them that love God.' We love God. Ollie."

She shuddered. "That is dreadful, that last
 one. 'All things!' that might mean death."

"Yes," he said, "that might mean death, but
 never eternal death, never death without life in
 it. You would not have me risk less for my Christ
 than a soldier risks for his country? Olive, I want
 to see you happy, glad, nothing could please me
 more; let me tell you how; there is but one way
 to be always so; it is found by centring *all* the
 springs of life in God."

Her eyes and lips drooped, but she did not
 reply.

"Perhaps you would like to do something else for
 my sake," he said, "something very hard?"

"Yes, I would," she whispered.

He bent his dear brown eyes on hers, and stooped
 low to say it: "Take the sister Herbert brings you

close to your heart, Ollie. As close as I would take Herbert if you brought him to me for a brother."

Something glistened on her cheek; it dropped on the hand that held hers.

"Can you do so much for my sake?" he asked.

"I *will* do it for your sake," she made reply. "I have been very wrong and stubborn in that and everything. I will forgive her for loving Herbert for your sake, Stanton."

He smiled a little at the way she put it. "Is there nothing else you would like, Stanton?" She asked humbly.

"You might write to little mother, she will miss her big boy so much, and she knows you are my friend. She has seen your picture; you remember you sent me a little one when I was at college, dear."

"Don't you want another? I have one taken recently; it is more like me." She was off and back with the photograph in her hand before he could say yes or no.

He held it up, and looked gravely at the sweet face.

"You give me this," he said, "to go with me to the Dark Land? I cannot tell you how I thank you and how I shall prize it. I will look at it when my heart gets heavy. It will be a recipe for homesickness; a bit of home always at hand."

Her tears were falling fast from her drooping eyes. "Is there anything else you would like, Stanton?"

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"Yes, dear. You make me bold. I would like a
letter occasionally to put beside the picture."

"You shall have it," she faltered.

Then he lifted her suddenly to his arms, and
folded her closely to his bosom. "God keep you,"
he whispered, as he placed one clinging kiss on her
lips and gently standing her on her feet turned to
where Herbert patiently waited at the end of the
corridor.

The tender solemnity of his face checked the
question on her brother's lips, but Stanton answered
it.

"No," he said gravely. "She would have re-
fused me nothing I might ask this morning. But
I could not take advantage of her little conscien-
tious heart, sorrowing over this parting, to further
my own ends. God expects us to be *men*, Herv."

And from her end of the hall, Olive saw and
felt the lofty seriousness of his countenance. It was
like the face of a man who has turned from all
else but heaven.

And after that, what? The dock, the steamer,
the on-looking crowd, the touch of a hand, the
glance of an eye, and then the awful loneliness,
and heart-sinking as he drifted out of reach, until
the grand, upright figure became the veriest speck
on the horizon of vision, then disappeared.

And Olive stood looking into space, and heed-
ing nothing, not even Herbert's voice in her ear,
Herbert's touch on her arm. Her love overtook,
out-ran, steamer and lover. Time and space were

annihilated. Henceforth one spot of earth held her heart, and soul, and vision; her love and prayers. One word formed itself on her lips as she looked vacantly into the face of her brother. It was—"AFRICA!"

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CHAPTER XVI.

AN ACCIDENT.

"To-morrow the paradoxes of earth may reappear as the demonstrations of heaven."

"Perfection through suffering—there is love in that law."

F. W. ROBERTSON.

"There are no accidents since God is God."

S. R. G. C.

It took all the loving tact of which Herbert was master to bring Olive back to life after that parting.

There was a tacit understanding of the situation with the entire family, and all felt it best to leave her to Herbert's love and comforting. Indeed Stanton had commended her especially to him. His words took peculiar hold of his friend's memory; he could not shake them off.

"Perhaps God wants you at home, Herv," he had said at almost the last moment, his honest brown eyes looking straight into the blue ones that confronted him. "I hardly know why, but I have thought He might. Don't be hasty; be sure to find His will, and be sure He never makes mistakes. Take special care of Olive for my sake as well as her

own; and here's for the hastening of His coming and kingdom wherever we may work," extending his hand for the hearty grip awaiting it.

"Perhaps God wants you at home." What could his friend mean? Could he think for a moment the taking of a wife would interfere with his highest duty? Was it not one of the bitterest experiences of life to both that they were not going forth together? He must follow speedily. In the meanwhile he must find aggressive work to do, missionary work, that he might not be outstripped in the race.

He shared his thoughts and plans with his sister, finding that nothing else so interested her as something in touch with the great world into which her loved one had disappeared. He was a little surprised at her changed attitude toward his affianced. She asked about Rea, was eager to hear what every letter contained, wrote to her herself, and finally planned a visit from her to come about at the holidays, when Harry and Eddie would be home to meet her.

They spent much time together searching out the literature of Missions. Herbert was desirous of reading up on some of these lines, and Olive seemed never weary of assisting him, eagerly seizing every item that referred in the remotest manner to Africa, its climate, inhabitants, geography. They drew maps and arranged facts, and each morning, upon her knees, she took the "prescriptions" Stanton had left her, until at last their healing

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reached her heart and the symptoms of a robus-
ter life began to appear.

How time drags when we wait for its going!
How wearily they watched for the first line from
the traveller announcing his arrival in Liverpool.
They counted the days and weeks until a letter
from the coast informed them that his feet were
on African soil. Then, after months, came the
word that he had reached his destination and was
beginning his acquaintance with the natives and
the language.

These letters were all addressed to Herbert.
The wistfulness with which Olive read them smote
her brother's heart, as also the questioning in her
eyes when he opened each fresh epistle as if it
must hold something for her. They did bring her
kind words of remembrance, but she wanted some-
thing more, a letter of her own.

"Hadn't you better write Stanton a few lines
and enclose it in my letter, Princess?" said her
brother one day. "He must be wondering why
you do not write. I think he told me you promised
to correspond with him."

"Ought not he to write first?"

"Certainly not. And even so, imagine any of us
standing on etiquette with Stanton! You did not
extract a promise from him, but he from you. He
is waiting, he will only take such liberties as are
accorded him, but a few words from you will
greatly cheer him, I know. Suppose you tell him
the truth, dear."

"I don't believe I can, Herbert. I've tried," she whispered.

"Well, suppose I write it for you?"

"Oh, Herbert, not for the world! No one ought to tell him but me. Don't hint it, please."

She wrote him a stiff little note quite unlike those sent him in college days. The young missionary smiled as he read the very proper beginning and ending of this epistle. He could not know, though he more than half guessed, what she told Lee, that the more she felt the less she could express, that her love seemed to choke the utterance of even pleasant, common things.

The queer little letter had a postscript, however—Olive was fond of postscripts—which went far towards redeeming it.

"I've written this over and over but it won't sound right and you won't like it. I'd burn it up if there was any hope of my doing better, but there isn't. But, O Stanton, I miss you and think of you every day, and am trying *truly* to do what you asked and to be what you would like best. Won't you *please* write to me?"

"OLLIE."

He did write, kind, brotherly letters that were as dear to her as life, and which she wore as close to her heart as he did her pictured face. If he had only known, if he could have believed her expressions of friendship were something other than regret over the sorrow and disappointment she had caused him; or the natural regard for an old

acquaintance separated by distance, and therefore romantically exalted in her opinion he might have set her heart at rest.

Lee, who knew more of the case than any one else, had suggested, as Herbert did, that she write Stanton the facts. "He being what he is and loving you as he does, no harm could come from that."

But Olive shrank from the thought. "It is impossible. I have tried, the very look of the bald unvarnished truth frightened me. I burned the sheet. If he were here I might say it some time, anything so near the heart might slip over the lips unaware. But to write it down! I cannot. It isn't down when I write it. I have lost my faculty."

Fredrica was really coming to visit the Gardenells. It had been impossible at Christmas time, but was possible now. They were to go to Bloomington immediately after her arrival, for she was to enjoy what her mother assured her was an "untellable treat," a summer at the dear old resort. Olive wrote Lee in a little flutter of vanity.

"I have brought it about myself and you must come and see her, though I shall never love her as I do you if she is twice my sister." The arrangements once made, Olive counted the days before her appearance.

"To-morrow," she said to Herbert, "to-morrow. Think of it, only one more day to wait. Are you not glad?"

"Indeed I am," answered her brother, "gladdest

of all because my little sister is so ready to greet her. I cannot tell you how much I love and thank you," regarding her fondly, "for taking Rea into your heart for my sake."

"But it isn't for your sake," she replied flushing, "and I am not to be praised at all. I promised Stanton to love her for *his* sake, and I do."

"The Lord bless him!" said Herbert fervently, as he stooped to kiss his sister's hot cheek, "he enriches all he touches." Before he slept that night he despatched a letter, a few lines of which read thus:

"I shall see Rea to-morrow and bless you in Africa for the privilege. Olive has so opened her heart it has prepared the way for the visit, and she has told me the secret of her interest. Dear, unselfish friend, I wish I were like you. With neither time or selfishness to push your own suit you yet found opportunity to help mine. Let me assure you God is caring for yours."

To-morrow! It never comes. But that Wednesday morning dawned as brightly as if it did. Herbert Gardenell, Jr., with happy face and light heart, kissed his mother and sister and took the train for an adjoining town where he was to meet his beloved.

Horace Germaine and Mr. Gardenell were riding through the streets of the city that morning engaged in earnest conversation, when the glaring head-lines on a bulletin-board before a newspaper

office attracted the doctor's attention. He stopped his horse to read.

"An accident," he said, "and on the — road."

Mr. Gardenell's face grew white. "What train is it, Horace?" he gasped, everything turning dark before his eyes.

"The Western train, due in H—— at ten-thirty. It is the one we expected Fredrick on, but there is no cause for alarm," he went on, "the accident is a slight one."

"I must go to Herbert at once," said the father.

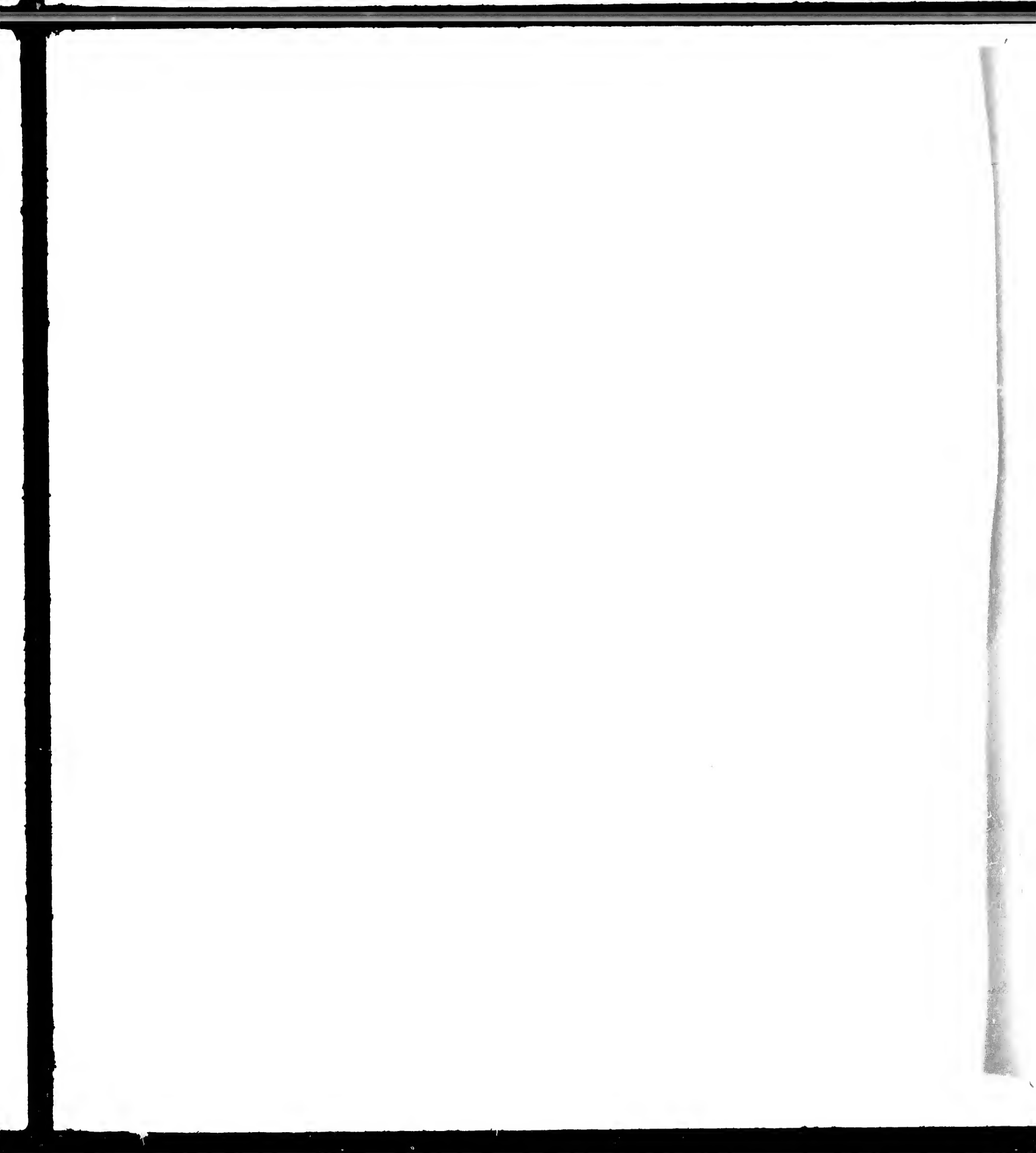
"Step into the office first and I will give you something, then I will go with you," answered the doctor, drawing rein at his own door.

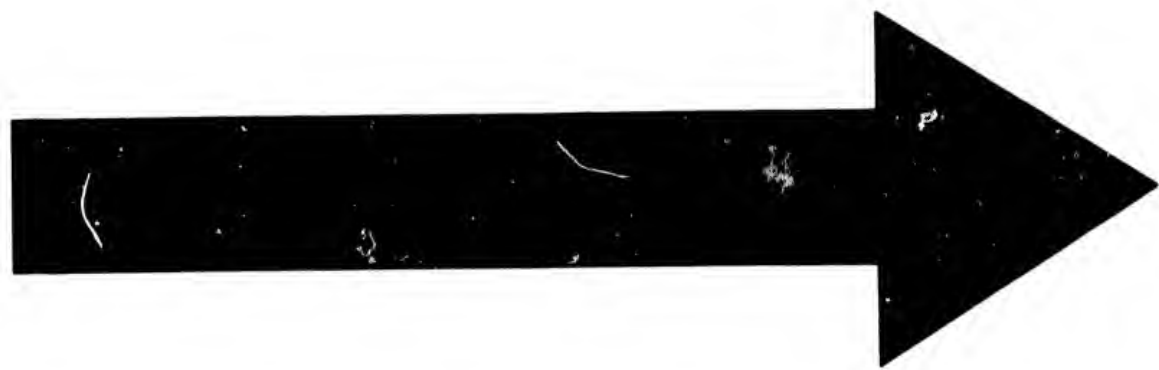
"A slight accident," so read the bulletin. "A slight accident" reported all the papers. "One car damaged, a few persons injured, only one killed."

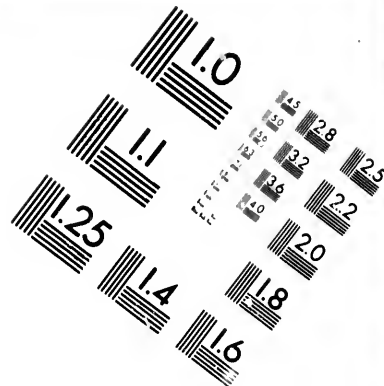
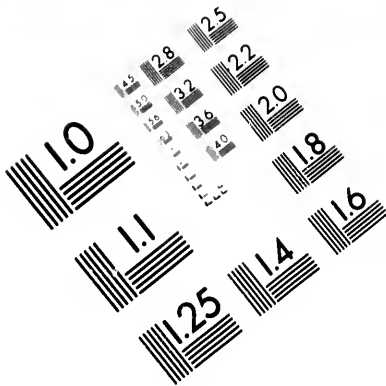
And that one lay with her pretty red-brown hair falling over and hiding the cruel gash on her brow, her eyes half-closed, the smile that happy thoughts of a near meeting had brought to her lips, frozen upon them. Thus Herbert Gardenell found his affianced.

His face was hardly less white than hers when he met his father and Dr. Germaine a while after. They had heard the truth, knew it all, he read this on their countenances as they approached. He was relieved to know he need not tell them.

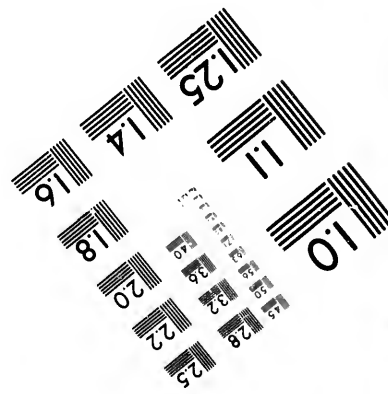
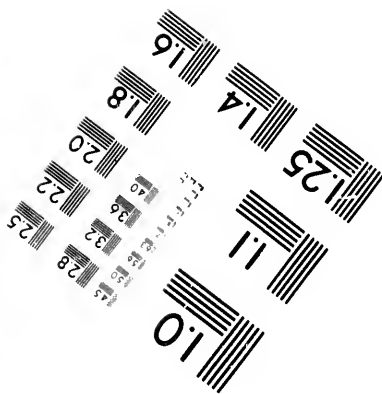
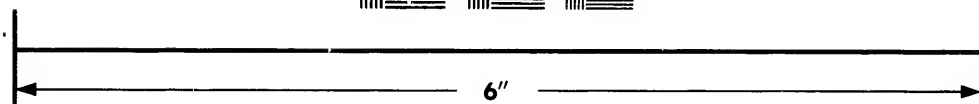
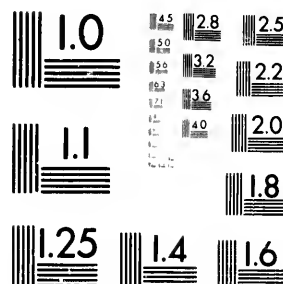
"I have telegraphed to Aunt Jessie, father, I shall take her back on the next train," he said.





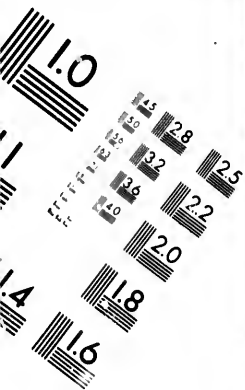


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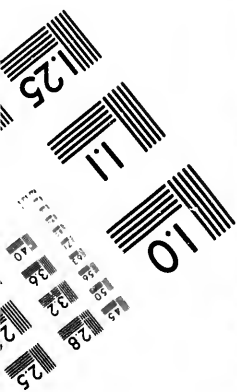


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"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away," said the elder clergyman brokenly, as he laid a loving hand on his son's shoulder. It was the son himself who finished the quotation, through white but unfaltering lips. "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

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CHAPTER XVII.

A NEW FEAR.

"But God is God, my faithful,
Of night as well as day;
And we feel and know that we can go
Wherever He leads the way."

—REMBRANDT PEALE.

It was Olive who wrote the sad news to Stanton with a cry of despair for herself.

"The Lord does not accept my tardy repentance. I have really learned to love Rea since I promised you I would, and now I shall never see her—and Herbert. Oh, Stanton, what can I do to atone for the past? What will Herbert do with his broken heart?"

"Take everything to Jesus," Stanton wrote back, but it was so many months before she could get his answer.

When it did come Herbert was home again from that sad journey to the place of his former joy, from Aunt Jessie's clinging hands and Uncle George's haggard face. Back to make ready for another departure. For he had no doubt this was God's call to sternest action. God did not intend

he should dally over any cup of earthly bliss. He needed him; the world needed him. This was why He denied him the joy of other men, that he might understand his calling to hardest labor and dreariest places where tender women and little children must not go.

There was no murmuring, no questioning. Before his Christ he laid his bleeding heart and with his all again upon the altar—for sacrifice or service—pleaded simply to know what next. No bride for him now but Africa, dark, lost, beautiful Africa! Ever since he had folded those white, white palms over each other in that little railroad town, and placed the cherished form in its narrow bed, he had seen those other dusky, outstretched hands beckoning him on.

His heart yearned to follow them, he grew impatient of delay. And then the postman left a little bit of Africa at his door. He tore it open eagerly; he read the burning words of sympathy and love; the tender, helpful, soulful words of one who could comfort because he had himself been comforted.

“They needed her in heaven. Nothing short of need would let the Father’s heart so grieve yours. Your choice was heaven’s choice first, the wonderful ripening you saw go on in her was preparation, not for Africa but Glory. Oh! the joy it must be to you in your sorrow to have been entrusted with the preparation of such a soul for such a mission. This is why you met her, that you might help get her ready for the King; this is why you

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loved her, because she so resembled Him whose
 you are and whom you serve."

All that one mortal could pen to cheer and com-
 fort another that letter seemed to hold. Near the
 close were these words.

"I am praying much for you. The time of
 sorrow may be also the time of extreme peril.
 Be very quiet and restful; do not hasten to do any-
 thing but pray. You will want to run away from
 your sorrow; God may want you to give it room
 and let it blossom in your heart. Be not precipi-
 tate, be *sure* you find His will, finding it I *know*
 you will do it. He has some purpose for *you* in
 all this. It is so difficult for us sometimes to real-
 ize God's thought for us, it so outreaches our
 thought for ourselves. You will want me now, and
 oh, how I should rejoice to clasp you! May not
 His will for you, for me, as far out-strip our con-
 ception of it as He has proven His will was for Rea?
 After all the only thing you and I need be careful
 for is to *let* His will be done. Herv, dear old fel-
 low, keep tenderest guard over father. I judge
 from his late letters it would be very easy for him
 to slip into glory some day unawares and leave us
 orphaned."

"Keep guard over father!" Somehow the sen-
 tence startled the reader. "Keep guard over
 father!" He looked at the loved form out of new
 eyes as they sat at the late dinner-table. Was he
 mistaken or did the dear face look white and wan?
 Had he been so selfishly wrapped up in his own
 sorrow as to forget those about him? Was he

planning work ahead and letting this most sacred work at his hand, of caring for his own, go neglected? He followed his father to the study.

"Are you feeling quite well, father?" he asked perching himself on the arm of the great chair where he had so often sat. It brought his eyes above his father's head, and noting the silver threads so thickly sprinkled there his heart smote him.

"I think I am as well as usual." The gentle, patient words falling like a rebuke on the young man's heart. "Did you come to talk over your future with me, my son?"

"I think I will not trouble you with myself to-night, father, you seem weary."

"Never too weary to listen to you, Herbert; you never trouble me, my boy." Oh, how true! Tears sprang to the son's eyes. The peculiarly tender solicitude of his father's manner towards him in his sorrow had touched him deeply before. Now he stooped and pressed his lips on the graying hair.

"The best father God ever gave to any man," he said. "I am not sure I have any plans. I am not capable of making them. I think I will take Stanton's advice and keep quiet, trusting a Higher to plan for and divulge His plans to me."

"A wise decision for a finite being to make. I—I feared," the word falling almost apologetically from his lips, "that you might have set your heart on Africa."

"It has been there for years, father. If God will send me there it will be truest joy. It is only to

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day that the suggestion has come that possibly God
may will some other thing for me. It has set me
at sea; I have lost all my bearings. I can only
pray and wait to see whereto this leads."

There was no answer. There was something,
however. A gasp as if for breath, the upward
heaving of a chest and head, as if for life, and
Herbert was on his feet, beside his father.

He did not ring the bell; he remembered his
mother. He carried the dear form to the couch and
chafed the chilled hands. He brought water and
smelling-salts, applying one to his head, the other
to his nostrils. He felt for his heart; it was flutter-
ing feebly; suddenly it leaped beneath his hand and
the eyes opened.

The sick man pointed to the shelf and whisper-
ed, "Behind the picture—I am better," trying to
smile. It was a bottle. Herbert counted the drops
numbered on the label, mixed them with water and
administered them. Then he sat down to watch
beside the patient until the ashen hue gave place
to one less like death, and his father tried to rise.

"Lie still," said his son peremptorily, "you
must not try to exert yourself."

The gentleman smiled. "I am better and exer-
tion up to a certain point cannot harm me. This is
nothing new or strange however alarming, Her-
bert."

"And you have kept it to yourself, knowing you
might die in one of these attacks?" reproachfully.

"There has seemed no proper time to divulge

the secret. I was not aware of the seriousness of my condition, though suspecting it for some time, until just as your mother became so feeble. Since then so many things have happened, I have not had grace to add this to the rest."

"So long ago," groaned his son in dismay. "Something might have been done if attempted sooner."

His father put out his hand and drew his son closer to him. "All has been done that could be done," he said. "I have consulted many competent physicians. They all tell me what Horace told me in the beginning—no hope."

To say the listener was smitten, is speaking feebly. He felt his life going out in anguish.

"So bad as that," he moaned.

"So bad as that or so good as that, whichever way we choose to meet God's will," answered the father. "My son, I would not lift my finger, if by so doing I could purchase health contrary to His will."

"Does Stanton know this?"

"He knows my peril and its extremity; he had to know. Horace would not let me share my heart's blood with your mother. Stanton knew the reason."

A groan was the only answer; forgive the young man if at that moment he felt earth very dark.

"You were ill at the time, you will remember, my son. Ray was away, the boys too young to be weighted prematurely, Olive already sorely bur-

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dened for yourself and mamma. You will see how
peculiarly I was situated, Herbert. I pledged
Stanton to secrecy."

Herbert dropped on his knees before the couch,
and drew his father's head to his breast. "And I
have been so selfishly swallowed up in my own joys
and sorrows that I have had no eyes for your need;
may God forgive me. And now, father, if you love
me, let all the weight of your life rest on me.
Let me lift it and you while I may."

"Thank you, my precious son, now, as always,
my pride and comfort. There is, there never will
be, any reason for you to berate yourself. I have
not suffered much. I have been able to hide it
from your mother. If her gentle heart has not
taken alarm, why should yours?"

"Sometimes I feel the approach of these attacks
in time to take my medicine and thus neutralize or
minimize the effect. When they have overtaken
me suddenly God has graciously provided for me.
I have never had a severe attack outside of these
walls. I have dreaded this revelation for you all,
especially for you, Herbert, since it would seem to
interfere with the dearest object of your life, the
preaching of the Gospel in other lands."

"Father, I will stay at home, I will do anything
you wish."

"No, my son. You are not your own or mine,
but God's. You will do as He wishes. You have
said to-night that the thought has suggested itself
to you that possibly He might mean something for

your life beside Africa. I think He may. We can ask Him. If the End—or the Beginning—is as near as I sometimes think, with Harry and Eddie yet unprepared for life, and mamma and Olive as they are, it may be—mark, I only say *may be*, Herbert—that God does will, for awhile at least, that you tarry. It would be a joy to me, Herbert, I admit, if I could know the home would remain as it is, for the present, that your mother might not miss too much at once, if this “other self” of mine as she loves to call you, could hold and cherish her until a little stronger grown and able to stand alone. Nay, do not answer me,” laying a hand on his son’s lips. “Wait until God teaches you what He would have you say. To mamma as to me His will is first and always best.”

“Dear mamma,” Herbert whispered, overcome by thought of her coming sorrow. “She ought to know, father, to be prepared.”

“I will tell her myself,” his father answered. “The time has come since it has been revealed to you.”

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BORDER LAND.

“No human fingers wrought the golden gates which opened,
 sudden, still and wide.

My fear was hushed by my delight.

Surpassing fair the lands ; my path lay plain.”

—HELEN HUNT.

“The soul will put her quiet house to rights

And in the upper chamber watch the dawn.”

—JAMES BUCKHAM.

MRS. GARDENELL was sitting alone in the dusk of her room ; a habit of hers. She loved the twilight, the hour she used to give to the children ; it had become her daily communion hour. Not so much a time for what we call prayer as for holding her heart up close to God's, resting herself in His love. Her husband loved to spend that hour beside her, he always knew just where and how he would find her at the close of every day. He opened the door

now.

“Yensie.”

“Yes, love.”

“May I come in ?”

“Surely.”

“I trust I shall not bring in one disturbing

thought," he said as she rose, and drawing him to her low chair, sat at his feet, her head on his knee.

"You never do," she answered, as he stroked gently with his hand the soft hair from her brow.

They were quiet for a few minutes and then he said, "I have a new realization of heaven, dear. It seems very near of late—homelike,—almost as if I had been beyond the gates aja. and knew something of its atmosphere."

She did not speak, she only drew his hand to her lips reverently.

"Yensie, you and I have found the will of God the sweetest thing of life?"

"The sweetest thing of life," she assented.

"Even when, sometimes, for a little while, we hardly apprehended it as such and it seemed adverse and strange?"

Again she assented.

"Sometimes," he went on, "God gives us longings for things because He is longing to give them to us. Begets in us desires that He may satisfy them."

She did not reply. All her being had suddenly taken ears to catch the next word he might drop.

"I think, perhaps, oh yes, I *know* that is why He is making me so familiar with heaven. That knowing it I may not miss earth, not grieve to leave it."

He felt her start under his hand and soothed her with a touch.

"Yensie, my heart's darling, truest wife, you have always met my spirit's highest aspirations

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highest aspirations

before I voiced them; held me to not from God's
best; helped not hindered me in reaching the fullest
expression of His will. You will not falter now
if He is ready for me first? I think He needs me."

She did not start now, nor speak, nor weep, nor
sigh. She held herself still lest she should fail
him in this supreme hour of his life.

"I have been wanting to tell you this, yet not
knowing how. If you could see as I see, love,
you would rejoice. I am glad now that you know,
because He can reveal Himself to you in a new
way, teach you what He could not before, while
you did not know this bit of His will. Darling, I
have been living for a year on the verge of eternity.
I have gone to bed every night and gone forth
every morning not certain but the next hour would
usher me into the glory of His seen presence."

"Herbert, why did you not let me die when I
was so near the other shore?" The low voice
trembled a little.

"Can you ask? While there was any ministry
for you here would you care or dare to miss it?
Would not you, would not I, consider it wrong to
die while it was possible to live? The impossi-
bility makes clear His next will and our next duty,
nay, our next pleasure. Love, everything is privi-
lege which God wills for us and Christ shares
with us. I have coveted for you this *privilege*,—
to walk with me through the valley. The mount-
ain heights are so fair and lofty; the light stream-
ing between their rugged peaks so pure and radi-

ant; the quiet so intense; not a ripple of passion or desire; the fellowship so real, like Adam's when he walked with God in the dusk at the close of day.

"In the dusk, Yensie, that the glory might be veiled which seen in its fulness must slay the beholder. Love, I think I comprehend how Moses died. It was of answered prayer. He had cried to behold God's glory. All prayer is answered some day. As soon as Jehovah could fit another for his place; could find excuse to take him, He led Moses to the mountain's top and uncovered His face. Yensie, Moses died of rapture—the rapture of a soul that at last sees God.

"I know something of it, I have glimpses of His loveliness; full vision is at hand. You have shared my best with me the years that are past, darling, I want to share with you all I can of this."

"I am ready, Herbert," she said, and her voice was calm as her little palm crept into his. "Hold my hand as long as you can, I will not shrink. I would like to walk with you all the way if I could."

"If God willed," he corrected. "You love His will best, Yensie."

"I love His will best, Herbert," she made reply. "Even better than I love you."

"Can you sing for me, love, or are you weary? There has been one hymn in my mind all day: 'My Jesus, as Thou wilt!'"

She rose quietly and went to the organ. Into

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or are you weary?
 my mind all day:

o the organ. Into

the room below, where Herbert sat praying, came the sweet, clear tones, tremulous at first, but gaining power as they rose, and presently he heard his father's voice chime with them.

He held his mother close to his bosom that night when she came to him before retiring. He read in the depths of her dark eyes, and the pallor of her face the intensity of the agony under which she staggered.

"Mother," he said, "mother," the tenderness of his utterance bringing tears to her eyes.

"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" she whispered. "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him."

"He will not slay, mother. His rod and staff comfort. It is only the shadow of death in the valley, you need fear no evil."

"Sorrow is not necessarily evil, Herbert," she murmured. "It is often disguised good."

"It can only be highest good for father," faltered the son.

"Then it must be for me," she answered. "Nay, it *shall* be. I claim it in His name."

CHAPTER XIX.

NOT AFRICA BUT JESUS.

"May not part of the preparation for work be the mental discipline of imagined postponements?"

—GEORGE MACDONALD.

"The battle is too close around us for us to understand how the day is going—we are not high enough to see?"

—MRS. CHARLES.

How calmly, quietly beautiful were the days that followed!

Herbert studied constantly how to lift all care from his father's shoulders, his wife followed him like his shadow. They were truly inseparable. A mighty yearning to walk with her husband to the very verge of eternity, to share with him every drop of his cup she might have seized Yensie Gardenell's soul, and she was ever beside him, her hand in his, her eyes on his face, her ears open to his slightest word.

Olive found it almost impossible to have one of her private chats with her father and hailed with delight the arrival of callers one night that detained her mother in the parlor and gave her the opportunity she coveted for an hour's talk in the study.

Herbert had tried to prepare Olive quietly for

the coming sorrow, but she would not listen. Papa looked a little pale to be sure, but no worse than he had for months. Herbert should have seen him when mamma was sick. He would soon be better, he must be, then she burst into a tumult of tears.

Then Herbert turned comforter, charging her, however, to be careful not to show such emotion before her father lest she hasten what she so deplored. Then she upbraided him with trying to rob her of her last comfort, the little joy yet remaining to her life. "God would not be so cruel as to take papa, especially when he was so good and so much needed." Alas, her argument only convinced her brother to the contrary. He had learned that goodness but proclaimed fitness for promotion.

He reported his unsuecess to his father. "God will teach her in His own way and time," said Mr. Gardenell gently. "We cannot foree lessons on hearts unready; we only wound them without cause or result. Our patient Father leads us each as we are able to go. We all learn very much the same lessons in the end, but by very different processes and degrees."

Olive had watched her father very closely since that conversation, however. She had been exercising great self-control also. The dear parent, so near the invisible, understood this and opened his arms gladly that quiet eve, for one more conversation with his only daughter.

It was so different from his talk with his wife and son. Now he was listener not converser, and she was very free with him. Her whole heart she poured into his ears. Had she been withholding anything from him? She would withhold it no longer. The story of her love for Stanton, known to be sure, but never before acknowledged to any one but Lee and Herbert—guarded and covered rather—was avowed now. Not shamefacedly or guiltily, but bravely and truly, and all her fears and uneasiness, her consciousness of fault and failure came with it.

As she prayed daily so she talked that night, in all humility and reverence. Perhaps the nearness of her parent to his Maker had so charged him with divinity that it was easy to make utmost disclosure of self. She felt better any way after it was done. He held her close in a vital sympathy that communicated itself unspoken to her deepest self.

"You have not confessed this to Stanton yet?"

"No, not yet, papa, I cannot."

"You will some day, darling, but do not hurry or worry yourself. God is working out in you His purpose for your life. He will see that it does not fail of perfection or fruitage. All we really need, dear, in this world is patient trust."

"And you are not discouraged with me, papa? You do not think He will let me spoil His purpose in me?"

"Never, dear, never while you will to meet His will."

"I do," she whispered. "Down in the deepest depths of my heart at last I find I do. *All* of me asserts, demands, His will fulfilled in me, though *some* of me, sometimes, shrinks from the way He does it."

"Little human blossom!" he kissed her fondly. "Remember what is written. 'It is God that worketh in you to *will* and to *do* of His good pleasure.' Since He already *wills* in you, can you not trust Him to perfect His beginning and *do* in you also of His good pleasure? Olive, my darling child, accept not only all that comes, as the concrete of His will, but take each little happening, however small or trying, each new providence, as a fresh expression of that will, as working out His good pleasure."

"I will try, papa," she said. Then her mother came in, and presently Herbert and they sat quite a while longer together.

Herbert filled an appointment for his father, speaking on missions in another city one night that week. But Mr. Gardenell himself prepared and preached as usual to his own people on Sunday.

Lee was there and heard that sermon. As she passed along the walk after service, the gentleman stopped her for a kind greeting. Herbert, waiting with the carriage, saw only her back as she went down the street.

"That is Lee Erdley," his father said, as he took his seat. "You have never met her, I think, she is a marvellous woman. She has been thanking

me for my sermon; how blessed is an appreciative hearer! I could hardly tell her if I tried, how much a little sermon she preached in my study once did for me. It is short, perhaps you can learn it by heart, Herbert, it is worth remembering. Here it is. 'You know we are to choose not ease but His will: ' How many different things since then I have put after that 'not' even life, my son—but by His grace I have always been enabled to add, 'but His will!'

Herbert did not speak; he took the lesson to his heart nevertheless. He was finding it no easy thing to yield the great ambition of his life, the cherished hope of his young manhood, the mighty impulse which he had ever regarded as the highest call of God—to preach the gospel of the Kingdom in the lands afar.

Many hours had he spent on his knees since the night he discovered his father's illness. If God had called him to the foreign field had He now abrogated that call? Had He trifled with His child? Led him to intensest longing for a good he could not grasp? And if He intended him to remain in his native land, by his mother's side, why had the choice of his young heart been smitten? He could understand a love that might smite him now to spare him the greater torture of seeing one so frail and so loved enduring danger, toil and sacrifice. But if none of these things were before her why need she be taken from his arms?

Why? Why? Children are not the only users

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of that word; the human heart forever echoes it. There came no answer to his questioning. Only one thing became clearer day by day and that was the present duty. He could see the first step, the next he must trust to God, with all the strange cross-leadings, the sorrows and disappointments of the past year.

On his knees that Sabbath night the "little sermon" returned to him with his father's comments. Did God ask more than simple acquiescence, acceptance of the inevitable? Did He require positive choice, active preference of His will? "You know we are to *choose*." Yes, he knew. "Not——" he left a blank after the little negative as he added, "but His will."

He changed the wording to make it personal, positive. "I choose," he said, the ring of determined purpose in his voice "not" what? Rea? Nay, she was beyond his choosing—"Africa."

All the tendrils of his bleeding heart were clinging to the sacrifice as he bound it to the altar. The pride, the love, the fond interest with which he had surrounded the Dark Land. The awful realization of her need, her woe; the high and holy enthusiasm, the deathless longing to follow his Master into the hardest places of earth for sacrifice for service; these all enhanced the gift Herbert Gardenell laid at God's feet that Sabbath night when, with lifted hand and dripping eyes and firm, unfaltering lips he said, "I *choose* not Africa but Thy will."

It was done. The mightiest act of his life. As far transcending the consecration of his life to Africa as Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac transcended his banishment of Ishmael from his doors. Yet both of them were acts of divine reality costing all their maker possessed. To take a barren, unsightly thing to one's breast and love, and clothe, and beautify, and live for it, much as this means, can never be what it is to thrust the thing so nourished, so loved, unto another and learn to live without it.

Herbert crept into bed that night as weak and as subdued as a whipped child. But it was the child to whose heart-breaking had come the soothing of a mother's kiss. No longer Africa but Jesus!

"It is not always open ill
That risks the Promised Rest :
The *Better*, often, is the foe
That keeps us from the *Best*."

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CHAPTER XX.

SLIPPED UNAWARES.

"Death knits as well as parts."

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

"Som'times the arrow sharpness of a sorrow,
 Piercing life's common calm,
 Smiles hidden rocks of comfort, which to-morrow
 O'erflow in healing balm.

'Neath burdens that we stagger in the taking,
 We walk erect at length;
 And bitter blows, that bowed almost to breaking,
 Reveal our secret strength."

—M. L. DICKINSON.

MR. GARDENELL had written to Harry, Eddie
 and Mr. Campbell yesterday, this morning he ex-
 cused himself for a while to write more letters.

His wife, busy about the house, came to look in
 the study occasionally and peep over his shoulder,
 kissing his smiling lips. The last time she came
 he was directing Stanton's letter.

"Only one more," he said. "I must write Ray-
 mond a few lines. I feel the pressure of the duty
 on me. I shall soon be at leisure."

"Do not hurry for my sake," was the reply.
 "I will bring my sewing and sit where I can

watch you while you are at work. I am selfish; I cannot bear you out of my sight."

"Sweetheart," he answered. "My heart's heart, truest wife that ever breathed."

She went out for a few minutes—oh, so few they seemed! She was delayed a little by hunting up the silk which Olive had been using and had left in her chamber. Then she appeared once more, a dress-skirt in her hand.

He was still at the desk, but his head was bowed forward as if in thought or weariness. Quickly, lightly, she came to his side. The pen had dropped from his fingers, his chin had sunken to his breast, his unseeing eyes were on the half-written page where the ink was scarcely dry.

She did not call or cry. She touched his hand, it was cold; felt for his heart, it was still. She knelt before him and looked up whither he was gone, and asked God to enable her to live as he had lived, to die as he had died, and to bear as he would bear if left in her place. She asked grace to say from the heart what her lips tremblingly repeated, "Thy will be done."

She heard the door open; it was Herbert. She rose and went to meet him; she put her arms up to his neck and drew his lips to hers. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;" she began, as her husband had that other awful day. And now, as then, the young man finished the quotations, with his mother clasped to his heart: "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

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aken away;" she began,
other awful day. And
man finished the quota-
clasped to his heart:
he Lord."

What need of words? We all know how his church and city sorrowed; how the state and even nation felt bereaved; how, in mission boards and mission fields and many a distant land, they mourned, not only the good man fallen but the generous friend, the consecrated helper removed. This was no private grief, too far had his influence spread. The mighty voice and pen, how they would be missed! What could take their places? Earth has so few such men she can illy spare one.

"Tall men Sun-crowned, who live above the fog,
In public duty and in private thinking."

Around the world the news travelled. The telegram to Raymond was followed by the letter never ended, only begun, like the life of him who penned it.

"I am living in Beulah-land, I shall not be surprised any day to find myself beyond the gates of pearl," he had written. "It is such a delight to know the 'old, old story' will not drop, unuttered, because I can no longer repeat it; doubly a delight to know my own dear sons can so worthily herald the coming and kingdom of my Lord. Raymond, my son, I joy in you. Of all the good gifts of my God—and they are many, they have crowded my life—I thank Him most for these: A wife who has ever been an inspiration, a divine assistant heavenward, and children who are a crown of glory not only to myself but my Redeemer.

"Meet me some day—work done—if not bur-

dened with sheaves, at least weary and furrowed by the toil that prepares them for the reaping of others. The labor may be hard, but the hours are short and the Eternal City is ever in view. It is only a step hence——”

Nay, it was only a pen-stroke. The next word the Recording Angel wrote was “Glory,” as the white-robed, waiting ones wafted him within the gates and he found himself at Home.

“What else could God do for him?” wrote Lee, in a note of sympathy to Olive. “I could not sleep after that sermon Sunday; it seemed that even I had been lifted into some realization of the unseen country. I think now, as I thought then, that he had come so close to heaven that Our Father could do nothing less than let him in.

“If the laws of growth are eternal, as it seems to me they must be, it is possible God has to take some men out of this world to let them grow. They absorb so much, so fast, they can no longer learn under our limited conditions; the Eternal within them demands Eternity without. We would not willingly think of your father as hampered in any way, hindered in his growth or even delayed. We cannot conceive it. We could spare him better than we could see him less than his Best.

“Do you find comfort in the thought, Olive? I do. To me he will always be a *present* friend. You know I did not see him often, but I had him. I have him yet.”

Something of the same feeling came to Stanton when in one mail he received that last precious

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feeling came to Stanton
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letter, and with it one from Herbert telling of his
father's death. He returned the sacred epistle
that they all might read it.

"He seems very near me," the dear Missionary
wrote, "nearer than ever before. Heaven itself is
very near and direct in this land of death where
to day's health may rest in to-morrow's tomb. I
have a peculiar sense of his presence, as if in losing
his body his soul came closer to my own. I do
not miss, I *have* him. And oh, the joy of having
had his love, and fellowship, and teaching! We
ought to be spiritual princes who shared the father-
hood of such a king!"

How hallowed this voice from the dead sent
back to them over the waves! How impossible to
think him gone as the familiar handwriting looked
up at them from the page. They could hear the
very tones of his voice, the tenderness that breathed
through every written word. He had been laid
away these five months, but this letter brought him
close at hand.

It was full of interest in Stanton and his work,
little helpful suggestions, a few earnest commands
concerning the care of his body, needful rest, etc.
Then it went on.

"I feel like a school-boy when vacation has
begun. It is not coming, *it is here*. I have had a
talk with mamma and Herbert, made all things
ready, my soul mounts up as naturally as if it had
wings. If this is death how wonderfully sweet it
is, there is nothing in my heart but deep content.
I have an intuition that this may be my last letter

to you. But if it is we shall not mind it, you and I; nothing can ever separate us. I shall be near you. I dare to think that perhaps on my upward flight Our Father will grant me a short visit to your lonely hut, a glance, if but momentary, of your dear self and your work. I can never lose interest in either while I am myself, and I shall always be that or something *better*.

"Who can guess the surprises awaiting us yonder? I get premonitions of a glory I cannot express, heart-grasps of Eternity, fluttering glimpses of the Saviour's face. My Earth-heart is too feeble to bear much pressure, God graciously withholds more than a taste, but how it sets me longing for a feast. Nay, hardly longing. I am too enraptured with His will to hasten it one heart-beat or to hinder it one breath. Stanton, whatever else death does for us, it does not separate us from the best—the will and love of God. Can it separate us therefore from those who know His love and do His will?"

Herbert's voice broke here; he could not go on. His mother took the sheet from his hand and finished its reading.

"Out of the weakness of my failing body my soul triumphantly asserts its strength and proves that, not the clay but what inhabits it, is Eternal. The I, 'yet not I' in me is mightier than in the height of my prime. The physical faltering is but the dropping of the husk that the corn may mature, appear, come into the fulness of the sun's warm rays."

At the close of the letter were a few lines which puzzled Olive sorely at the first reading.

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"I had nearly forgotten what, after all, was the chief cause of my writing at this time. I had a long talk with my Girlie last night. Not such a one as I am having with you, she is hardly ready for that yet, but one it would not displease you to hear. Do you remember that we decided one night she must *grow*? Well, she is *growing*. You were not mistaken, the end is sure."

"Growing!" What could he mean? Surely not in stature, could he mean in grace? Her heart gave a thrill. Had her father, ripe as he was, so near the kingdom, discovered what she had hardly yet dared to believe, that she was really growing Godward. She must grow faster, she must be ready to meet this adored parent. She did not forget that question of his, "Can death separate us from those who know His love and do His will?" Henceforth this should be her life's one aim, to know and love God and His will.

There were resolutions of every description sent to this home, and letters poured in upon every side; Letters of condolence, sympathy, love. Among those the most prized were those from Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, Eddie Campbell, Mrs. Cartwright and Raymond. Poor Raymond! for whose bleeding heart there seemed no healing. Over his mother and how she would endure this blow, he was particularly troubled.

"If I could come to you I would," he wrote her, "I am praying for you and aching for you, may God Himself come to your aid."

And He did. It was a wonder to all how this devoted wife met the death of her beloved. So calmly sweet, so restful, almost glad was she as if she had really gone with him and partaken of the glory, and come willingly back awhile to strengthen and help those who needed her most.

Friends who came to sympathize with her, expecting to find her swallowed up in grief, found themselves the mourners and she the comforter. Hers was a bright, sweet, holy spirit thoughtful of every one but self, tenderly appreciative of every word of praise for the departed or love and sympathy for those remaining. She wrote Ray and Stanton letters over which they wept, and wondered, and praised God. She held Olive and the boys to her mother's heart, by some heavenly magic extracting the bitterness out of their sorrow, leaving some portion of the tender strength of her own faith implanted in its place.

Oh, how her children loved, adored her! They clung, looked up to and hung on her, even as she looked up to, clung and hung on to Christ. Ah, nay, she would not so have said. She looked up, indeed, but did not try to cling or hang, she dropped her whole self on His heart and rested.

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CHAPTER XXI.

HIS FATHER'S PULPIT.

"God's design
I see, and say through hopes and fears,
'The crown is here,'"

"The vision of all my past life
Was an awful thing to face;
Alone with my conscience sitting
In that solemnly silent place.

"And I know of the future judgment,
How dreadful soe'er it be,
That to sit alone with my conscience
Will be judgment enough for me."

To Herbert's surprise, in a few weeks he found himself unanimously called to his father's pulpit. Flattering as some might have thought this offer, to the young man, it brought only grief and pain. To fill his father's place he felt would be impossible should he attempt it.

He would much rather have chosen a humbler flock, a more unobtrusive position. The mission where he had delved so long, some country church far removed from these scenes of former joys. But the choice was not with him. More really than ever before he was not his own. He must

not count self. His mother, Olive, the boys! Should he not preserve to them the old home, the familiar surroundings, all the possibilities the larger salary would command? His father's words came back to him; he felt their weight. For his mother's sake as little as possible must be changed. She must not lose with her husband, her home, her work, her associates.

His resolve was taken. The committee informed of his decision. The church would change its pastor, but not his name; it would still be Rev. Herbert Gardenell.

The name, but not the fact. Oh, how he realized it! How could the people endure him Sabbath after Sabbath when so used to his father's ripe scholarship and spirituality? Self-pity was lost in commiseration of the congregation, and yet how he shrank from occupying that sacred desk. There where his father had stood for so many years, where, as lad and man, he had listened to him with reverential awe, where, in later years, he had stood by his side or supplied for him during vacations. How could he make it his own place? The garment was too big; it did not fit; would he ever grow to it?

He rose in the settling twilight and taking a key from the peg—its place for years, made his way to the old church.

He went up into the pulpit and knelt where his father so often had kneeled, he wept with his face buried in the cushions of his father's chair. There

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he solemnly dedicated himself to serve his father's church and people, stretching out his empty hands for guidance.

He was there for hours. It was late and quite dark, when at length he rose to grope his way out. He laid one hand on the pulpit and raised the other solemnly and his rich, deep voice filled the room: "He is my father's God and I will exalt Him," he said, and quietly passed down the aisle and out.

The young minister had no idea that any other person than himself was in the church that night. But God had willed that his first utterance from the old pulpit should be the conviction of a wandering soul.

A poor, dissipated young man, strayed away from home and the prayers and tears of a father and mother; cold, sleepy, half-intoxicated, fell up against the church-door, and seeing it was ajar slipped stealthily in, fearful of being seen and ejected.

He had been wandering all day and half the night before and dropped into a deep sleep as soon as he touched the first pew into which he stumbled.

He did not know what aroused him, but he woke with a start, and unconscious of his whereabouts began to feel around him. The narrow walls of his habitation suggested a horrible fear:—he was dead! he was buried!

His distended eyes just then took in a vision. Was it man or angel? Something tall and dark,

with gleaming eyes and a white face. And then, distinctly through the gloom, like a voice from another world, came the words,—“He is my *father's* God.”

The stricken wretch heard no more. Palsied with fear he wallowed on the floor scarcely daring to breathe.

The next morning the janitor found him more dead than alive. It was a wonder he had not actually died of fright, for he was sure he had seen a denizen from another world. All that long night and for many succeeding ones those five words rang in his ears, “He is my father's God.”

It was meant for him. Who else? Had not his father's God searched him out at last? Would He not bring him into judgment? Great conviction seized the man's soul; he could not shake it off. He gave no account of himself to the janitor, only he said the door was open and he walked in and had seen a spirit.

“It's the spirit that generally resides in a bottle, I guess,” laughed the janitor. “Take my advice and let it alone.”

Let it alone! he dared not touch it. He felt like one who has faced the judgment and hardly knows whether he lives or not. “My father's God!” The morning and evening prayers raised under the humble home roof came back to his memory with wonderful power, moving him to longings for better things. If he could but recall the past, if he might have another chance?

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A strange fascination drew him over and over again to the spot where he had seen the vision, heard the voice. And Sunday morning—that Sunday Herbert so dreaded—the longing to go in and see the place overcame the youth's superstitious fears, and he entered.

He dropped into the pew nearest the door as he had done before, and looked about with a half-shuddering awe. He was not a fool or madman, this young man, but a fellow-mortal, awake to awful realities, impaled before his own conscience, which makes cowards of us all. That conscience which he had trampled underfoot with his father's counsels and his mother's prayers had suddenly taken the throne and he trembled before it as all must who dare its judgments.

His eyes never left the young preacher's face, from the utterance of the first sentence to the last. For the first sentence was that which he had heard so strangely a few nights ago. Herbert had chosen for a text the verse brought to his mind that evening. It was to be his future battle-cry, his father's God and His Exaltation.

He did not forget the sinner's portion. He had solemnly covenanted with God for souls, for men and women redeemed from sin through his ministry; for men and women to take his place in the foreign field if he must stay at home. He expected them. Not knowing who sat in his audience trembling, he cried, God-moved:

“ Young man, your father's God calls *you* to-day.

You have left alike both Him and father, spurned offered love and mercy. But do not think you are given up; nay, God is after you to-day. Your father's prayers must be answered; the Spirit is pleading with you anew. He whispers, 'To-day, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart, your father's God waits to be merciful.'

He ended with a stirring appeal to the children of Christian parents, dedicated to God from their birth, specially dear to His heart, robbing Him of their youth and strength. For young Christians he had his word also, the power to exalt their father's God, the wide opportunities, the open doors, the crying needs.

This sermon was no failure. And way back there in the last pew sat a man with his hands over his eyes, his first prayer trembling on his lips, his first honest resolve for God heard and noted in heaven.

Herbert waited awhile in the vestry on his knees before he left the church. He had not proceeded far when some one accosted him.

"You are the young minister?"

In spite of the marks of dissipation on his face, there were traces of refinement in voice and manner.

"I am," answered Mr. Gardenell heartily. "Can I befriend you in any way?"

"Oh, sir, if you only will help me to God!" Was ever gospel-teacher met with gladder request? In another moment, arm linked in that of the

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stranger, Herbert was talking earnestly as they hastened toward his home.

Up in the old study, before father's chair—that consecrated spot! Herbert laid his first sheaf from this new calling at the feet of his father's God. Robert Langmore went out from that holy place with a light in his eye and a glow in his heart that would have filled his mother's heart with joy had she but known it. In less than a week she did know it and prayer was turned to praise in one Ohio home.

His new ministry had received its seal. Herbert's joy and gratitude knew no bounds. This conversion was followed by others and yet others; a gracious revival began, and before many months had passed there were three score fresh young consecrated souls as fruits of his labor. And brightest, most earnest among them, was this first jewel plucked from the mire. Before the winter ended, in the study where he had found Christ, Robert Langmore said:

"Mr. Gardenell, I feel sure I am to prepare to preach the Gospel among the heathen. The call is on me day and night. I have written home about it, and my father is anxious I should begin study, go to school, prepare. I have a little money saved, so has he. I have come for your advice and blessing."

And Herbert Gardenell's answer sounded strangely from the mark. "The Lord He is God," he said, walking the study floor with tearful upraised eyes. "The Lord He is God—my father's God, I will exalt Him."

CHAPTER XXII.

LEE'S SECRET.

"I shall know by the gleam and glitter
Of the golden chain you wear,
By your heart's calm strength in loving,
Of the fire you have had to bear.
For as gold must be tried by fire,
So a heart must be tried by pain."

—A. PROCTOR.

IT may have been well for the young pastor that he was kept so busy, and not only for him but his mother and sister, who became his advisers and helpers in every good work.

Olive began again to bring her sewing to his study. Not the old one, in the nursery, but his father's, with its large windows and bright furnishings and sober leather tomes; no suggestion of gloominess about it, though there the good man had died as well as labored.

With his father's pulpit had come to Herbert many of his father's duties and burdens. He wondered sometimes how the dear saint had borne it all. Men were not slow to discover that this son was a worthy successor to his name; and soon on Mission Boards—young as he was—and varied

charities, he found his services coveted and valued.

It was not long after coming into his new position when, one morning, the mail brought him a letter from the superintendent of public schools. It announced an opening for Miss Lenore E. Erdley as teacher, in accordance with the application of his father some time before.

"Olive," he inquired turning to his sister, "do you know a Miss Lenore E. Erdley?"

"Certainly I do. Read the initials and tell me what they spell?"

"L-e-e," he said, "Lee. Oh, then she is the friend I have heard you mention so often. It seems she desires a position in our public school; it is ready."

Olive clapped her hands. "You must let her know at once, Herbert."

"Where can I find her?"

"I really don't know. I have always addressed her where she works. But she hasn't been at Madam's for a week; her mother is sick. She has a secret, Herbert, something dreadful, I am afraid, for she never once asked me to call on her, and when I suggested it one day looked almost horrified. I have often wondered what it could be."

"Is that why my sister is so interested in her?"

"Slanderer! But I forgive you unless after seeing her you repeat the offence. Think how papa

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his name; and soon on
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loved her! And how her eyes would light when he called her daughter. She adored him."

So Herbert searched among his father's belongings, and late that afternoon, in a little book of addresses, found the one he sought.

"I wish I could go with you," said Olive kissing him good-bye, "but I would not for the world know what she does not wish to tell me."

He found the place readily. It was in a sort of alley, back of the street, and behind several large tenement houses of the better sort, if anything can be said to be better where all is so ill. It was a respectable though very humble neighborhood. A woman from one of the outer houses pointed him the door, adding the information that she occupied the left hand side of the down stairs flat.

He pushed open the front door which stood ajar and halted. A sweet, clear voice reached his ears. Some one with remarkably fine accent and inflection was reading a German tale. He was rather surprised as he knocked gently.

There was a pause in the reading, the slight rustle of a dress, the opening of a door, and the young minister stood face to face with the loveliest woman he had ever met.

"I beg your pardon, for disturbing you. I wish to see Miss Erdley."

"That is my name," she took the precaution to step into the hall and close the door.

"I am Herbert Gardenell."

eyes would light when he adored him." Holding his father's belonging, in a little book of sought.

"You," said Olive, "would not for the world wish to tell me."

family. It was in a sort of room behind several large windows, if anything can be said to be so ill. It was a humble neighborhood. The outer houses pointed out the information that she was on the side of the down stairs

at the door which stood ajar. His voice reached his ears. His fine accent and inflection were a tale. He was rather nervous.

While he was reading, the slight opening of a door, and the sight of a face with the loveliest

was disturbing you. I wish

she took the precaution to open the door. "Well."

Small need to tell her that. "I should know you by your father," she answered, with a smile that seemed to envelope the listener in pure sunshine. She did not add as she might have done, "I heard you preach last Sunday."

"My father was interested in getting you a school."

Her eyes lighted. He had never seen eyes like hers that made so unnecessary the opening of her lips. He saw a sudden shadow sweep their clear depths before he realized that a voice from within the room was speaking.

"Bring the gentleman in, Lenore, bring the gentlemen in." It was a peremptory voice used to commanding, and being obeyed. The maiden looked in his face with something like positive pain upon her own.

"Your business can be quickly dispatched, Mr. Gardenell?" she said.

"Immediately," was the prompt reply. But the voice within broke forth anew.

"Lenore Emerson, I wish to see the gentleman myself, I *will* see him."

There was repressed agony under the maiden's quiet, courteous "May I introduce you to my mother, Mr. Gardenell?" He bowed and followed her.

The dainty spotlessness of the modest apartment into which he stepped struck him first. Its simple comfortableness and air of superiority. A few easy chairs, a book-case well stocked, a piano, a couch

on which reclined the remnant of what had once been a very handsome woman.

He stooped courteously over the hand extended to him, thanked her for his welcome though its extravagance had marred it. But Lee's secret was no longer hers only. Acquaintance with the low haunts of New York, its Chinese quarters, opium dens, made it unnecessary that one should tell this gentleman that the woman before him was a victim of the debasing morphine habit, that she was just now under the influence of the exhilaration that accompanies a debauch. And the young lady beside him knew all this, though nothing in his manner intimated the truth.

He took the chair she offered him and proceeded to business. It consumed very few moments, many less than Mrs. Erdley's lamentations over the loss of their former social standing, the mortification of their present environments, her assurance that day was about to break upon their fortunes, rendering it unnecessary for her daughter even to consider his proposition. She thanked him volubly for his kindness, but Lenore must not entertain a thought of teaching, she was speedily to be restored to her past position, etc., etc.

Herbert quite understood all this, and valued her remarks for what they were worth, the vagaries of a diseased brain. He bowed himself out while her last words were still in his ears. "You can realize the isolation from which we have suffered, Mr. Gardenell, when I assure you that you are the first

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gentleman who has ever crossed this threshold
since we lived here. I trust when we are again in
a home of our own we shall see you often."

Lenore drew the door close as she followed his
retreating form and looked wistfully into his face.
She wanted to ask him to keep her secret, spare her
mother's shame, but her lips refused to open.

They had no need. He read in her face her
pain, her sorrow, her desire to shield this wreck of
womanhood, still known by so holy a title. All
the chivalry of his nature went out to meet her.
He held out his hand and spoke very tenderly as
she placed hers in it.

"I am your friend, you can trust me. Your
mother shall be held as sacredly, even in my
thoughts, as my own."

The brave little head drooped a moment, there
was a tear on his hand as he went out. "You are
your father's son," she said, and no praise could
have been to him sweeter.

"A perfect gentleman, Lenore. And the first
who has ever darkened our doors, think of that!"

Her daughter needed no exhortation so such
thought. The spot where he had stood, the seat
where he had sat, seemed sacred; the place of her
torture had been hallowed by the presence of a
friend.

Herbert said little to Olive about his visit. He
had seen Lenore, he felt quite sure she would
accept the situation. Yes, she was a very beautiful
woman. Unsatisfactory as this was, his sister was

forced to be content, until a card arrived stating her friend's decision, and she danced off to dress herself for a walk to the schoolroom.

She was so full of Lee for days that the home circle got little else, and Herbert smiled and mamma sympathized. This brother was interested in spite of his coolness, but he did not get another glimpse of the lady for months. Once he thought he saw her in church. Looking towards the same pew the next Sabbath a kind, elderly face met his eyes. Once he heard her voice in his mother's room, as he passed the half-open door, and saw the hem of her dress. Again he had a vision of her and his sister disappearing round a corner one day as he stepped from a street-car.

"I have tried and tried to have her come and dine with us some day," cried Olive in despair. "But she never can because of that selfish old sick mother of hers."

"And what about this selfish sister of mine who is not sick?" inquired her brother, hardly glancing up from his paper. "Does Miss Erdley complain?"

"No, you old Blessed! of course she doesn't, that's all left to me. But truly I am trying to be good. No, not to be good, but to be *His*, that is the way Stanton puts it. God's children never complain. I must stop it."

The life in the parsonage was very quiet, disturbed only occasionally by news from afar. Every body was glad, therefore, and Olive in particular,

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when Eddie Campbell wrote that he and Achor
and their "two hopefuls" were about to make them
a flying visit.

"Only for a few days, mamma," he wrote, for he
had never gotten over the habit of his childhood
in calling Mrs. Gardenell mother, "but you know
a little is better than none, when it is so good a
thing as the sight of my face; if you will please
read this backward imagining you are writing it
to me."

They had come. And this morning, Herbert,
determined to get all of the visit he could, had
brought his mail to the sitting-room to open, that he
might get snatches of the conversation and "look
at his big cousin-brother all he pleased."

It was rare-looking. Not often such a handsome
face, merry heart and consecrated soul are united.
Olive and he were especial friends and this morn-
ing she was sharing with him her treasures.

Achor had gone to Dr. Germaine's to see Esther
and had taken her youngest child with her, leav-
ing little Esther seated at Mr. Gardenell's feet,
helping him sort the mail. Children were par-
ticularly fond of Herbert.

"I think you promised to let me read your
father's last letter to Stanton, Olive?" said Mr.
Campbell.

"Yes, I did. Stanton let me keep it on purpose.
I knew you could not afford to miss it, or the one
Stanton wrote after receiving it."

"Wonderful, wonderful!" said the gentleman

a while after. "What a spiritual giant Stanton Cartwright is! and how proud of him and fond of him your father was."

"Everybody is," replied Olive proudly. "There's mamma, I believe she loves him as well as she does Herbert."

"Why not?" asked mamma, smilingly. "I am sure my son has never a pang of jealousy," looking with utmost confidence into her first-born's face.

"He would hate himself if he had," replied Herbert, answering her glance with one of unmingled love. "One likes to have such a good article as Stanton appreciated. Yet I doubt if anybody can have due appreciation of such unselfish sacrifice as he lives daily. Not a man on our Board who estimates half what he has done and borne so far, or his value to the mission. Why, I don't know a tithe, and he writes to me more freely than to any other mortal, and I have the faculty of reading between his lines, too. I am used to his way of solving problems. He *works* them out."

"I've an idea I know another something like him," said Mr. Campbell quietly.

"Me?" looking up scornfully. "Why, Ed, you haven't a notion of how absolutely Stanton can ignore himself. Sacrifice, self-denial! he likes them. And there's so much of him to be yielded up and used. There isn't a man in ten thousand with so much to offer to God, or who so royally, so unreservedly abandons himself to His will and purposes. He never has to draw a breath over any demand

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or command after knowing He makes it. You
worded it just right, Ed—'a Spiritual Giant.' I
wish I was worthy to be compared with him."

Olive's cheeks burned, and her eyes glowed as
she listened, and Mr. Campbell stooped and kissed
her.

"I do not wonder you all love him," he said.
"I owe him one debt of gratitude I can never re-
pay," drawing Mrs. Gardenell fondly toward him.

"Everybody loves him because he loves every-
body," said Olive. "There's Lee, he was the first
to appreciate her and draw her out. I must show
you her letter, Eddie, it is so much like Stanton's.
They are a lot alike—*inside*. Perhaps," naively,
"that is why I love her so much."

She put a dainty missive in his hand. "What
beautiful chirography!" he exclaimed. "Yes,"
after a pause, "she has the same thought, Olive,
you should send this to Stanton."

Herbert looked up from the sheet he was pe-
rusing. "Have I ever seen that, Princess?" he
asked.

"No, I have only shared it with mamma. You
do not care anything about Lee. I cannot interest
you in her."

He put out his hand. "I will read her letter,
nevertheless," he said smiling.

He made no comment when he passed it back;
the last sentence had tied his tongue; he could hear
the sweet voice saying again, "You are your father's
son."

"She is just as beautiful as her letter," he heard Olive saying. "Stanton called her a 'living poem.' You ought to see her wash dishes! It is high art as she does it. You needn't smile, Eddie, mamma and I know, we have seen her do it. Herbert has only seen her once, and he has been so quiet about it, I know she did not impress him."

"Or impressed him too much for words," suggested Mr. Campbell.

Herbert smiled, "Olive," he said, "my first impression of Miss Erdley—outside of her personal beauty—was her exceeding frailty. My second, her exceeding strength."

"You indulge in paradox," exclaimed Eddie.

"Apparently; yes," assented Mr. Gardenell, "perhaps not really so. It may be Miss Erdley is physically as delicately strong as she undoubtedly is mentally and spiritually."

Mrs. Gardenell smiled at the look on her daughter's face, such a mixture was it of pleasure and perplexity. To Olive her brother spoke with the same degree of interest and accuracy as he would if analyzing a flower.

Mr. Campbell came to the rescue. "Can you not manage to give me a glimpse of your friend, Olive?" he inquired. "I don't know when I have been so interested in the description of a stranger."

"Will you go with me to meet her after school?" cried Olive.

"Gladly. I wonder does she love children and

her letter," he heard called her a 'living wash dishes! It is needn't smile, Eddie, seen her do it. Her- and he has been so not impress him." such for words," sug-

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would she like a ride? I might take the carryall and Achor and my babies."

"Eddie Campbell, you are simply delightful, too good for anything. But before you see her face I want to tell you one more thing about her. She wants to be a missionary. She never said so quite, you know she couldn't. She would not want what Gods seemed not to will. But—well, I will tell you what she said once when talking with Stanton and me about it. I think I can give her very words, for I could not forget them, though I did not understand them then as I do now. I wish you could hear her say it herself. It will not mean as much as I repeat it.

" 'I have thought sometimes,' she said, and her eyes said more than her lips, 'that I would willingly give half of the years of my life for the privilege of telling, during the other half, to those who never knew it, the power of Christ to save. I think I would be willing to die on the shore of some far-away land, if only by dying I might show those lost ones how death is swallowed up in Life—Life Eternal.'"

Olive's voice faltered and almost broke, and Herbert lifted little Esther suddenly to his knee and hid his face in her curls.

"If you could have heard her say it, Eddie—Death is swallowed up in Life—as if it already was a sublime reality. And Stanton told me she had spoken the language of his own heart," sobbed the girl. "I thought of her words when papa died and—"

and it comforted me. For if death is swallowed up in life for her, it can be for me, as we know it certainly is for papa."

There were tears in Esther's golden curls and a manly heart thrilled with unuttered sympathy. Could he have better described the mighty yearnings of his own soul for this coveted work? He was not alone, then, in his experience. Might there not be many others beside this fair, frail girl who had felt all the strange questionings, the seemingly cross-purposes of a soul set on a forbidden mission? Perhaps she had struggled, had suffered as he had before she accepted with such gentle grace, the inevitable.

Up before his mind's eye rose the picture of that unpretentious room, that couch and its faded, debauched, silly occupant. Had he even thought a murmur over his lot? Then might God forgive him. He contrasted his mother, his home, his sister and brothers, his glorious work and plentiful opportunities with the limited possibilities, the comparative hopelessness of the task set that strong yet gentle spirit, and humbly asked God to make him worthy to stand with such as her beside His throne at last. That moment Lenore Erdley was canonized; Herbert Gardenell accorded her a place in his heart and prayers. And Olive knew it not.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

"It chanced Eternal God that chance did guide."

SPENCER.

"To see the hand of God in the present, and to trust the future in the hand of God is the secret of peace."

T. L. CUYLER.

THE second summer after Stanton's departure found Mrs. Gardenell's family pretty well scattered.

Olive had gone to Maine to visit Mrs. Cartwright and perfect the acquaintance begun on paper. Harry was spending his vacation in the West with Uncle George Rogers, Eddie with a friend in Massachusetts. Herbert alone remained with mamma at their summer home.

It was very quiet, almost lonesome, at Bloomington without the merry-making of the boys and Olive's girlish chatter. Yensie and her first-born came closer together if possible in those long beautiful days. They had time to talk over many things necessarily put aside in the rush of life: to compare notes and *look* at each other, as the son declared, as they sat on the broad verandah, he reading, she sewing; or she reading and he lying

idly in the hammock taking the rest nature demands and insists on having, sooner or later.

However, Herbert had a call to town to-day which would probably keep him over night. Mary-Ann and her boys came out early in the morning to his delight. He disliked leaving his mother alone with the servants. He would be back as early as possible to-morrow, he said, kissing her fondly and charging Ted—Mary-Ann's oldest—to remain with her until his return.

A sick parishioner, one who for many years had listened to his father's preaching and latterly to his own, was nigh to death. His Christian wife was greatly exercised over his condition, and Herbert spent most of the day in the home and at the bedside of the dying man. There seemed actual incapacity for spiritual truth ever in its simplest form. He had neglected, until it was gone, his power to perceive God, and the young pastor's heart was heavily burdened over his loss.

At eight o'clock that evening, weary, jaded and feeling he had done all in his power, Herbert turned from the mansion towards the parsonage to spend the night in the old home.

Preoccupied, saddened, he walked along, hardly heeding whither, until the sound of sacred song fell on his ear. It came from a mission near, and they were singing Lyte's tender, familiar hymn, "Abide with me." He stopped to listen, the words fitted into his mood, he found himself repenting them under his breath with impassioned fervor.

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"Not a brief glance, I beg, a passing word ;
But as Thou dwel'st with Thy disciples, Lord,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me !"

His heart echoed the prayer ; tears sprung to his eyes. What would he take to-night for his Christian hope ? Never had it seemed so priceless. How precious the consciousness of his Lord's presence, approval. How could he bear the awful possibilities of the hour for that passing soul unless he had known he was free from the guilt of blood, had faithfully done all that lay in his power for this man's salvation. And God had done all He could. Who was to blame ?

He stepped over the sill to the vestibule. He would go in. He needed just the refreshing that would come from such simple, heart-felt testimonies as he was sure to hear there.

The back seats were full as usual. He had to go quite a distance up the aisle to find a place. They were singing something else now, and he was unperceived. Quietly he dropped into a seat, and covered his eyes. The vision of the sick-chamber yet clinging to his memory.

How heartily they sang. There were trained as well as untrained voices in that throng. Men and women who had earned their living with their song, men and women who had once been the boys and girls of cultured homes, as well as men and women who had never known the meaning of that word—home. One pure, sweet alto—a woman's

alto—fell with peculiar soothing on the minister's ears. He did not look up, he did not care to know from whence it came. He had rather listen with bowed head and closed eyes, drinking in the spirit of the song.

The earnest, honest prayers that followed, falling from lips all unused to such utterances, brought tears anew to his eyes. How he loved these rough diamonds! Let others choose more fastidious surroundings, smoother tongues. The stammering praises of these lately depraved men touched his heart as few things could. Out of the depths they had cried, and been heard. Out of the depths had they been lifted—the depths not only of ignorance and wretchedness, but of blasphemy and sin. His was a missionary heart wherever it beat—America or Africa—he loved the lost—the saved.

Scripture, song, testimony followed fast one upon another. No pauses, no dull places. Tragedy and comedy were strangely mingled in the scraps of heart history brought to light. The smile and the tear trip each other up in the genuine mission-room.

At length an old man rose. He had once been as bad as any of them, but had begun the new life something less than a year ago. There had been hard places since, he wouldn't deny, but never one so hard as that he had come to now. The wife was opposing him "terrible," and the boy going the very way he went himself once, wiping his eyes,

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the work was dull, only about half time, an ' like to
close altogether soon. But the old man's chief
sorrow lay in the discouragement that had reached
his own soul. Temptation had overcome him, he
had given way to a fit of passion and "spoiled it
all." God knew he wanted to be right—but be-
tween it all, trouble without and within—especially
within—and no peace anywhere—here he broke
down entirely and took his seat in tears.

There was a hush after he ceased speaking.
Every heart was full of sympathy but no one knew
just how to express it. Or if anybody did it still
went unexpressed. A quiet dropped down on the
company.

Then suddenly across the silence came a voice,
sweet, clear, unhesitating, yet beautifully modest.

" Leave it with Him,
The lilies all do,
And they grow—
They grow in the rain,
And they grow in the dew—
Yes, they grow,
They grow in the darkness, all hid in the night ;
They grow in the sunshine, revealed by the light.
Still they grow.

" The grasses are clothed
And the ravens are fed
From His store ;
But you, who are loved
And guarded and led,
How much more
Will He clothe you, and feed you, and give you His care ?
Then leave it with Him ; He has everywhere
Ample store.

"Yes, leave it with Him,
'Tis more dear to His heart,
You well know,
Than the lilies that bloom,
Or the flowers that start
'Neath the snow.
What you need, if you ask it in prayer,
You can leave it with Him, for you are His care,
You, you know."

Herbert started at the first sound of that voice—he had heard it before. He almost held his breath until the last word fell from the lips. The message was for him as well as for this poor old tempted saint. He would leave with Jesus the burden pressing his heart.

There was a stillness ensued that seemed to hold the very atmosphere as if an angel had spoken. In the hush the young clergyman peered over in the direction whence the voice had come. He was not mistaken. He saw a pale, intellectual face, with deep sympathetic eyes, delicate nostrils and sensitive mouth. It was Lenore Erdley. Unseen himself he watched her stealthily for the remainder of the evening, reading every emotion of her soul as it mirrored itself on her face.

The leader caught up the spirit of her words.

"That is just it," he said, "the whole of religion, the whole of life. Leave everything with Jesus—yourself with the rest. Don't carry your burdens, don't carry yourself, and don't worry over either. Drop them on Jesus, leave them with Jesus. Be sure He will take care of both them and you. Then

you will be sure to grow. Growth is not, never can be, the result of effort, but always and only of life—life within. It must and will find expression."

The meeting ended, Herbert slipped as quietly out as he had entered. It was raining hard. Fortunately he had his umbrella with him. Not that he had feared a shower—seldom had an evening looked less like it—but because, on leaving home in the morning, his mother had put it in his hand saying he might need it before his return.

He blessed her thoughtfulness now as in the shadow of a building he spread it and waited until a form he recognized approached.

"Will you kindly let me share my umbrella with you, Miss Erdley?" he asked, and smiled at the startled glance she gave him.

"Mr. Gardenell!" she said in surprise.

"You did not know I was present at the Mission to-night. Allow me," drawing her hand through his arm. "I was detained in the city and dropped into the meeting for a rest hardly expecting this privilege."

Unused to such attentions the young lady did not reply. She was almost troubled. Her quiet disturbed Herbert, who said a good deal in order to draw her out. He wanted to hear her talk, and wondered how he should set her at ease.

A happy thought struck him. "When did you hear last from Olive?" he inquired.

"A week ago."

NELL, JR.

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"Then I have later news. We had a letter yesterday."

She was enthused immediately; her spirit kindled as he went on giving her, as he knew how, the very essence of Olive's charming epistle.

"Among other things it contained the latest word from Africa," he continued. He felt the woman at his side grow still as if her whole being were listening.

"One of Stanton's boys has been converted."

She drew a breath of joy. "Which one?" she questioned eagerly. "Is it Balulu?"

He laughed softly. "So you know Stanton's boys by name as well as the rest of us. Yes, it is Balulu. Miss Erdley, would you mind telling me why you thought it was that one?"

She answered, without a moment's hesitation, "He has been laid very much on my heart of late."

"And mine also. I expected this news. Miss Erdley, you and I seem to have had very similar experiences in some things."

She looked up at him. He knew she did not understand the drift of his words. Her lowly reverent spirit clothed him with the sacredness of his office. She would never have thought of comparing her sacrifice over anything with his.

His next word seemed far enough from the last.

"There is something about you that reminds me constantly of Mr. Cartwright. I have heard my sister speak of the resemblance and I realize it myself to-night."

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"I am very glad if it may be possible," she said, her voice echoing her words. "I should like to resemble him. I love him very much," frankly. "Not only because he is worthy of love, but, partly, I think, because he is the first young man I ever met in a social way, and talked with familiarly. My life, as you know, is somewhat isolated, and it was very delightful to live for awhile in such companionship as his and Olive's. He is so human and so good I have wished sometimes he was my brother. God will not count that sin, will He?" questioningly, "since I would not make it so if I could knowing it is not His will."

"Surely God will never condemn in you what is so like Himself," answered Herbert. "Was it not the yearning after more of the same kind of love that His Only Begotten gave Him, that made Him convert the red clod clay of the valley into sons and daughters of Adam, stamped with His own image, able, like Himself, to give or withhold affection? Fellowship, Love—freely and spontaneously given—even God covets."

He felt her eyes in the dark. It was to her a new thought.

"Then nothing ever comes to us," her voice low and reverent, "not even this yearning for our kind, that has not first come to Him?"

"Nothing ever but sin." The assurance thrilled his own heart as he spoke.

"Then whatever we find in ourselves that we can trace back to Him is innocent, is sinless," making

ready application of his words. "I am glad you have said this to me, Mr. Gardenell. It makes creation such a beautiful thing. He created us—me—to satisfy His heart. Not His will only but His love spoke us into being."

"Are they not one?" he queried gently.

"Yes, they must be, but we do not often realize them as such. They fall so quickly succeeds creation that we are apt to think, if not to speak of ourselves as creatures of chance or despotism—*tolerated* not loved—born to an unhappy heritage of sin, against which, striving mightily, we may at length win possible approbation, finally reward."

"You have not so learned Him?"

"No, oh, no. I have found Him my heart's satisfaction. I never much coveted approbation or reward. I think I would rather at any time be the naughty child taken to a mother's heart forgiven, than the good child merely approved."

Herbert understood her meaning. What a revelation she had given of herself. Were not his father and Olive right in their estimate of this woman? He kept silent, unanswering her, hoping she would say more.

"Mr. Gardenell," very timidly, "you are the only person outside of our old doctor, who knows the secret of my home life. I should have starved without God," her voice sinking to a whisper.

He pressed her hand sympathetically.

"You must not commiserate me," she said. "I do not need commiseration. Indeed I do not," ear-

words. "I am glad you
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Indeed I do not," ear-

nestly, "though I have said to you what I have.
I can hardly tell why I have said it unless it is
that I feared you might think I have missed too
much. I have not and you must not think it. God
has more than made up to me all I have seemed
to lack, and I live glad-hearted."

She was very anxious he should believe it and
he did and assured her so.

"I could have trusted Mr. Cartwright under
every circumstance," she went on. "There were
times when I longed to take him to my mother's
side, tell him her need, ask for his help. I always
felt his pure, strong faith might lift her out of her
misery. But I could not. She would not let me.
For some reason God *brought* you to her. And
that is why I am speaking of her to-night. I have
prayed for her alone so many years without seem-
ing result, do you not think God sent you to her
and to me to help us both?"

Her voice faltered a little.

"He certainly brought me to you, very unex-
pectedly, Miss Erdley," answered Herbert, with a
thrill in his heart and voice. "There must be a
purpose of love in it somewhere."

"Yes, and this is why I dare ask you to pray
with me for mother, because her need is so great
and because you know it."

"I will join you," he said. "We will take the
promise for two who agree."

They had reached her door. She held out her
hand. "Thank you," she said simply.

"Thank you," he answered, pressing the little palm. "Miss Erdley, when you pray for Olive and Stanton, remember me."

"I always do," and she was gone.

"I always do." The words made melody in his heart for days. How much did he owe to her prayers? How much to other prayers of which he had not yet heard?

"Mother," said Herbert to that lady a day or two after as she sat beside him, "I wish we might get Miss Erdley out here for awhile to rest, she needs it."

"I wish we might, my son."

"I never realized how dreary, how barren a life she lived until the other night when I shared with her my umbrella. She said then—think of it, mother!—that Stanton was the only young man she had ever met and talked with familiarly. She was giving me a reason for so admiring him."

Mrs. Gardenell smiled. "I wish I was sure young men were the only things her life lacked," she said.

"Must I weigh my words with you, mamma?" asked the gentleman shaking his head reproachfully; "you surely understand my meaning."

"And disagree with your conclusions," was the smiling reply. "Lee's life is neither dreary nor barren. It is beautifully bright and cheery."

"The marvel of it!" he replied. "Yet you are right. She is a rare person, mother."

"Very rare," assented the lady.

"And you will write to her?"

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" Gladly. Only don't count on her coming. We have tried before and always in vain."

A few days after Mrs. Gardenell received an answer to her note of invitation. With many thanks it was declined. Her mother was weaker than usual and needed her constantly. If she improved enough to make it possible Lenore would like to spend a day with them before the summer ended.

Yensie handed the letter to her son. He read it carefully.

" Mother," he said, " this seems to be a case where the Lord's encomium cannot be earned or even striven for. Here are sick and in prison and we cannot ' come unto them. ' "

" You have visited their home, my son? "

" Once," he made answer, and she questioned no further.

The next time Herbert went to the city he made an attempt to see Mrs. Erdley. She refused to meet him.

Lenore looked sadly troubled.

" She never receives company when she is herself," she explained.

Then of what use was it for him to attempt to minister unto her? wondered the young man. What help could he bring her while under the influence of this baleful narcotic? His chances of winning her to Christ were indeed small. He prayed the more earnestly therefore for the inspiration and guidance of the only one admitted freely to her presence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CHAPTER OF EVENTS.

And evermore, beneath this outward sense
And through the common sequence of events,
He felt the guiding hand of Providence.

—WHITTIER.

TIME sped on. Stanton numbered now, among other converts, not one or two but ten Christian boys of those given over to his care. Many of these were able to go out and tell the story of the Cross in the surrounding villages.

Herbert had his band of ten also. All consecrated young men ready to answer the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." Wonderfully had God prospered his labors and answered that prayer breathed out of his deepest agony, to multiply him tenfold if he must stay at home—and send him, through others he might prepare, to every corner of the globe. Africa, China, India, Japan, yea, Corea and South America, were all represented in this choice group; every member of which was a picked man, able to do the highest kind of work; strong, physically, mentally, spiritually.

Among them was Tom Burton, the fruit of that sorrowful journey westward with his dead love. Another was Robert Langmore, the soul garnered from the first sermon he preached in his father's pulpit. The others were mostly young men from his own church and Sunday school, each with a soul-history known to their pastor, each respected and beloved in the community.

Harry Gardenell had completed his college course and was taking civil engineering. Eddie was about to enter Dr. Germaine's office as a medical student. Both had decided to give themselves to the work of missions, each was preparing in his own way. Harry's heart led him where it naturally might amid his surroundings, to Africa; Eddie, still uncertain, waited for definite orders.

Olive was developing into the strongest kind of a woman; brave and true, ready for every good work however hard. She had never yet written that word to Stanton for which he asked so long ago, and he had never repeated his question. His life and work however, in every way possible, had been freely shared with her. She knew his anxieties and perplexities, felt acquainted with his people, carried his boys to the Throne of Grace, exulted over their salvation and growth.

Her visit to his home had not been unfruitful. It had been a great joy to him to know she was there, to get from her a letter dated from the old farm. But he was most glad when a letter from his youngest brother, Ben, reached him.

XIV.

EVENTS.

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—WHITTIER.

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"I say," he wrote, "Ted and I owe you a grudge for not telling us what a daisy she was. It just about took our breath when we first saw her, and isn't she devoted to you and Africa! Why, she knows as much about it all as you do yourself, and loves to talk it over. All you ever did or said and the places you liked best are what interest her. She takes her Bible and sewing and sits for hours in the old tree where you used to study, and she's forever after us boys to tell her more of your pranks and exploits.

"She's solid good too. You see she took it for granted that Ted and I were Christians because you are, and she talked to us just as if we were. Wasn't it awful, though? I was never in such a fix in my life. We stood it just as long as we could and then we owned up. And what do you suppose she did? Why, just cried like a baby. And then she got her arms about us both and kissed me and said, 'Stanton way off in Africa trying to save the heathen, and his own brothers refusing his Christ.'

"I tell you I felt bad. It looked mean—'meaner 'n dirt,' as Samantha says—but I couldn't seem to help it. Ted caved in first and I followed, and we mean business too. She's as happy as a bird, chirping over us and reading to us and praying. Yes, its a fact, she prays with us every night. Mother just adores her, and we fellows don't come far from it. I wish she hadn't any other home. Say, old fellow, Ted and I are wondering why you didn't take her off with you? We don't think she'd have objected."

Was Stanton sorry, after the reading of that letter, that he had come to Africa alone? Never.

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 Africa alone? Never.

Would he have had these boys miss their spiritual
 motherhood? Not for worlds. His next letter to
 Olive was the very essence of tender reverence.
 She wept her fill over it.

"Somebody honors me," remarked Herbert look-
 ing up from a recently received letter from his
 friend. "This is the third time Stanton has
 referred to something in my sermons, quoting
 sentences from them. I wonder who is my re-
 porter?" looking smilingly from his mother to his
 sister.

"Not I," said Mrs Gardenell, "I am guilt-
 less."

"Not I," echoed Olive. "I haven't the ability.
 It must be Lee."

"Lee! Miss Erdley, do you mean?" in un-
 bounded astonishment. "Where and when does
 she hear me preach?"

"Why, Herbert Gardenell! is it possible you do
 not know that Lee Erdley is a member of your
 church? Such ignorance is reprehensible. Papa
 baptized her when she lived with us; she had been
 waiting for the privilege for years."

"Which fact by no means answers my question,
 Olive. She never attends church. At least I
 have seen her but once."

His sister laughed. "She is as easily and as
 naturally hidden as a violet or arbutus," she said.
 "Nevertheless she misses very few Sunday-morn-
 ing sermons; she heard the first you preached
 as pastor and the last, two days since."

Still her brother seemed unconvinced. "It is incredible that she should attend so regularly without my knowledge."

"Not so incredible as that she should carry away so much of what you have said and as you say it," was the laughing reply. "She says your sermons *feed* her," slyly, as her brother's face flushed a little, "and I should think they might the way she takes them in: I think she must be one of nature's own stenographers, she can carry whole sermons in her brain and repeat without notes whole paragraphs of anything she hears or reads. She heard Stanton the Sunday he preached for papa when mamma was sick, and she is constantly referring to what he said at that time, in one way or another. She must have fed on that too, I think, for she certainly has repeated it all to me piecemeal. I thought it quite wonderful myself, and was very proud of him, and yet only a few of his statements remained with me."

"Are you sure Lee writes to Stanton?"

"He prizes her letters next to his Bible, he wrote me recently," said Olive. "What ought I to think of that? He addresses her, 'Dear sister Lee' and signs himself, 'Your brother Stanton.'"

"You do not seem to take it much to heart, Princess."

"Indeed I do, and it does my heart good. I know of only one thing that would delight my heart more."

She looked up with meaning and met his eyes.

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and as you say it,"
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to his Bible, he wrote
What ought I to think
'Dear sister Lee' and
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s my heart good. I
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ng and met his eyes.

They were so gravely sad, even troubled, that she
dared not add another word.

"Mamma," she cried, as he turned abruptly and
left the room, "mamma, will he never get over the
past? Must he always keep his heart in the
grave?"

Her mother drew her close and took the flushed
cheeks between her hands.

"His heart is not in any grave," she said. "It
is beating strongly and bravely in his bosom. My
little daughter over whom some one I know has
exercised so much patience ought surely to be the
last to grow impatient of another. Herbert's heart
and life are in the keeping of his Lord, we need
have no fears concerning them."

But Herbert had grave fears for himself. There
had been a gentle confidence, a friendliness about
Lenore's greeting in their chance meetings since
that night at the mission, which, while it in no way
detracted from the modest deference she had ever
shown him, yet assured him of her favor and es-
teem. And something within him sprang up to
greet every mention of her name.

And it troubled him, the outward moving of his
soul towards this maiden. It ought not so to be.
He had loved once, and with her once ought to
be forever. He struggled manfully and prayed
much, and at last tried to put her entirely from
his thoughts. How was that possible when he
was pledged to meet her daily at the throne of God
to ask her mother's salvation?

He went out of his sister's presence that morning to his study, to his knees. Into the midst of his perplexity and distress crept the lines he had heard her repeat that night for another's soothing.

"Leave it with Him
The lilies all do,
And they grow."

To be sure! Had he forgotten that the secret of all overcoming was not struggle but abandonment to Jesus Christ? He laid this thing of which he was almost ashamed on the heart of his Lord, and for the present, at least, was comforted.

Ray was coming home. The letter announcing this fact hardly reached New York before he appeared himself, and all the cheerful bustle of joyous greetings and happy questionings began. What a change it brought to the home, grown so quiet of late, to have this merry gentleman with his wife and bright-eyed baby making its echoes ring with mirth and song.

He was sunburned and grown thin, his curly hair "almost wool," as Herbert slyly suggested, his whole appearance reminding one forcibly of the colored boy who once sailed out of that harbor.

His brother smiled and then sighed over the recollection.

"The fact is, Herv, I never recall that escapade of mine without a sort of reverent awe. It is to me a wonderful revelation of how surely God answers prayer. Had I not possessed, as I did, thank

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God, a father and mother and brother who could not be denied my salvation I fear I should have drifted into eternity unshrive. I was so near it. I shudder now, sometimes, when I recall the strange fancies that held me in that Border-land. It will always be to me an argument, not only for the power of prayer, but also for the supernatural in religion. God may and undoubtedly does lead many men naturally and quietly to Himself, to others He has to open the very doors of the invisible. And He will if He must for the soul that has been travailed for must be born."

He drew his mother tenderly towards him and kissed her as he spoke.

"Twice my mother if not thrice," he whispered. "You at least understand what Paul meant when he wrote 'My little children for whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.'"

Then Herbert told him of Robert Langmore's experience. "Another illustration," exclaimed Ray. "I suppose there are many such if we but knew them, and that not among ignorant and superstitious people only, but our best; those brought up under the gospel sound, and used to the voice of prayer."

CHAPTER XXV.

MISS BUNCH.

"Should I wrong her gentle trust,
Serene, complete,
What keenest loss forever must
My future meet.
We walk through ways with danger fraught,
Of naught afraid,
In sweet exchange of inmost thought
My little maid.
—CORA STEWART WHEELER.

THE old nursery was in requisition once more. Not for baby but Ray, who took up his quarters there, declaring it was just the place he needed for a quiet hour of study and rest.

The room opposite to it became an extemporized nursery, since it adjoined the chamber selected for the young pair. To this spot, sacred to baby, Herbert loved to repair, especially at her bedtime when she lisped her prayers and repeated to her mother little scraps from the history of her day.

His sister-in-law was to Herbert an ideal woman. She had been such in her girlhood and was especially so now as the pure wife and holy mother. He loved to watch her with her not yet

four-year-old darling, the immediate pet and plaything of the household.

Little Yensie Cartwright Gardenell was a thing of beauty and a joy forever. "Miss Bunch," her father called her, "Birdie," her mother, "Sweet heart," came most naturally to her Uncle Herbert's lips. She was soon his devoted follower and helper, spending hours in his study, riding on his shoulders over the house, accompanying him to town, making herself generally companionable.

Ray was immensely delighted at the wonderful devotion between niece and uncle, though he pretended some distress, declaring himself forsaken and obliged to resort for comfort to his mother and sister. His offspring regarded him with troubled eyes, and kissed him regretfully while she reasoned with this unnatural jealousy.

"You know I love you, papa, just as much and am your own little girl just the same," she said soothingly. "But poor Uncle Herbert hasn't dot many little baby at all, an' only wants to *borrow* me a little while."

"Oh, is that all? why, I don't object to that," answered papa, apparently quite relieved, and just restraining in time the joke over Herbert's bachelorhood that rose to his lips. He was tender over his brother's sorrow.

"I'm willing to loan you if it's not forever, Bunch."

"Oh, papa, you is so dood. An' p'raps I'll be dood all er time now too, I 'spect I will," went on

XXV.

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this wheedle-wee much given to moralizing, " 'cause Uncle Hervit's so dood I guess I'll catch it."

She seemed much disconcerted at her father's laughter. " Things *does* be catching, you said so, papa," striking him with her little hand. " An-an' I took er measles cause I was wiv er little boy."

Her father hurried her to the door. " Run up to uncle," he said, " run fast, I want it to catch quickly," and then he turned back laughingly to his mother.

She shook her head at him vainly. " She's a chip of the old block," he said. " I named her for you, hoping she might escape her paternal heritage and go back to you for her proclivities. She has a fearful temper."

" You didn't know me, Ray, when I was the trial of Aunt Sally Walton's life," answered his mother.

" I heard her speak of it once when I refused to repeat my dose of the Shorter Catechism and she locked me in the closet. I kicked the door off its hinges and she called me my mother's child. I was so indignant at what I considered an insult to your memory, that I ran at her with both fists crying, ' My mamma is better than you.' ' So she is ' she exclaimed laughing. If you turn out as well as she has I'll be proud of you."

Mrs. Gardenell smiled. " Yet your little girl is right, Raymond, when she complains that you

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laugh at her. You ought not. She said nothing
that was not quite proper and to her reasoning
correct. I think even it may be correct to highest
reasoning. Why should not good as well as evil
be infectious?"

"Oh, I have no doubt about that, mamma, it is
the way she says things that is funny. You re-
member how Princess used to wheedle? Well,
Miss Bunch is just such another. I should like to
be behind the study door some day when she is hold-
ing forth to Herv. If that fellow doesn't shake
his sides its because he has less sense of the ludi-
crous than I have or more self-control."

And Ray was not mistaken. It took all the power
of which Herbert was master at times to keep
his face straight under this baby's questionings.

"Uncle Hervit, will it make your thoughts *lose*
if I ask you just a little question?"

"No, dear."

"Well, Uncle Hervit, wh. makes er naughty
want to be naughty in us all er time an' we not
want it to be?"

There was a question for the doctors. The
gentleman was puzzled how to answer.

"What kind of naughty does my sweetheart
mean?"

"The '*terruption* kind."

"*Terruption*." Uncle studied the word a mo-
ment.

"How does the '*terruption* kind act, darling?"
he inquired.

"Oh, it wants to make min'ster's stop writing sermons an take little dirls in their arms. Its kinder tired, I dess."

Herbert smiled. "Oh, interruption! That isn't naughty, pet," lifting her to his knee.

"But it's *kinder* naughty, Is'pose," looking up at him trustfully from eyes so like his mother's though hedged with a tangle of golden curls.

"No, it isn't even a little naughty if it waits as patiently as it can and then asks politely for attention."

Uncle Hervit, I like 'tention—I like *you*," with a big hug.

Another day he was attracted by a great sigh from the little one at his feet. He stopped his pen and smiled into the eyes watching his movements so narrowly.

"Does you have to write *all* er time, Uncle Hervit?"

"No, darling, not all the time."

"But you write more an' my papa do. He got his sermon done *awful* quick."

"But uncle has magazines and papers to write for as well as sermons. Does my sweetheart understand?" lifting her to his lap and opening first a paper and then a magazine for her inspection. She looked over the articles he pointed out as carefully as if reading them.

"Is that what Aunt Olive does, too?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered, smiling at the shrewdness

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them.

Olive does, too?" she

smiling at the shrewdness

of the child who had discovered so readily what so
few of his sister's friends guessed.

"Is it Africa you write, Uncle Hervit?"

"Sometimes. And sometimes other things."

"Jesus things? to make peopies dood?"

"Sometimes things to make people good, some-
times things to make people wise. Do you under-
stand the difference, darling?"

She shook her curly head. "Uncle Hervit, you
know most eberything, doesn't you?" she said,
admiringly. "You'se not er *first* man God made
cause you're not Adam, but you know most more'n
Adam did, don't you?"

"In some things, perhaps," answered the gentle-
man cautiously. "In other things not so much."

"What more things does you know?"

He smiled. "Adam did not know so much
about our Saviour, pet. Jesus had not been born
or crucified for us then."

"I know about Jesus," proudly.

"Yes, even a little child now may be wiser in
some things than the wisest man of those days."

"Not Sol'mon?" with wide open-eyes,

"Yes, wiser even than Solomon, darling."

"My papa say you is a very wise man, Uncle
Hervit, an' Sol'mon was very wise man, but *he*
make some mistakes an' so does *you*. But you
doesn't, does you?" with utmost confidence.
"Cause you doesn't *wart* many wifes an' babies
for yourse'f; course you don't, when you has my
movver an' me!" with a hug. "But I know

Sol'mon. He was the most wisest an' er most unnerwisest man in er whole world ever."

Surely Ray was not the wisest, Herbert concluded as he looked into the little face so gravely puzzled and kissed the sweet lips before replying.

"My little sweetheart must not trouble her head over such matters. God doesn't want her to be very wise yet."

"Not till my hair grows?" asked the child solemnly. What could she mean?

"I do not understand you, darling."

"No, I doan unnerstan' papa eiver, an' him say wait till my hair grow."

Herbert smiled; that was so like his brother. "Papa only meant to say his little girl could not understand until she grew older. You know your hair grows a little every month," he explained.

Her intelligent eyes showed she was following him. "But perhaps I can explain it a little to you, dear. Solomon was wise because God told him so many things other men did not know."

"An' unnerwise?" interrupted the eager child-voice.

"And unwise because he did not act as he knew God wished. I am not sure you will understand me, darling, but it is wisdom to know the will of God and un wisdom not to do it."

"You do it, doan you, Uncle Hervit?" confidently looking into his face.

"I try, pet."

"I try too," she said complacently, "an' some."

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times I does it, but sometimes I *don't*," with a
sign.

It was only a few days after when her father
found her in the upper hall with a very cloudy face.

"What has gone wrong, Bunch?" he stopped to
inquire.

"*Me* has!" dolefully.

"That's nothing new, come tell papa what has
happened?"

"I'se gone and been like Sol'mon, papa."

Only his mother's appearance at this crisis and
her warning look kept Ray's countenance steady.

"How has my baby been like Solomon?" asked
grandma, drawing the child to her arms.

"I know mamma didn't want me to, and I
did," whispered the little one slowly.

"You have been disobedient? is that it, Bunch?
How does that make you like Solomon?" asked
her father, considerably in the dark.

"Oh, 'cause he knew and he didn't eiver," sighed
the child.

"Grandma doesn't understand," said Mrs. Gar-
denell gently; "won't my little Yensie tell me
what she means?"

"Why, grandma, don't you know? Uncle Hervit
'splained it to me. Sol'mon was wise 'cause he
knew what God want, an' unnerwise 'cause he
didn't do it."

"Uncle Herbert must look out or he'll be mak-
ing a theologian of you, Bunch," said her father
solemnly.

"The—ole-goshen isn't anysing bad, is it, papa?" cried the child. "Uncle Hervit wouldn't make me anysing bad, he's so good?"

"He's the best man in the world," answered her father reassuringly. "But I fear my little daughter hasn't improved much yet by his society according to her own confession."

And he left his mother to deal with the small culprit while he went to join his wife and brother in making some necessary calls.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year."—EMERSON.

"And things can never go badly wrong,
If the heart be true and the love be strong ;
For the mist if it comes, and the weeping rain,
Will be changed by the love into sunshine again."

MISS BUNCH had a new thought in her little noddle, her father had put it there. She kept it to herself as long as it was possible, then it blossomed into speech. She was in the study as usual, and at Herbert's feet, her dolly in her lap.

"You must be very still, Daisy," she said, addressing her waxen darling, "'cause Uncle Hervit dcesn't like to be 'terrupted an' it ud be a Sol'mon to 'terrupt him, only you can *sigh* if you're *very* tired," the little speaker here drawing a dismal breath.

The gentleman kept his face steady by effort and went on with his writing as if he had not heard.

"Uncle Hervit isn't like Adam," continued the tiny lady still addressing her doll, "caud Adam

he was naughty an' *stealed*, and had to be turned out'n er garden, my papa said so. An' he's not like Sol'mon," scornfully, "caud Sol'mon wouldn't do the wise he knew an' our uncle *always* does. No," with great satisfaction, "Uncle Hervit *never* does anything wrong, he's the best man in the world!"

This was too much for the listener. Such devotion deserved reward. He threw aside his pen and suddenly lifted her to the ceiling and buck again to her great delight. "On'y I might have dropped Daisy," she observed, an' of course I wouldn't like to hurt her. She's good, awful good, 'y *she can't talk*. I like peoples that talk, Uncle Hervit, an' as don't has to write *all* er time."

"I like peoples that can talk too," said uncle, tossing her in the air like a ball and catching her again; "little peoples just about as big as sweetheart Gardenell."

"An' you wouldn't like to make the ole-goshen outen your sweetheart would you, nunkey?" she cried, clasping his neck with her dimpled arms.

"I'm not suro I know what the old Goshen is," he laughed. "But I deny any desire to make you even a day older than you are, blossom," throwing her up to the ceiling again.

"There," she said radiantly, as she caught her breath, "wait till I see papa! He said it himself: 'You must look out or you'd make the old-goshen of me.' I knew you wouldn't if it was horrid, an' there isn't no place to look out only er windows,

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an' there's no ole-goshen there, is there, Uncle
 Hervit? You *is* the best man in the world, *isn't*
 you, darling?"

"Uncle Hervit," was a modest man. He re-
 turned her hugs with interest but denied the
 charge. "My little niece thinks so because she loves
 me," he said, parrying the question.

"But my papa say so. Is it caud he loves you
 too, nunkey?"

"Yes, darling, I think it must be."

"And ain't you *truly*?" asked the little fairy,
 quite crest-fallen and ready for tears. "Oh, I
 fought you was!"

"I try to be the best I can, darling, and God
 looks at the try in my heart and not at my failure.
 It is possible He may count me good," said uncle
 comfortingly.

"I has a try in my heart, nunkey, does God see
 that?"

"Yes, indeed."

"An' is Him dlad?"

"Very glad."

"An' won't Him look at the naughty at all, only
 er try?"

"He see's both," replied Herbert. "But if He
 sees the try is big and honest, darling, I know He
 will forgive the naughty; and if you ask Him
 He will keep you from being naughty."

"I do ask when I don't forget," she whis-
 pered, kissing over and over again the lips
 that had spoken such good news. "An' I'm not

goin' to fordet nany more, an' my papa'll be s'prised cause I is so dood an' he won't laugh 'bout its bein' catchin.' It *does* catch, doesn't it, Uncle Hervit—your dood?"

And oh, how uncle laughed and smothered her with kisses! So the frolic began. Back and forth and up and down the study they chased each other. On hands and knees went the young minister so play horse with the tiny lady perched on his back, her fingers holding on by his hair, her childish voice falling in peals of laughter. Finally, flushed, breathless with triumph, high up on his shoulders, she was carried to the rooms below to find the family. From one room to another they galloped, but not a glimpse of any one could be found. They trotted to the kitchen and horse and rider each indulged in a fresh doughnut from Jane's dish. They visited the conservatory and the young lady thrust a pink in her own little bosom and one behind each ear of her faithful steed. As they approached the back parlor they heard the sound of voices—home voices. Neither of them had heard the bell ring,—which was not such a wonder considering the racket they had been in—it was morning, moreover, and of course no time for company. So in they pranced with a flourish. The charger, in dressing-gown and slippers. Just then, under the pressure of the rein, which by-the-bye was a lock of his own hair—he drew up suddenly and stopped before—Miss Erdley.

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Herbert felt the little shock that went over her as with flushed face and disordered hair, holding on to his little niece with one hand, he extended to her the other. His blue eyes were brimful of merriment, his voice shook with it, so conscious was he of the almost horror of the lady in view of the liberties this baby had taken with the person of the minister. She had known Stanton as a happy, rollicking, natural young man, himself only as a religious teacher, a preacher. Which would she prefer, pulpit, orator, or man? Would loss of dignity detract from his value? He was man enough to be interested in the problem, to be amused over its funny side.

He drew baby from his shoulder to his knee, and while she took his face between her hands and walked all over him, attempted to talk to the visitor. The young lady tried to be polite, to ignore the situation, and as the conversation became general, listened attentively to Raymond, who showed unmistakable signs of admiration for this friend of his sisters. But Herbert was conscious that her eyes kept coming back to his face almost curiously, and meeting them once with a frank smile he received one quite as frank in reply.

Somehow the frolic had wakened the boy in him. He had not felt so ready for fun in two years. It was as if the weight of care, the burden that had lately oppressed him, slipped off and left him free. He made a charming conversationalist in such a mood. Ray crossed swords with him to

be defeated. There was no resisting the good fellowship of the atmosphere. Lee was carried off captive to the lunch-room; Olive gladly removing her wrap and hat.

Seldom has a merrier meal been eaten, or by a gayer company. Olive exchanged glances with mamma when Herbert, with dress rearranged and hair freshly brushed, but with the radiance of his face undisturbed, took his seat at the table. She felt almost content. Harry and Eddie were both at home, papa and Stanton only missing. If—that little word kept Olive's cup from running over.

"I want to sit by Uncle Hervit," cried Miss Bunch, allowed on this occasion to eat with her elders. And the honored gentleman lifted her chair to his side.

"Papa, what made you say Uncle Hervit is the best man in the world?" suddenly burst forth Raymond's little daughter in the midst of the meal, her spoon half-way to her mouth.

"I certainly thought so," answered Mr. Gardenell cautiously, used to his baby's tactics and properly on his guard.

"He says he isn't, and he knows," was the triumphant response, as the contents of the spoon disappeared.

"Simplicity thou art a child," laughed Raymond, looking at his brother. "Ladies, I beg to explain. My little daughter is logically inclined, and having heard me make some comment on her

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uncle's worth she immediately interviews him on
the subject and concludes, quite philosophically
too, that knowing himself better than I do, and
being himself, and therefore unable to deceive, I
must have been mistaken in my premises."

Miss Erdley just then meeting the roguish eyes
of the subject of all these remarks laughed as he
begged her sympathy and patted his niece's curly
head.

"Good people do not always know they are
good, Yensie," said grandma, taking pity on the
perplexed little face.

"Don't they? Hum!" with a little sniff of con-
tempt for such ignorance. "I always does when
I'se dood."

In the laugh which followed Herbert succeeded
in calling the child's attention to her plate.

The after-lunch talk was quieter if no less
bright. The little one fell asleep in her uncle's
arms, and was carried by him to bed, Gatty follow-
ing. He came back to the parlor presently, the
same light on lip and brow. There was a fascina-
tion about his gladness that was infectious.

The afternoon was advancing when the party
broke up, Lee insisting that she must go home.
Herbert joined her at the door with coat and hat.

"I am going your way, Miss Erdley," he said.
"And will trouble you with my company if you
don't object."

And as they started down the street together
Olive's eyes again met her mother's.

"I want to inquire concerning your mother, Miss Erdley," said the gentleman presently.

"She is no better. I think she is even a little weaker physically, otherwise there is no change. Sometimes I almost despair, but that is not natural to me, and then the pendulum swings the other way. But there is really no reason for hope."

"Except," he said.

"Except," she assented, meeting his eyes.

They parted before she reached her destination, he going one way, she another. He had no reason to urge for accompanying her further. She almost feared, but did at last glance backward once. It was to find him also looking after her, the same bright smile illuming his face.

She was glad she had seen him thus, knew both sides of his nature. The sweet, strong, uplifted, almost supernatural. The pure, bright, unaffected natural. Were they not perfect halves of a whole? Her undefiled womanhood went out to do reverence to this undefiled manhood. In home and church alike able to bear the most rigid scrutiny, able to lift an unblemished front.

God give America tens of thousands of such—pure women, holy men! These are the bulwarks of a nation; she needs nothing else to insure her safety, her perpetuation!

"Herbert," said Olive that night, "it is delightful to see you your olden self. Your face still shines."

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eman presently.
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self. Your face still

"Somehow I seem to have struck a higher strata of air," he laughed, "it is full of exhilaration."

"And Lee likes you so," continued his sister, in a tone which reached Ray's ears though her words did not, for he was sitting in the window and she was pacing up and down the veranda with Herbert.

"Look out, Hervie," he cried. "It's time to put up a danger signal. Olive is wheedling."

"I'm doing nothing of the sort," she retorted, "am I, Hervie?" holding his arm close and looking into his face. "But didn't she look divine in that old-fashioned silk? She does her own dress-making—think of it!—and always has things so becoming, so in mode, yet never extreme."

"You would hardly expect Miss Erdley to be extreme in anything," said Herbert, lest his sister be vexed with his quiet.

"Except her goodness and the texture of her dresses. They must have been very wealthy some time, for she never has anything common or quite new. Now, honest, Herbert, did you ever see anything prettier than her dress to-day?"

"Honest," answered her brother laughingly, "I did not notice a thing she wore."

"Oh, Hervie!" groaned his sister, "if I had worn anything so pretty you would have complimented me."

"Because you are mine," he answered. "That is nothing strange."

"I think it is strange you should not admire the admirable."

"I do admire Miss Erdley very much."

"When will you get over calling her Miss Erdley, and adopt her name for her?" she cried in chagrin. "Herbert, I wish you would be good and admit the truth. Honest, truly, can't you see her just as she looked this afternoon when she laughed at Bunch?"

"I certainly can recall just how she looked," he smiled. "But not a thing concerning her dress except that it was dark and soft and clinging."

Olive clapped her hands. "She never wears anything that is not soft and clinging as if it loved her. Herbert," whispering, "I wish you loved her."

"I love you," he said, stooping to kiss her. "That ought to satisfy you, Princess," and there was an undertone of pain in his voice.

"Herbert," she said, "please let me say what is in my heart. Papa was talking to me once about mamma before she married him, and it surprised me. I had never thought of them apart. And I said, 'Papa, I thought mamma always belonged to you,' and he answered me—listen, Herbert—'She did, but I didn't find it out for years.' Herbert"—her voice falling very low, "I always think of his words when I see you and Lee together—you belong to each other and have not found it out."

He did not answer her. He simply unlinked her hand from his arm, pushed her gently yet sternly one side, and went in, leaving her alone.

There was a timid rap at the study door at bed-

very much."
"Never calling her Miss
for her?" she cried
"Oh you would be good
at, truly, can't you see
afternoon when she

"Just how she looked,"
"I'm concerned concerning her dress
soft and clinging."
"She never wears any-
thing clinging as if it loved
"I wish you loved

"stooping to kiss her.
"Princess," and there
his voice.

"Please let me say what is
saying to me once about
me, and it surprised me.
I'm apart. And I said,
'Always belonged to you,'
"Herbert—'She did,
'ears.' Herbert"—her
"I always think of his
"Lee together—you be-
"not found it out."

"He simply unlinked
"I pushed her gently yet
"I, leaving her alone.
"I the study door at bed-

time. Herbert rose and opened it and looked
down into the wistful face lifted to his.

"I'm so sorry. Forgive me for spoiling your
beautiful day. I will never mention her name to
you again," she said.

"Never?" he questioned gently. "That is too
far-off a day for my little sister to reckon about;
you will forget. But don't cry or grieve, darling.
I assure you I do not love you less because you
love Lee so much." Then he kissed her and led
her to her chamber door.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A REVELATION.

"We sit down to reckon up the darkness We
ought rather to count the stars Thou hast set therein."
"God must grow into the empty places of life."

RAYMOND GARDENELL had come home to his native land for a purpose, just as he had left it for a purpose, and the purposes were one: The extension and strengthening of our Master's kingdom on the American continent.

To this end, after a short rest, he was expected to travel up and down the land telling the things he had seen and heard, presenting the needs of the country and the work in which he was interested, rousing Christians to the necessity and privilege of immediate co-operation in its behalf.

He had many long conferences with his brother, who was nearly as well acquainted with the facts as himself, concerning the best methods of promoting his object. They were hand and glove in the enterprise.

Raymond had become enamored of the land of his sojourn, and was determined to offer himself as a missionary to South America as soon as he

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should have accomplished the task set him. His descriptions of the country and people, and their tremendous need had taken strong hold on his youngest brother's heart, and Eddie began to inquire if God would not have him go back with Raymond when he should be ready to return.

Gatty accompanied her husband as far as Maine, where, after a short stay, he left her to finish the long visit looked forward to for months, with her mother and brothers. A great vacuum seemed opened among those they had left. Life appeared very prosaic, Olive declared, with no baby to tease, and no brother to tease her, and nothing but common, every-day work.

"But common, every-day prose is the staple of life and poetry only its pastime," Herbert reminded her. A remark which his mother challenged.

"Every true life is a poem," she said, "where commas and colons, exclamations and interrogations abound, with periods more or less frequent. But whose staple after all is neither of these, but beautiful stretches of imagery, reality, and thought: with wondrous revelations of truth and love and glimpses of a glory ready to be revealed. The final period being only the taking of breath before the opening of the next and sublimer canto."

There had always been a very close friendship between the Germaines and Gardenells. The doctor had never forgotten the debt his young life

owed Mrs. Gardenell—then Miss Walton—and from the hour his pastor brought her to his home, his bride, his heart and sympathies and purse had been at their disposal.

The children of the two houses had been companions and playfellows from birth. Dr. Germaine being specially fond of Eddie, who was about the age his Horace would have been had he not died in infancy.

Olive was a year or two older than Grace, but they were fast friends, especially so since Grace had promised to be Tom Burton's wife, and follow him to the mission field, for Olive would always hold those nearest who had given their lives as had her lover, to the Foreign work.

Olive had been calling on Grace this morning; they had been exchanging confidences as girls will. She had left her friend busy in her own room, and run down to let herself out of the front door, when Mrs. Germaine appeared with a question.

"Have you heard from Stanton recently?"

"Nothing since the tidings of fever at the station reached us," answered the girl, her face telling the story of her fears.

"Olive," said the usually gentle little lady, "if anything happens to Stanton, you will never forgive yourself. How could you let him go away as you did, dear, when you owed him so much—your mother's very life?"

Two blue eyes flashed up to hers in questioning.

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to hers in questioning.

"I ought not to have mentioned this," said the lady, "but it has been in my thoughts all the morning, and was sure to leak out without care. I think you ought to know, however, that it was by the transfusion of Stanton Cartwright's blood into your mother's veins that her life was spared."

There was a little rustle, and both ladies looked up to find Dr. Germaine standing near listening.

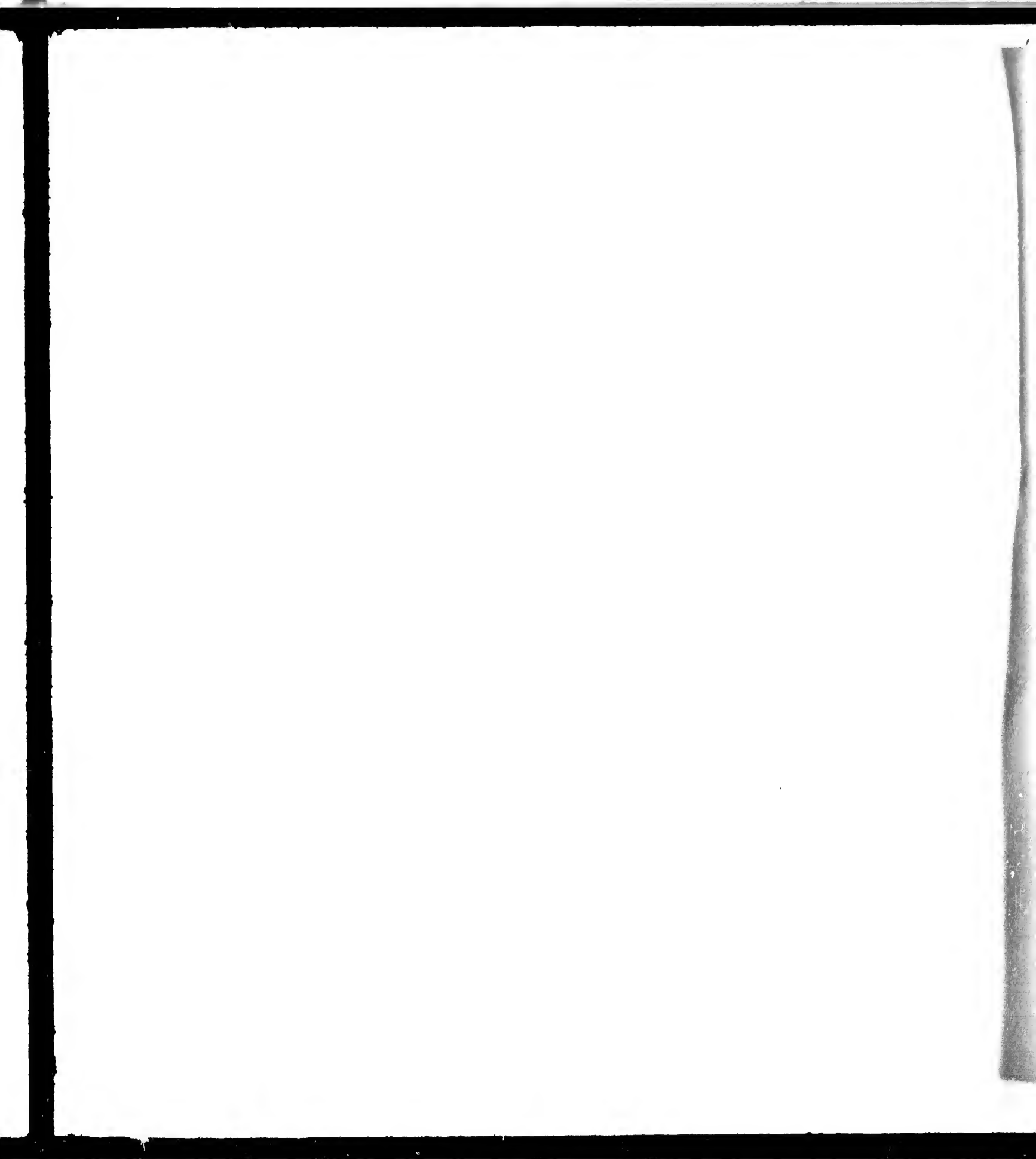
"Horace, I fear I shall lose my reputation for prudence," said his wife, "but the secret slipped out unawares."

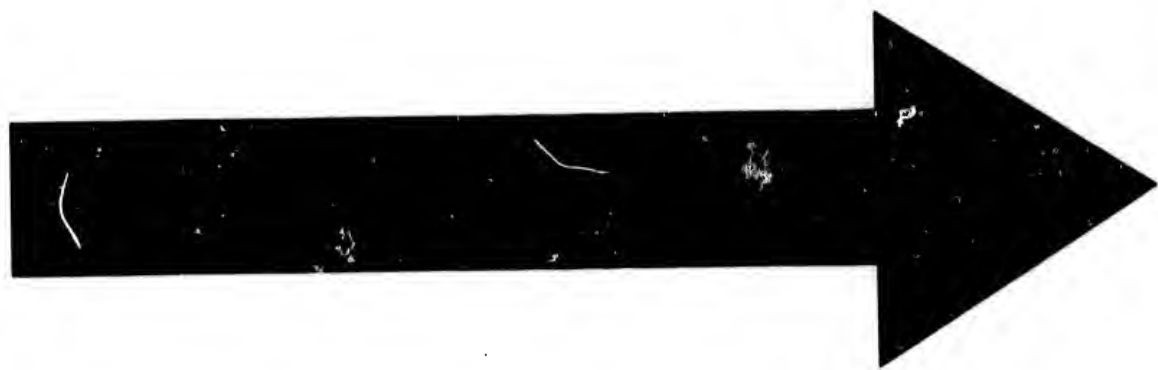
"And none too soon," answered her husband. "I wish now I had told it long ago. Olive, I am disappointed in you. I never thought you would let Stanton go away without hope, and when you did I supposed it was a whim of which you would soon weary. But I begin to think you hard-hearted. I venture now you have not had the grace to write him a single word of love in all these four years."

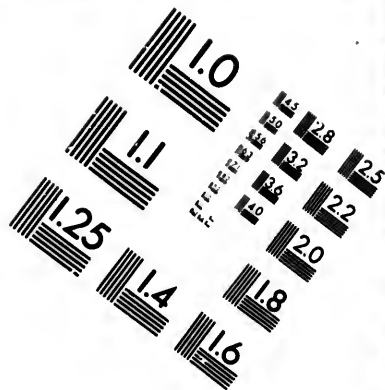
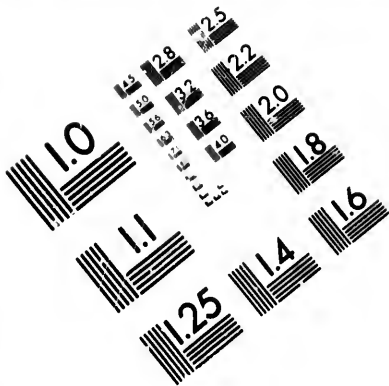
The delicate face flushed, the eyes and lips quivered.

"A woman is not a man, Horace," the little woman suggested gently. "She finds it hard to unveil her heart when urged, well-nigh impossible to anything but urgency."

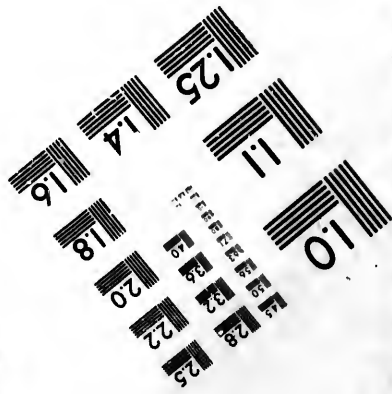
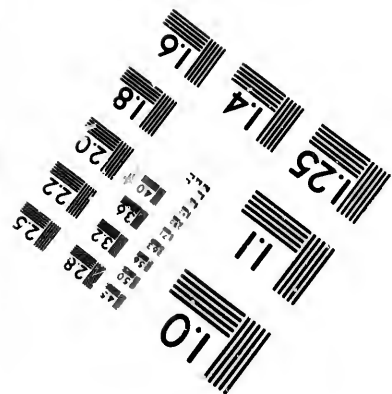
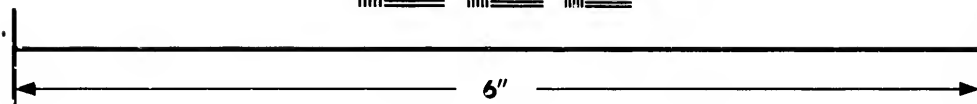
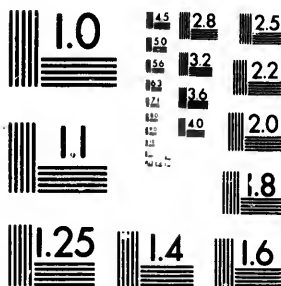
"Nonsense," answered the gentleman, but not unkindly. "If you defend this bit of baggage, Esther, I shall consider it proper cause for divorce. What more urging does Olive require? Is Stanton Cartwright a baby doll to change his mind?"







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Is not his question still awaiting an answer? Who doubts whether he meant it? Not Olive I'll be bound. I tell you it is neither politeness or modesty to withhold bread from a starving man, because he does not tease for it. Why, Olive, what would you think of my Ruth if she served your brother Harry after such a fashion? I'd like to have her try it."

"Somebody is taking my name in vain," cried a bright-faced young girl coming over the front steps with a flush, for she had heard another's name also. "What are you saying about me, papa?"

"Nothing very dreadful, Puss," pinching her cheek.

"You are quite right Horace—doctor," said Olive humbly, and with flaming cheeks.

He stooped and kissed her, putting out a hand to draw her close, but she evaded it, rushing out of the door and down the street as if pursued.

"Why, Papa Germaine, what were you saying to grieve her so? There were tears in her eyes. It's a good thing Grace did not see them; she adores Olive and is no end jealous of Lee Erdley."

"I repent," said the gentleman smiling. "Her 'Horace—doctor' is always too much for me, it brings back her babyhood. Do you remember, Esther, how she used to sit on my knee when we were first married. She was such a wee fairy. She never could understand why she might not call me Horace, since her mother did so; she got up the little compromise herself, and added the 'doctor.'"

"She calls mamma 'Aunt Esther.'"

"Your mother is responsible for that," replied the doctor. She taught her. Poor baby, she was too young and too near and dear to us both, to address us as cold Mr. and Mrs. Germaine, so your mother coined a relationship. She's a charming little girl-woman, if she has treated Stanton Cartwright shamefully."

"We must hope it has been a blessing to him, it undoubtedly has to her," said Mrs. Germaine, turning the best side up, as was her habit. "It is wonderful how she has developed of late. Some day, when she is his wife, he may have reason to bless God for the delay that ripened her soul."

"You seem to be quite sure of the end, Esther."

"Are not you?"

"Perhaps, but not exactly of the same end. I am too well acquainted with African fever."

She turned and looked at him out of her gentle eyes—

"Be not faithless, but believing," she said.

Meanwhile Olive had hurried home, as if life and death depended on her haste. She rushed into her mother's presence in a way that suggested the girl that used to be, rather than the one of a few years past.

"Why, this is my old-time Olive," said Mrs. Gardenell, getting up to meet her, for she saw something had gone amiss.

"Mamma, why did not you, why did not somebody tell me that Stanton saved your life?"

"Because he requested that you should not know."

"Then why did Aunt Esther tell me now? I do not want to know anything he does not wish I should."

"Perhaps Aunt Esther thinks, as I do, that the day for such precaution is past. The knowledge can do you no harm. My Olive loves Stanton now, and knows she does. Then she was still uncertain of her heart—and he unwilling that anything should even seem to hinder or fetter her freest, fullest choice. I think, too, he shrank from your gratitude, from praise or reverence, for doing what to him was simplest, plainest duty, not to say privilege. It was love he gave, and love, not favor, he sought. He would not allow anything to occur that might possibly, in the least degree, bias your decision.

"Oh, mamma, Uncle Horace is right, I have been wicked as well as cowardly! I have thought always of myself, considered my own feelings. How can I ever forgive myself? I have been afraid to write the truth, shrank from giving without a further asking what he loved me too well even to suggest, since it brought me pain before. Mother if we ever hear from him again, if he lives—" voice faltering, "I will force my hand to write the fact in plainest, straightest form. I will say 'I love you Stanton, above all the world, you and you only, and Africa shared with you will be paradise. Let me come to you.'"

It was while Raymond was still at his mother Cartwright's that he received a paper from home addressed in Herbert's hand, but containing a little poem from Olive's pen. It described a scene that took place in the parsonage before her eyes one day.

His daughter being out of the room at the time, her father deemed it safe to read the article aloud to Gatty and her mother and Be a, the only occupants of the parlor. It was entitled "Miss Bunch," and ran thus:

Little Miss Bunch was a naughty girl
As naughty as naughty could be,
She would not say "thank you," not she indeed,
For a wilful bunch was she.

'Twas useless to reason, persuade, rebuke,
And mamma, in mild despair,
Drew her little daughter unto her knee
And parted her tangled hair.

"I shall have to whip," said the saddest voice.
Miss Bunch crept off in haste,
Under the table and couch and chairs,
As after her mamma chased.

Over the floor—but caught at last
One, two, the blows fell down
From a gentle hand to a tiny form
Under a dainty gown.

A look of anger, reproach and grief,
Well mingled with grave surprise,
Swept over the sweet, indignant face
With its soft brown asking eyes.

"Why don't you obey mamma and say
What she bids?" Bunch drooped her head:
"Why, mamma, it's cause," with shy lifted eyes,
"I can't find my *talk*," she said.

Little Yensie was not far off. Before the first verse was ended she had slipped in and laid her head in her grandmother's lap. She was regarding her father out of grave and somewhat troubled eyes when he ceased reading.

"Why, papa," she said, "that must be about my little andel. Aunt Ollie says I has one jus' zackly like me that allers sholds the face of my Farver in heaben."

"Bunch," asked her father solemnly, "do you think your little angel in heaven ever scampers under the table and over the floor to escape a whipping she deserves?"

Mrs. Cartwright found it hard to keep from smiling as the picture Ray had drawn flitted across her mind's eye. Her son-in-law was a constant diversion. But baby had no thought of laughing. She suddenly hid her face in her grandmother's lap with a wail.

"Oh, it's me, it's me, and now eberybody knows I was naughty! I shouldn't fink Aunt Ollie'd a telled it, Uncle Hervit never would," with a genuine sob.

"You are not the only Miss Bunch in the world," said Grandma Cartwright soothingly. "Who is to know which one she means?"

"That's so," cried Ben, always ready to come to

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the front where baby was concerned. "And then, too Olive knows there are lots of people in the world who don't understand babies, and she wants them to know they're not always naughty when they seem to be."

Bunch was looking up hopefully out of tearful eyes. "Whata tumfort you is getting to be Benjy," she said, in exact imitation of her father's voice when he had offered her the same consolation not long since. "I guess I'll fordib Aunt Ollie, but she must neber, neber tell anysing 'bout me again, and you will burn up all those horrid papers, won't you, Nunkie Ben?" putting her chubby arms about her devoted follower's neck.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOME AGAIN.

" Ah ! lend me your little ear, love !
Hark ! 'tis a beautiful thing ;
The weariest month of the year, love,
Is shortest and nearest the spring."

—MRS. WHITNEY.

" If he lives."

Olive's lips had faltered what Herbert's heart had long said. It had been months now since the last word received from his friend, and then it had been scarcely more than a word.

" The fever is raging in our midst," he wrote. " I am tending the sick constantly and have little time for anything else. One of my best helpers is dead—a bright young fellow who loved the gospel story ; most fitted for service, therefore most fitted for glory. I do not murmur only wonder a little, but *He* knows."

This with a message of love to the dear ones and a short postscript,

" You'll have to forgive me, Herv, but I don't feel up to writing. I am languid and uncertain of myself, hardly able to think connectedly. It may be the fever creeping on. If not, I'll write again soon. Pray for your other half—

STANTON.

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 —MRS. WHITNEY.

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STANTON.

Somehow that postscript roused deepest solicitude in the heart of the reader.

He did not pass the letter to Olive as he generally did, but read its contents aloud, all except those closing lines. Why should she be troubled with the fears filling his own bosom? He would spare her while he could.

But his sister soon discovered his uneasiness; it communicated itself to her unspoken. When two months passed with never a word, the quiet anguish of her face was more than he could bear, and when she said, "You are keeping something from me. What was there in Stanton's letter that I did not hear?" he put it in her hand.

"He is dead," she moaned, "dead, and I let him die alone. My punishment is greater than I can bear."

Her brother tried to reassure her, to find reasons for hope and courage, but truth to tell he was heavy-hearted himself. Mrs. Gardenell was their comforter.

"He is too busy to write, with the care of the sick and his other work. If he was smitten we should hear, some one would send us word; there is hope in this silence."

They moved to Bloomingdale early. Olive so drooped they trusted the sweet life and beauty of nature's springtide would quicken the current of her blood, give elasticity again to her step and color to her cheek.

The spring! Yes, she loved it. But never be-

fore had it seemed so suggestive of Stanton. Had he not passed his last spring in the Home land with her? Bloomingle! dear old Bloomingle! Had they not together and alone that fateful May-day drunk in of its loveliness? The apple-tree, the robins, the big dining-room, the whole house seemed ever voiceful of Stanton—Stanton, and that afternoon when she read in his face the pain she had brought his heart. One sentence of that letter was ever in her memory. "Most fitted for service, therefore most fitted for glory." Were the words true? and to whom more applicable than to Stanton's self? Her shuddering heart fainted before the suggestion.

Yet the solitude, the quiet were just what she needed, and they helped her. She was weary of the ceaseless round of work, of visiting; she felt as if unable to longer force herself to do anything. Just to be alone and still with mamma and Herbert, who understood her sorrow and weariness, was all she asked or wanted.

To Herbert especially she clung with the tenacity of despair. He knew her heartache, had he not felt it himself? lost his dearest? And she had tried to make him forget. How could she? He was unlike her, he had never misunderstood, or disappointed Stanton as she had, but had always loved him as he deserved. She dreaded his going to the city, and waited feverishly for his return, and leaned on him constantly in a way that brought all his devotion to the front and made

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his courage rise to meet her necessity. He must not despair since Olive must hope, and he must inspire that hope.

Early summer came. It was impossible to live in the midst of nature's sweet wooings, her prophecies of love and joy, and not take on something of their cheer. In spite of dark days, hours of agony and fear, the maiden's heart dared think of something beside evil. Color came back to cheek and lip, her step no longer lagged drearily, her eyes looked up and saw God.

She opened her Bible one day to Rom. 15: 18, "Now the God of Hope—" She stopped amazed. She had never thought of Him in that way before: "The God of Hope." It was right then to hope—like God, wrong not to hope. She read on—"fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." She took great breaths over that Scripture. So God Himself willed she should hope. Nay, He was to *fill* her with joy, and *peace*—her hope was to *abound*.

She took her Bible to her mother's room where Herbert sat talking. "I have found something," she cried, "something so beautiful and strange." Her eyes were shining, her cheeks flushed, joy overspread her countenance. "God wants me to hope. Not you and Herbert, mamma, but God. He says so," and she read her verse. Then mamma smiled at Herbert, and Herbert smiled back at mamma. Healing had begun.

Olive always asked the same question at first sight of her brother after his visits to the city.

"Any news?"

His answer was ever the same. But somehow, from the day she found that verse, she expected some different reply, and following every shower of disappointment was the speedy outbreaking of the sun. So the weeks went by.

It had been a beautiful day, one of the sweet breezeful days of early summer when the spring is yet in her breath, and its freedom in her step. Herbert had missed all its delights, to his sister's sorrow, for New York demanded his presence.

Twilight was coming on, almost time for his return. Mamma awaited him in the parlor as usual, resting on the couch opposite the window-door which opened wide to the radiance of the western sky. Her beautiful face had affinity to the glory toward which it turned. Sunset to her was but the opening of the pearly gates, it brought her heavenly visitants. The glow upon her countenance seemed not so much the reflection of what she saw as the outbeaming of what she was; as if the gold and crimson within recognizing the crimson and gold without shone forth to greet it through the translucent windows of her flesh.

Her daughter catching a glimpse of her thus, as she passed, felt the rush of sudden tears. Tears of neither joy nor sorrow, but the mingling of both. Tears such as the realization of spiritual verities always bring to sensitive souls, a divine agony, a

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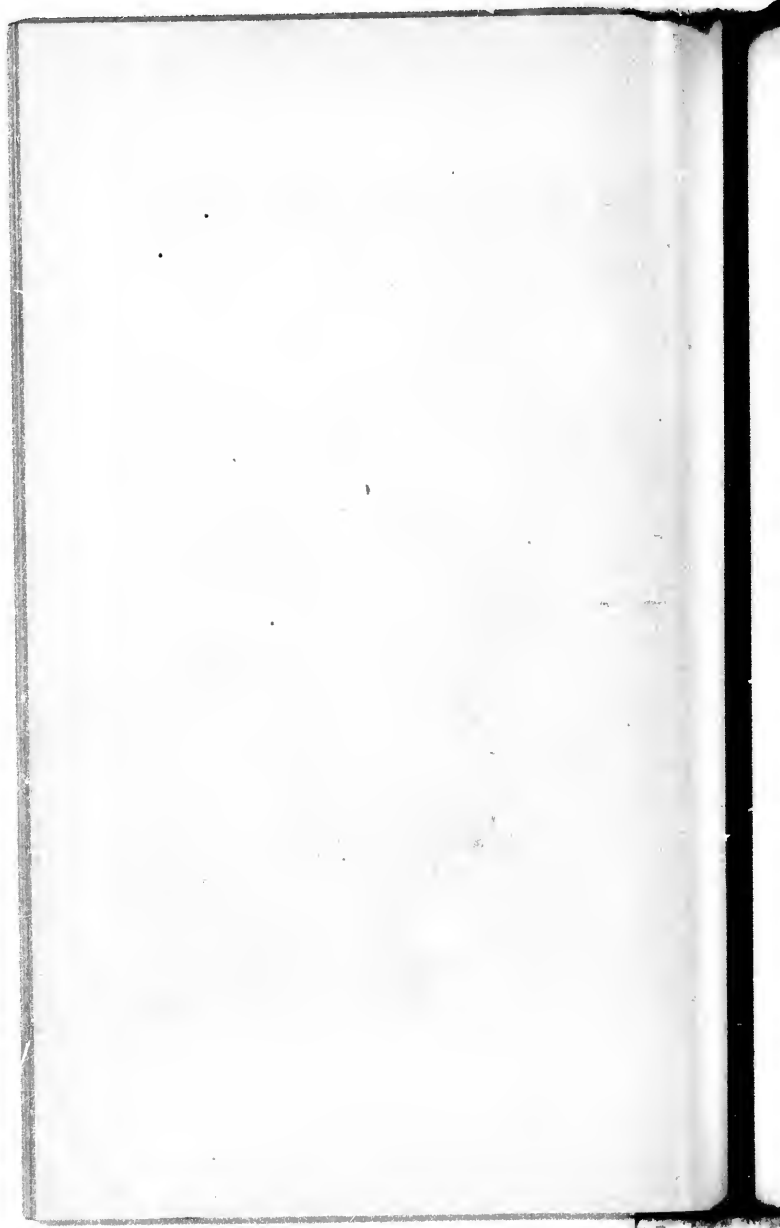
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Olive stood transfixed.



sublime pain, a joy which in its passage hurts the flesh, because as yet it is too weak to transmit, without suffering, the electric currents of heaven.

Olive did not disturb her. She had an almost awe of her mother at times, so near seemed she to the better land. Surely if Stanton were there her mother would know it—so well was she acquainted with its inhabitants.

The maiden went to her own room and knelt to pray. She always prayed these days before going forth to meet her brother and ask the question she dreaded and yet longed to hear answered. God was most real to Olive. She could not have lived and borne without Him, and prayer was no longer duty but delight.

“‘So on I go not knowing.’”

She sang softly as she arose,

“‘I would not if I might.’”

She hesitated and pondered, as she went quietly down the hall, whether she could say that from her heart—

“‘I would not if I might.’”

Did she not long to know?

She halted before the mirror to take her hat from the peg, and caught the reflection of her own face. A sort of astonishment took hold of her that she was still young and fair, and she stood a moment curiously regarding herself.

"I wonder I am not old and withered," she said, "the years seem so long." And then sighing gently she took her hat and opened the door and went down the gravelled path.

She stopped amid the flowers to pluck a few roses—she had plenty of time. The breath of mignonette came to her nostrils. She stooped and gathered it with tears in her eyes as she whispered, "He always loved it so much." Then she fastened it to her bodice and walked on.

Was she early or was Herbert late? It seemed a long time she waited in the gloaming, just where she could catch the first glimpse of his form as he turned into the road. The western sky was dulling, its purple and crimson splendor fading into gray, only a few bright clouds still remained. She counted a few stars beginning to peep out.

And then—then, why, yes, it was Herbert's form that appeared, but there was some one with him. She had started from her rock-seat to run and meet him, but stood transfixed with head thrown forward, eyes dilated and heart beating tumultuously.

There was an agony of hope, and fear and questioning in her bosom. Was it?—could it be?—or was she grown suddenly mad? Oh how weak, almost feeble was the advancing step! with one wild dash she was down the road and had flung herself on the stranger's breast.

"Oh Stanton, Stanton!" she sobbed.

And then a voice, that voice for whose sound

withered," she said,
And then sighing
opened the door and

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The breath of mign-
She stooped and
as she whispered,
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Oh how weak, al-
step! with one wild
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she had longed and prayed beyond all utterance,
the voice so loved, said wickedly,

"It's only for your sake, Herv, you know."

She did not resent it, there was room for nothing
but joy in her heart. She pulled down the dear
face and kissed the naughty lips, and he dropped
to the grass on the wayside and drew her to his
lap, saying roguishly,

"I have a question to ask you, Olive."

"As many as you please," she cried, "only let
me ask mine first. Will you, can you forgive me,
Stanton, for not reading my own heart better, and
not appreciating yours?"

His arms tightened about her form, but he said,
"I am going back to Africa, Princess."

"I am going with you," she answered. "Now
that I have you again be sure I shall never let you
go anywhere, at any time, without me."

"Not even to see little mother?" he questioned
with proper resignation.

"Not even to see little mother," she replied.
"I have written to her every month since you left
and visited her besides, and we quite understand
each other. When she sees you she expects to see
me."

"So I am the victim of a conspiracy," he laughed.
"Oh Ollie, how impossible it seems that I sit here
beside you! How good God is! Three months
ago I was lying on the borders of the grave."

She dropped her head on his bosom, and wept
freely. "If you had died, I would have wanted

to die too," she said. "But Herbert made me hope; Herbert and mamma and God."

She did not move from the arms that held her, but she stretched out both of hers to her brother. He dropped on his knees beside her, his eyes dripping with glad tears. She slipped her hands about his neck.

"I love you just the same," she said, "always the same, but I belong to Stanton. You do not feel bad, do you, dear?"

What a child she would always be! He kissed her lips and eyes. "You precious sister," he replied, "I am almost too glad to speak;" and he took the hands from around his neck and put them about his friends. "Ollie," he whispered, "to see you thus is the deepest joy of my heart, and for it I thank God fervently."

Stanton improved rapidly at Bloomingdale. He would have been very ungrateful if he had not when so many were devoted to his well-being. He had suffered from African fever of a very malignant type, and, as he had told Olive, been very near to death. Only the tireless efforts of his Christian boys had saved his life, and when they, and the missionary from the next station, bade him "good-bye," on ship-board, they feared it was forever, and that he would fill an ocean grave.

Not so. God had more work on earth for him to do, and prayers offered in America are heard, and answered, in Africa. He reached New York in a condition that would have surprised his fellow-

Herbert made me
God."

arms that held her,
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You do not feel

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workers, yet far from his normal health and strength. Herbert, ever on the lookout for news from his friend, was at last rewarded by the sight of his face, and of course headed him immediately for Bloomingle. They had taken a carriage from the station, until they reached the piece of road where Olive usually awaited her brother. Then Stanton insisted on alighting and walking to meet her.

Mrs. Gardenell constituted herself his nurse, Herbert was his faithful companion and helper, and Olive hovered continually over them all. It was amazing with what rapidity the young man gained strength, under such love and care. In several weeks he was able to go on to Maine where his mother and brothers anxiously waited his appearing.

But he did not go alone. Olive had her own way, and since her way was so delightfully his own, Stanton saw no reason to demur. Olive's twenty-fifth birthday became her wedding-day as well.

It was a very quiet affair, out under the apple-tree with the robins twittering overhead. Of course Herbert officiated and Raymond gave away the bride. Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, Dr. and Mrs. Germaine, Harry and Eddie, with Lee and Grace and Ruth and a few old friends made up the wedding party.

"May I for Herbert's sake?" Whispered the young husband as he stooped to kiss his bride.

"I would like to say yes if I could truthfully,"

answered Olive. "You so like to take advantage of me because I have learned my lesson so hardly and so well."

"Say, rather," he answered, "because it is so delightful to know that at last I am loved for my own sake and not for the sake of another."

"Olive Gardenell Cartwright." Lee was the first to speak her new name as she held her in a close embrace before going back to the city, for she had only an hour to spare.

"I am so happy in your happiness," she whispered. "It is such an assurance that God loves joy and would rather give us that than anything else when we can bear it."

"Children," said Mrs. Gardenell that night, as Olive and Stanton sat one on either side of her a hand of each in hers, "children, I have thought all day of the marriage of Cana of Galilee, and Jesus was there. He was here to-day, and I think father may be as glad to-night as we are. Stanton, my son, my beloved son, do you realize what high honor is given you when a mother so fearlessly, so unreservedly, yes, gladly, puts her child in your keeping, and thanks God she may?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

A STRANGE RECITAL.

"We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our future's atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.

"The tissue of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown."

—WHITTIER.

THERE was another outgoing mission-ship and Stanton and Olive were both there. But this time they were not divided, one on the pier and one on the deck. Both stood together on the steamer now, and beside his sister stood Harry Gardenell.

There had been many tender farewells and last words.

"Remember," Yensie whispered, as she held her only daughter to her heart for perhaps the last time on earth, "remember, darling, you can never be far from me while you are close to God." Then she turned to clasp Harry, one of her "little boys," as she still loved to call these stalwart men—the younger members of her family.

"You are making great sacrifices, Yensie," said Dr. Germaine, his own eyes fixed on the spot where Harry Gardenell was bidding a good-bye to his daughter Ruth.

"I am glad to be able," was the reply. "Nothing so rejoices me as the privilege of giving back to God's service those He has so kindly given to my love."

"All mothers cannot measure up to such privilege," said the gentleman.

"I know one who can," she replied, her eyes overflowing as Esther held in a farewell embrace this mother's boy whom she hoped some day to call her son.

"Every soul I gather to the fold will add another star to your crown," said Robert Langmere heartily, as he gave his hand in warmest clasp to his young pastor. For two of Herbert's band sailed with this party to Africa.

On the pier Yensie and her three remaining sons, Mrs. Cartwright, Gatty, Lee, and a hundred others, waved the departing ones out of sight with hymns and prayers and tears. And as they drifted out from the shore the group on the steamer's deck clasped hands and sang that sacred old Salvation Army melody, "Where He leads me I will follow."

And He was leading one to an African grave and they knew it not.

"It seems strange, mamma," wrote Harry Gardenell six months after, himself just raised from

the verge of death, "that he should be taken and I left, who am of so much less value. He was so strong and bright and gifted, we had such large hopes for his future. Stanton wept like a child above his grave."

Robert Langmere had won his crown. And an old couple in an out-of-the way farmhouse in Ohio mingled their tears and praises that God had counted them worthy to give a son for the redemption of the world.

"One soweth and another reapeth." The reaping may be long from shortest sowing, such a difference is there in seed, in crops. One soweth—yea, one is *sown* that another may reap, and He who has declared, "If it die it bringeth forth much fruit," will apportion each one his share in the harvest.

"Mamma," said Raymond, gathering his mother to his arms as the last glimpse of the ship faded from view. "mamma, yours is a big part towards the world's redemption."

"I would not wish it less," she answered huskily. "Did I not bear you all for this, Ray, that to the uttermost you should do the uttermost that in you lay for God and His kingdom, and in the uttermost parts of the earth if so He willed."

The company lingered awhile sadly as if loath to leave the spot where they had said farewell. Then they separated into little groups and disappeared, Mrs. Gardenell and Mrs. Cartwright with Ray and his wife and baby turning towards home,

Herbert and Lee in another direction. Lee, with a sort of glory on her lifted, tear-stained face that suggested David's psalms to her escort, so weakly human was it, so sweetly divine.

"He goes out not doubled but quadrupled," she said, "and you are his partner in the spoils." She was speaking of Stanton. "Mr. Gardenell, your brother is so like you it was hard to believe it was not you sailing away towards Africa."

Something within the listener thrilled and mirrored itself on his face. "You would like to go?" she said.

"I would like God's will done perfectly and fully and nothing else," he made answer. "In my body and my spirit, my labor and place of labor, I have no slightest choice." And she was sure he spoke the truth.

"And you never have a thought otherwise?" she said wistfully, reverently.

He smiled. He would like to free her from this reverence for himself as something superior.

"I am only a man," he replied. "and much like other men. I am human. I do not *wish* anything but God's will; I sometimes *think* it, however. My flesh sometimes rises to greet some other suggestion. But my heart and will remain unswervingly His, and that brings every thought into subjection sooner or later."

Gatty went back with her mother and baby to the farm and the boys. Ray accompanied them as far as Boston, where he had an engagement to

meet. Mrs. Gardenell, Herbert, and Eddie were left in the big house. You know how lonely it seemed.

Hard work was Herbert's panacea for most evils. He threw himself into the prayer-meeting and pulpit with redoubled energy, praying for revival. He took up a special course of reading with Eddie, and Mrs. Gardenell, unwilling to be left out, joined them. The winter was well advanced when one day at evenfall, as Herbert was about to step into an uptown car, he heard his name spoken by a familiar voice. He turned to see Lee Erdley.

"Mr. Gardenell," she began, and something in her manner, quiet as it was, suggested excitement. "Mr. Gardenell, I need a friend to-night. I believe you are such, and I can trust you."

"I believe you can," answered the gentleman, his pulses leaping in a most unministerial manner in spite of his controlled voice. "How can I serve you?"

"My mother is worse, I fear she is dying," a little tremor in the sweet voice.

Herbert waited for nothing further but turned toward her home. "I will go to her at once," he said.

"She is all I have on earth," continued the sad young voice. "Yet I would not dare say I am sorry if she were only ready to go. I have tried to lead her to Christ, and I have failed. I have tried to bring her comfort, and in vain. She has had a sad, sad life, how sad, I have never dared

to hint to any one. But you ought to know now, for she needs you. She feels she must see some clergyman—lighten her heart of its load before she can die in peace."

The young lady paused, evidently to gather self-control.

"I would rather you should know our sorrow than anybody else," she went on, "if I must choose a thing in any form so humiliating. I did not know I was so proud until now. Besides mother knows only you among all the pastors of the city, and would prefer you if you can spare time for such a recital."

"Spare time! that is what time is for, and who else should share your sorrow if not I, Lee? Are you not Olive's friend—and—mine? Say to me all you please, tell me the worst. You must have no pride where I am concerned. The farther you take me into your confidence the better I shall like it, the more you open your heart to me the greater will be my gratitude."

"You are kind," she said sadly, "but you do not know yet, you have not heard all," and in spite of her wonderful exercise of will, her voice trembled.

What a ghastly object! Herbert Gardenell felt himself almost shrink at first sight of the loathsome spectacle. So shrivelled, so sunken, so withered. The mere skeleton of a woman was this, hardly half the size and weight she had been when last he saw her. Her eyes seemed to have

left their sockets, and, naked and uncovered, taken their places above the sunken lids, unblinking, unresting. He could think of nothing but the headlight of an engine as it shrieks into the depot at night, its fierce eye putting out every other light, so bright, so wild, so unhuman seemed these eyes watching him narrowly now.

This was a task such as had never met him before in all his varied experiences. He had been the confidant of many a wretched man and woman, had knelt at the dying bed of murderer, thief, and sorceress, but never had such eyes searched his, or such blankness of despair met his tender solicitation.

Would she not like to have him pray? No. He began to quote God's word, she silenced him. "I want nothing but your ears," she gasped. "When you have lent them until I am done then you will know whether prayer is of any avail in my behalf."

She seemed so near death, so unlikely to survive the recital of her story, that Herbert had desired to press Christ on her attention first; but she would not listen. There was nothing else to be done, she must free her mind.

He wrote a few hasty words to his mother, lest she should worry over his non-appearance, and dispatched it by a little boy, then he came and took his place again by the bed, bidding the woman speak freely and without fear since he was her friend.

"Thank you," she said courteously. "I must speak freely if I would gain peace. That it is to a friend seems strange irony."

What a tale was that! The two listeners shuddered as it went on. A story of low, selfish ambition that robbed life of its purpose at its source and culminated in murder. Yes, murder. Lee Erdley, pure, holy, womanly Lee Erdley had a murderess for a mother—had lived her guileless life daily in such unholy companionship, so near comes heaven to hell. Herbert felt the shudder that ran through the form at the other side of the bed, and avoided the eyes that sought his, lest she should read in them his horror.

"I hated him," said this woman feebly and with effort, for self-murder had made possible to her as to others, the murder of another. "I hated him, though he was my husband. He bound me when I wished to be free, he caressed me when his caresses were intolerable. I felt I *must* get rid of him. The thought grew upon me; I tried to shake it off, it came back, it followed me. I gave him small doses of arsenic—I used to take it moderately myself for my complexion. He suspected me and charged me with the deed the night before he died, for it had made him ill. I denied the charge, and in a fit of anger administered in his tea the fatal draught that ended his life. That was not arsenic, it was a powder given me by a gypsy woman. I had not dared use it sooner.

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really committed the deed. I kept going to
him, uneasy and afraid. He was very affectionate,
sensitively alarmed, lest he had wounded me by
his suspicions, asking me to forgive him. I tried
to coax him to take an emetic, hiding my real
reason for this by a reference to his late fears.
But he would not listen to the suggestion. He had
been very wrong to grieve me, he said, and would
prove how absolutely he trusted me by never
doubting me again. He never did.

"He fell asleep and woke in some terror and
distress as if from a bad dream. He found me
beside him, and blessed me for my faithfulness.
The last movement of his dying eyes was towards
me with an attempted smile. He did not die hard.
I was mad, frenzied, yet I dared not call a physician
lest he discover my secret, I dared not summon
friends lest they suspect. I gave him a deadly
draught in my anger, and let him die in my
cowardice. Everybody supposed he died while I
slept—some sudden affection of the heart. I have
lived a hell on earth ever since."

She had drawn herself to a sitting posture as
she proceeded with her narrative, she fell back
heavily at its close. Herbert rose and arranged
the pillows under her head and moistened her
mouth. Her daughter seemed for the time para-
lyzed.

He whispered to her, divine words: "Though
your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as
snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall

be as wool." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," adding that the real rendering of the last passage was simply Christ's beckoning hand, "Hither, I will rest you."

But the woman did not seem to heed. He prayed, but it was as if into deaf ears. She spoke no further word and gave no sign that she understood. But his ministry reached the heart that had nurtured itself on heavenly things. Lee, pale but composed, rose from the place where she had crouched with her face hidden in the bed-clothes and prepared her mother's medicine.

"I thank you, Mr. Gardenell," she said, "I think you can do no more to-night. Perhaps God will spare her another day, and open her heart to His message."

He felt himself dismissed, yet hesitated about leaving her alone after this awful divulgence of guilt. She read his thought. "You are kind, but I shall not mind it," she said. "I have lived right here for years and found it the very gate of heaven."

"God bless you," he said tenderly. "To such as you hell itself could be no barrier to God's presence. Yet I should be pleased to share your vigils."

"Thank you, there will be no need." How

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quietly sad her voice. "Others have claims on
your time, and your mother will be alarmed at
your long delay. If you can spare a little while
to-morrow——" she did not finish her request.

"I shall be here in the morning. In the mean
while may God rest your soul and body in Him-
self."

He lifted her hand to his lips and went out.

CHAPTER XXX.

AN END AND A BEGINNING.

"It was not the 'come forth' that made Lazarus live,
But the Life close by,
For how should words power to the powerless give?"
—S. F. S.

"Every inmost aspiration is God's angel undefiled;
And in every 'O my Father!' slumbers deep a 'Here, my
child.'"

THE message Herbert had sent his mother read thus: "I may be very late, do not wait for me. Lee's mother is dying, I may remain with her."

Nevertheless when he returned that night he found his mother watching for his coming. Something in his face made her draw him into the parlor and into a chair and fold her arms about him.

"It has been a fearful night to you," she said.

"A fearful night," he assented.

"Is she dead? Mrs. Erdley?"

"No," with a shudder. "She still lives if anything so ghastly can be called life, anything so like death."

"Then there is still hope for her, my son?"

"Yes, I am going again in the morning."

"Something else burdens you, dear."

"Mother, I am tortured for that girl—that pure, holy, beautiful life lived almost on the verge of the pit. So full of strength and pathos and possibility to suffer and to bear."

"Her release is near, Herbert."

"Yes, but her memory, her soul, they will always hold the impress of these years of horror."

"Have they been years of horror to her? Have they not rather been years of growth toward and in God?"

"True," he cried. "It is myself after all that is out of joint. Mother, I am possessed with an unutterable longing to snatch her from her surroundings, her hardships, to strain her to my heart and stand between her and every evil, lifting her on my own bosom to the joy, and peace, and beauty that are her inalienable right."

"Herbert, you are denying your heart what your life demands. Why do you not let yourself love?"

His head drooped to his breast.

"Let!" he said, "I cannot hinder. I am fighting for my life, my self-respect, and I am not a conqueror."

"Your self-respect!" she echoed. "Does any man lose self-respect who loves purely so noble a woman as Lee Erdley?"

"Never," he answered. "But, mother, I thought I loved before. Can that which dies so speedily have ever had birth?"

"Babies die new-born."

"Yes, but not men, nor should the full-grown love of a man. I never felt anything like this before. I do not understand myself. I am pained, amazed, grieved—and, yet happy beyond all utterance at one and the same time. I have fought this passion with all my strength yet fall before it like an infant. I determine to avoid her and her face shines up to me from every printed page and out of every avenue of my being; I strive to put her out of memory and her lightest word comes back to thrill and defy me. I would purchase her smile at the price of torture. I am possessed by that which has come unbidden and will not go at either entreaty or command."

His mother smiled. "Herbert, you are simply in love," she said. "I think perhaps that is the only real love; the kind that comes unbidden and unsought—that takes possession of us against and yet with the fullest consent of our will; which we could no more create or counterfeit than we could God's sun and dew. I doubt if anything less, anything we go out to seek or foster is worthy of that holy name."

He did not answer her. "Perhaps," she began again, but a finger was gently laid on her lips.

"Don't say it, mother. It humiliates me beyond telling, the bare suggestion that I may have offered to any woman less than she had right to demand."

"Unknowing," added a low voice.

"Unknowing," he rejoined sadly. "But sup-

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pose that into my married life had come such con-
 vulsions as these?" He shuddered. "I start back
 from the awful possibility of so great sin in
 myself."

"Possibility to great sin is also possibility to
 great virtue. I have learned that for myself, Her-
 bert. Being what you are such thoughts would
 never, under such circumstances, have rippled the
 current of your being, or, having suggested them-
 selves, would have died of their own temerity in
 a soul fully surrendered to God. Why trouble
 yourself unnecessarily, my son, over what is not and
 can never be? Who shall say which is greater
 sin, to ignorantly offer less than our best with
 intent to bless another, or to stubbornly withhold
 our choicest when its bestowal can do nothing but
 enrich both giver and receiver?"

He was silent again for a moment then, "Mother,
 you open paradise, but I fear to seek an entrance,"
 he said. "I have no hope whatever that Miss
 Erdley has any answering love for me."

"Then rouse it in her."

"Would it be then this genuine, spontaneous
 growth of which you speak?"

"Like begets like," she answered. "And seed-
 sowing is lawful, as also the fertilizing of soil
 already sown. All growth is spontaneous, the out-
 cropping assurance of life within. I think Lee
 admires you very much."

He made a little gesture of contempt.

"I do not covet her admiration and I do not have

it. It is my office, not myself, she reveres; the truth uttered, not the man who utters it, that she adores. She looks me in the eyes as quietly and well-nigh as tenderly as you do, mother, and without a flutter more of pulse. While I—even the calmest of her glances sends my blood like lava through my veins."

"I'm afraid this isn't his father's son who is talking to me to-night," said Yensie Gardenell. "He always hoped even against hope. I think I must tell you a story you have never heard, Herbert, the story of your mother's failure and your father's conquest over despair. I told it once to Eddie Campbell, at your father's request, and it saved him from a grave mistake. It may serve now to rouse anew in you the courage that should always accompany your father's face."

The small hours of morning had struck when Herbert left his mother at her chamber door. His kiss on her lips was warm and clinging, and there were traces of tears on both faces. He had been traversing with her the bitter years of her early life and, she trusted, not in vain.

When Mr. Gardenell called on Mrs. Erdley next morning, she was languidly conscious of his presence and words. She had not spoken, hardly moved, all night, Lee informed him, but rallied a little after day dawn. The minister could not tell whether the story of Christ's love entered her understanding at all, though she made no objection to the reading of Scripture or the offering of prayer.

Before Herbert left he asked permission of Lee to bring his mother with him when next he called.

"Mother has always had marvellous power with the sick," he said. "My father often remarked that when a case baffled all his skill he resorted to her, especially where a woman's heart was concerned, conscious of its own unworthiness and unable to realize God's love."

Lee saw no reason why she should refuse this request. The pride that had sought to shield her mother was no longer available. The remembrance of it and of her own humiliation, were swallowed up in the consciousness of her mother's need and peril. It was doubtful indeed if she realized any added humiliation. She was now as ever the daughter of this woman who was exactly what she had ever been. The knowledge of her sin neither enhanced nor diminished it, and it was but sin. Christ died for sin. All her fears and hopes and desires centred now in one thing, her mother's salvation. She had no room for anything else. She was ready for anything that would make it more probable.

So that afternoon, Yensie Gardenell, escorted by her son, entered the humble dwelling and sat down by the sufferer's side.

There was something in the beautiful woman that seemed at once to attract the dying one—a nameless grace and tenderness, a delicacy of touch and tongue. She kissed that shrivelled face and held in closest clasp that murderous hand, and

Lee turning suddenly away to hide her tears surprised them in the eyes of this mother's son.

How wise are some in soul healing! This skilled worker spoke no words except a few in friendly greeting. She simply sang and looked the gospel gladness into this drooping spirit. Oh, the power of sacred song! How Yensie's children had always exulted in her gift! How her oldest son thanked God now as he saw the sick woman's wild gaze soften and melt and hunger, almost yearning, take on her face the place of stony despair.

Such hymns were sung as are full of the Cross and the Blood, heaven's only remedies for sin. The two young people sitting one side hardly breathed as they watched and prayed, until at last a tear—a *tear*—dropped over the sunken cheek, and a voice, harsh in its eagerness, asked, "For me?"

"For you." Yensie Gardenell's lovely face was close beside the speaker's in another moment, her arms about the attenuated form as she sang with melting tenderness,

"Was it for crimes that I have done
He hung upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!"

and presently they were weeping and praying together, sufferer and saint.

"I am a great sinner," Herbert heard the dying woman whisper hoarsely. Then that gentle voice answering,

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"But I am the chief of sinners, you cannot imagine what I have been, and yet you say it is all for me?" His mother's tears dripped freely as she sang softly,

"Depths of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?"

And Herbert slipped out of the room, no longer able to control his feelings.

When he came back, an hour after, his mother sat where the woman's eyes could feast on her face, holding her hand. She smiled at her son but did not move until at last the eyes closed and the sufferer slept. Then she rose and folded Lee to her bosom and went away with Herbert. He came back later and insisted on sitting beside the invalid while her daughter took some needed rest. His mother was too frail for such work now.

Mrs. Erdley did not die immediately. She lingered for several days. It was wonderful to see how the expression of her face changed in that short time, how the cold, hard look gave place to one of restful trustfulness.

Mrs. Gardenell visited her every day and was always welcomed by a smile. She was always motioned to a chair where the sick one could watch her best and always asked to sing one hymn, "Depth of mercy." The dying one had kind greet-

ings and hand-clasps for Herbert, wistfully tender yearning glances for her daughter, but for Yensie were reserved her rare smiles, her few confidences.

At last one night she passed away, only Lee and Herbert beside her. "I trust in Jesus Christ's mercy," she answered feebly to the young minister's gentle "You do not fear to go?" then, in a moment,

"Lenore," with strange distinctness and strength. "Lenore, my hands are clean! there is no stain of blood upon them but His. You are no longer the child of a murderess."

There was a struggle, a cry—not of fear or pain but of seeming surprise—the jaw fell, and Herbert took Lee's hand and led her from the room.

A humble funeral, a half dozen mourners, two voices in holy song, one in prayer and a few simple words. And the couch was empty, the house desolate, Lenore alone.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A NEW HOME—A POSSIBLE CALL.

"The purple grape—last thing to ripen—late
By very reason of its precious cost.
O heart! remember vintages are IG.
If grapes do not for freezing night-dews wait."

—HELEN HUNT.

"I wish you could persuade Lenore to come to us if only for awhile, mother," said Herbert, the day of the funeral. "I invited her, but she only looked surprised and refused, thanking me and saying she should not be lonely, it was her home; Perhaps by and by she would find a room nearer her school."

Mrs. Gardenell tried what she could do.

"I have no daughter, and you no mother, Lee, and I miss Olive so much. If you would only consent to take her place and give me a right to your company."

But the girl hesitated, and Mrs. Gardenell felt sure she could guess her reason.

"I must get used to my life," she said, "and the sooner the better. This would only spoil me for the future. I should only miss so much the more some day. I think I must say no."

"But we only live one day at a time, Lee. Perhaps this is God's way of helping you over the first hard days, and He will surely lead you later. I think your mother would be glad to have you with me, and we both know Olive would. It would be only joy on my side. Perhaps I am selfish."

"You selfish! Oh, Mrs. Gardenell, I am the selfish one. I am just considering myself. Is it not because I am afraid of joy, afraid I shall covet it and find it harder to live after it is gone? Yes, mother would be glad, and I will go to you for a little while—just a little while until I can get settled nearer my work."

She moved her belongings into an empty chamber hired from the upstairs tenant, locked her door and slipped into the home life of the Gardenells as naturally as if she had always been a part of it.

They made no fuss over her, treated her as no stranger, allowed her to come and go at pleasure, have her own sweet will. Eddie was soon her devoted follower, and Herbert envied him sometimes his easy access to her smiles and confidence.

With him she was not so free. That of which he had complained to his mother was no more true. She no longer met his eyes, no longer had utmost ease in his presence, she seemed almost to avoid him. The change brought only sorrow and wonder to his heart. Was it because he shared with her the secret of her mother's sin? Surely she ought to know him better than to suppose that could diminish her value in his eyes.

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He loved to watch her pretty household ways. He understood now what Olive had called the "high art" of her dish-washing. She never allowed the china or silver to go out to the maid, dropping easily into the old way of her former sojourn there.

"It seems almost as if time had gone backward," she said to Mrs. Gardenell as she stood wiping the choice cups and saucers. "If only Mr. Gardenell and Olive and Stanton were here," with a sigh.

And Herbert, sitting apart, apparently intent on his paper, took it all in. The sweet confidence of her manner toward his mother, the tender home feeling that held her heart in the familiar place, the dainty handling of the pretty things which took on sudden value from her touch.

She went back to school in a week. Then they only saw her at breakfast and at late dinner and during the evenings. Sometimes from the study window Herbert saw Eddie accompanying her to the car, carrying her books. Sometimes he heard her playing for his brother the music which he preferred. It was amazing to him to find out by chance words and allusions how speedily she had become acquainted with the young fellow's studies and perplexities, his friends and his hopes.

To himself it was a joy just to have her near, to know she was in the room or house. She did not know how often his eyes followed her outgoing or watched for her return, how his heart gladdened

when her light step tripped up the stairs or her low laughter rippled through the hall. She must never go away again.

There was a look of surprise, yet evident pleasure too, in her eyes when he met her one afternoon just beyond the school-house gate. He repeated the experiment. But one day, at his station a little earlier than usual, he saw her—unperceived himself—slip out of the side door of the building and hasten down a back street. He never chanced that way afterwards.

There was another Mission party ready to leave New York. This time there were among them eight of Herbert's little band which was growing steadily. Tom Burton was one of the outgoers, and he took with him Grace Germaine, his month-old bride.

The departure had a hallowed, mellowing effect on the church of which so many of them were active members. It was a growing church because a giving church—giving not only of its material wealth but its highest life. A spirit of most earnest consecration rested on its young people especially, and the meetings increased continually in interest and numbers.

It was the pastor's habit to preach at least one missionary sermon each month, and this was missionary Sunday. Mrs. Gardenell, Lee and Eddie were all present at the morning service. At evening the two gentlemen went alone. Lee spent the interval on her knees with her Bible, Mrs. Gar-

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denell in her chamber, holding the meeting and its leader up to God.

"It has been a blessed day, Herbert," said she as her son dropped on a chair at her bedside, for his good-night chat before retiring to rest.

"A blessed day, mother dear. The evening service was excellent, the atmosphere tender and deeply spiritual, and one person asked for our prayers."

The earnest face of the speaker was pale and weary, and there was an undertone of almost sadness in his voice that did not escape the listener's ears.

"Your sermon this morning was powerful, Herbert, unanswerable. God gave it to you."

He smiled as he stooped to tenderly kiss the lips that spoke. "You reminded me of your father when at his best. Lee was deeply moved."

"Yes, I know"—hesitatingly. "Mother, she may be the next one I shall send forth."

"Alone, my son?"

"If God wills. I am mistaken if she did not get her call to-day."

There was a pause, and then he went on. "It has been a peculiar day to me, mother, a day of heart-searching. In the midst of the morning sermon I caught a glimpse of Lee's face. The solemn rapture on it almost overcame me for the moment. I do not need to beg your pardon, mother, you who always understand me—but for that moment everything within me cried out to go too. The unutter-

able longing to speak God's truth among the heathen, melted my soul into streams of desire and my whole being seemed flowing that way.

"For a time I was overwhelmed. The old call with tenfold intensity swept me before it as a straw on the current of Niagara."

There was a gentle, sympathetic pressure on his hand. His eyes thanked her.

"At first it seemed like the mighty renewal of my call to the field, but I know better now," he went on humbly. "It was only God's rebuke of my sluggishness."

"Rebuke! Herbert?" questioned the voice at his side. "Such exalted emotion rebuke?"

"Yes, mother, such rebuke as you frequently administered to me in my childhood when you gathered my naughty self to your bosom and shone all the loving sorrow of your soul into me through your tender eyes. How my boyish heart was rent between the throes of agony and delight. But love always conquered, mother, always will. What is rebuke but disguised blessing? And rapture? is it not often simply glorified pain?"

"I see now how content I was becoming to be nothing but an arresting voice, a guide-board pointing to others the way, rather than an anointed leader—here for the moment to arouse his fellows, but ready, eager to show them the path and tread with them its length. Oh, mother, I was unconsciously losing the divine unrest of a soul fixed in his will yet panting ever after the unat-

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tained. How can he enthruse another to volunteer
who is not himself girded for battle, shod and
armored to lead the fray?"

Again the soothing of that loving hand. This
mother read in her son's voice all the conflict and
the victory his soul had met that day, and she
knew it had not been without much weariness and
pain that he had conquered.

"A hard lesson well learned," she said.

"A lesson learned," he replied. "And God let
Lee Erdley set me the copy. This may be the
purpose for which she touched my life."

"This and *more*," answered his mother.

He smiled again into the dark eyes looking so
hopefully into his.

"This and more, thank you, little mother, I ac-
cept the amendment and pray God it may be
true."

"What will you do?" she asked.

"Do! where God has spoken who else shall
dare lift his voice?"

"He to whom God has spoken also. *Every*
word of God is good."

"What if he hardly discern between the voice
of his Master and his own desire?"

"If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God.
The inward desire is at least a third part of his
guidance. The written Word and the speaking
Providence can make it absolute certainty."

He smiled again. How weary he looked.

"You need your bed" she said "and I must not de-

tain you. But let me say this much more: the word as well as the heart-impression is yours for 'marriage is honorable in all' and has the sanction of his blessing."

He stooped to kiss her. "There is a missing link. God's providence has called Lee to the mission field," he said as his lips touched hers.

"Not more really than He has called you, Herbert."

He hesitated.

"True, little mother, no mortal could be more truly, more divinely called than I have been."

"And the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," she quoted. "Perhaps you will disagree with my exegesis, Herbert, but I have this to say in its defence; I have marked numberless instances where it ran parallel with His providences. I fail to see why, if while calling you to another field He yet for the present appoints you to this, He may not also appoint you a helper here who is fitted to the exigencies of that call."

He threw back his head and laughed. "What shall I call you, mamma, sophist or schemer?"

"Neither," she answered promptly. "You shall call me no name but my right one—mother. The one above all earthly others interested in your highest good and greatest usefulness and never willing to lead you where God has not said you may follow."

Reverently he stooped and gathered her for a moment to his bosom.

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"Most loving, most true and therefore most wise," he whispered. "Your words will not soon be forgotten. From your heart they have reached mine, pray God they may have passed through His in their journey and so bring me only His will for me. His will *for me*, mother, *for me*. Not His usual leadings, not His will for most of children but His will for me. That I must know and do."

He put her back on her pillows, covered her gently, kissed her good-night. But she clung, whispering, to his neck.

"Do you remember what Elizabeth Charles says, Herbert? 'God does not need to make room for Himself by making a desert and a desolation. He made room for Himself by creating the worlds.'"

"Hush!" he said, the thrill at his heart vibrating in his voice. "Hush! It was through His own desert He perfected our Eden. The room he made was for Himself to die."

"To die and live again," she cried triumphantly, "and behold He is alive forevermore."

He went out reverently.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE OLD STORY.

"The light not the cloud,—the joy, not the sorrow—is what endureth, because God is love, and love is heaven."

—Mrs. CHARLES.

It was prayer-meeting night. Mrs. Gardenell had been suffering all day with headache. Herbert had been obliged to leave the city in an early train, but as there was no school, Lee had spent most of the day beside the sufferer, bathing her head and doing all she could to alleviate her pain. She had fallen asleep before dinner time, and lay with wide open eyes when the girl again appeared.

"How rested you look! Is your head better?"

"Much better. The pain is all gone, I am simply weak. I thank you so much for your care, dear Lee."

The thanks were broken off short with a kiss.

"Who shall thank you for all you are always doing for me? and I have something to tell you that is such poor reward for your kindness. I have been almost glad I could not tell it to-day, I have dreaded it so much. But now you are better

I must not delay. I must have it over. I—I have found another," she hesitated, unwilling to say home—"another room," she finished, "I am going away."

"Lee, Lee! how can you? and how can we get along without you?"

"Far better than I can without you," answered the girl brokenly, "I am not going because I wish to go, but I *must*."

"Must leave your best friends?" in surprise. "Lee, you are cruel. What reason can you give me for going?"

"None, none. I must not think of reasons, I must go. Oh, I hate to leave you and I hate to grieve you," hiding her face in the coverlet. "Please don't urge me to stay, dear Mrs. Gardenell, I dare not."

"No, dear, I will not urge you against your will. But I will ask you to delay your departure, for my sake, until you have carefully reconsidered the matter."

"It will do no good, it will make no difference," mournfully. "I have considered it very much, but always reach the same conclusion."

"When do you go?"

"Saturday night, I think."

"So soon? You owe us at least a week or two of warning."

"I owe you more than I can ever pay, this will only swell the debt. You must not think me ungrateful, you must not think I am glad to go out

into the world again. It is not because I do not love you all."

Mrs. Gardenell soothed her. "There, there, do not cry. We will pray about it, dear. Perhaps you are distrusting God, Lee, taking your life into your own hands. Do not haste or grieve."

They talked awhile longer, and then the girl went away to prepare for evening meeting. She was gone a very few minutes when Herbert appeared.

"Awake and better? You were asleep awhile ago when I reached home."

She smiled. "Did you meet your appointment all right? Have you had a good day?"

"In every respect but one, I left my mother suffering at my departure. You have scarcely been out of my mind all day."

"Needless worry," she said fondly. "I have had excellent care. Lee has hardly left my side a moment."

"Where is she now, mother?"

"Gone to prepare for meeting."

"How long since?" consulting his watch.

"Perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes."

"I will walk down with her," he said.

"She has decided to leave us, Herbert."

"Leave us!" he started. "She shall not, I will not permit it, she needs her home. How wilful she must be, mother, for such a gentle being. I will put a stop to this if possible." He kissed her and went out, waiting a few moments in the hall for Lee's appearance.

"Do you know whether Miss Erdley has left the house or not, Mary?" he inquired of the maid who passed him presently.

"She went out of the side door ten minutes ago I should think, sir."

"Thank you," Herbert smiled grimly.

Eddie came down the stairs singing as Herbert opened the door. "Coming my way?" asked the elder.

"No; I'm sorry but there's a lecture before the class to-night and I cannot miss it."

"I see. Is that why Lee took advantage of the side door this evening? my company alone would be intolerable."

Eddie gave his brother a roguish glance.

"She does avoid you lately, that's a fact, but it's not a bad sign. Faint heart never won fair lady, you know," and he swung around a corner.

It was a quiet meeting, but tender. The leader was delayed a few moments when it was over, and by the time he reached the door the girl he sought had escaped and was out of sight. He laughed, to himself, amused and a little nettled. He would outmatch her yet. She would not be likely to go home the usual way. He struck into a side street and soon overtook her, catching up to her side.

"Runaway," he said, a ripple of mischief in his voice, "I think you will have to slacken your pace now, to give me chance to recover my breath. Permit me," and he drew her hand through his arm. "See, we are going to walk slowly. Am I

very offensive to you, Lee, that you avoid me so much?"

"How can you imagine such a thing, Mr. Gardenell?"

"But you do avoid me, do you not? You ran away from me one afternoon after school—I saw you do it—and you have repeated the offence twice to-night. What ought I to conclude from these facts? Lee, be honest with me and tell me, do you not intentionally shun me?"

He waited for her answer and out of her truth she breathed a low "Yes."

"I thought so, and it grieves me. Then mother tells me you are going to leave us. I think that must be my fault, too, since you seem to like Eddie and mamma. The house will be very lonely without you. I cannot tell you how I shall miss you. It seems as if I could not let you go: and yet it can hardly be pleasant for you to live in the house with one you desire to avoid. Am I right, Lee?"

"Yes, sir."

"And that is your reason for going?"

"Yes, sir."

"And yet you are sure you do not dislike me?"

"Yes, sir," again. It seemed impossible for her to speak in anything but monosyllables, and they seemed nearly to choke her.

She was much distressed. She had never seen him like this before. So masterful, so determined to have his own way, to say and know what he willed. Was he disturbed at the manner in which she was

returning their kindness? She did not see the light in his eyes as he asked the next question, she would not have dared look up and meet it.

"I can think of but one other reason why you should avoid me, Lee, and that hardly seems possible either. Is it—can it be because you love me?"

He felt the hand on his arm tremble but she did not speak. What could she say? She was a woman of truth, and if she spoke at all she must speak the truth, and she knew, as she knew nothing else that moment, that she loved this man utterly. She could not deny it; dared she affirm it? She had no reason to suppose he returned her affection. He had been always kind, as his father was, but he was lifted above her in her every thought—sacred; and she knew too of his loss and sorrow over another.

How was it possible for her to acknowledge her folly. Not that she was ashamed of it, oh, never. It was a holy thing and modest, it did not intend to thrust itself into notice, it only asked privilege to exist unseen, unknown, cherished in her heart of hearts. She had not sought or fostered it. It had come like the violet and the dewdrop come, unheralded except by the spring atmosphere, the new life that must bring something into being.

Would he understand all this? Surely he must, being himself, must understand and pity and shield. He was to her the sum of all perfection—the one of all earth to be trusted. Should she throw herself upon his magnanimity, his mercy?

He was walking very slowly, waiting for his answer. He intended to be answered. He repeated his question. "Do you love me, Lee?"

"Lee!" He had never called her this before to-night, how sweet it sounded on his lips as she whispered,

"Yes, sir."

"As a minister?" he said. "Of course every body loves and reveres the minister. Is that how you love me, Lee?"

"Yes, sir."

"Any more than that?"

"Yes, sir."

"You do not mean, you cannot mean, that you love me just as you would any other man that sought your favor?"

"No, oh, no!" she cried desperately. "I could not think of any one else as I do of you. And oh, Mr. Gardenell, please don't torture me with any more questions, but let me go away quietly as I desire."

She tried to withdraw her hand from his arm but he held it close. He bent his head until his breath swept her cheek.

"Do my questions torture you, dearest?" he said tenderly. "Forgive me that I asked them. I could not have done so had not my hungry heart demanded some hope, had not you so successfully hidden all expression of your favor, though my every word and act for months, must have divulged my devotion. Your answers to-night do not

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torture but delight me. Suppose I should tell you, what is quite true, that you are dearer to me than any earthly thing has ever been, that I want you for my own, my wife, that your presence and your touch are to me exceeding joy. What would you say? Do you love me well enough to answer as I wish to all that? Oh, Lee, my love, what would you think if I should ask you to walk beside me, sharing my weal and woe all the days of my life?"

"I should think God loved me," she whispered a clinging in her soft palm, tears in her voice.

"He does and so do I—dearly, dearly." So Herbert Gardenell did his wooing.

He led her into the house, the parlor, and under the electric light while he lifted her face to his. "I want to *see* my happiness," he said, "Oh, Lee, how your love has crowned me!"

"Mother we have come for your blessing," he said as they stood beside her bed.

Yensie's voice trembled a little as she joined their hands. "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God," she repeated.

Later, after Lee had gone to her room, they still sat on.

"Mother, I never knew it was possible so to love," said Herbert. "Why, even you are dearer who have ever been so dear. I can never have learned to love before."

She drew his face to hers and held him close while she replied,

"You will say that again to me some day, Her-

bert, when we both reach the Beyond Land. If—
—with a wondrous smile—“if in this child-life,
with its limitations, we can so love, so enjoy, what
will it be when full-sphered manhood and woman-
hood is attained? When we wake in the Resur-
rection likeness with Resurrection possibilities
upon us?”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WHICH WAY?

"Fear not, sweet saint, by joy to be undone:
Peace comes with joy, like lilies with the sun."

—ALICE W. ROLLINS.

A TIMID rap on Mrs. Gardenell's sitting-room door. Lenore answered the pleasant "Come."

"My daughter." The lady rose and clasped the maiden in her arms. "I wish you knew how happy you have made me," she said. "It is not often that a man chooses one so exactly the choice of all that love him. You are favored, dear Lee."

She pushed the girl away from her a little as she spoke and smiled into the beautiful face. There were tears in the gray eyes and the cheeks reddened and paled under the gentle scrutiny.

"You are too kind," she faltered, "but—but I am afraid I said what I ought not to have said to Herbert—Mr. Gardenell—last night, and I don't know what to do now."

Yensie smiled. She had half expected this.

"What you ought not to have said," she repeated. "Was it not the truth?"

Truth! Lee looked puzzled as well as abashed.

"Oh, yes. I told him nothing but the truth."

"And you are sure you love Herbert, Lee?"

Sure, Lee was sure of nothing if she was not sure of this. Every throb of her being asserted it and had all the long night and morning as her will battled her heart.

"Oh, yes, I am sure. I am afraid that is the trouble, I love him too much. I cannot seem to give him up, but I must."

"Who says you must give him up, Lee?"

"God."

"Are you sure? Who gave you this love for my son?"

The girl hesitated. Who gave her this pure strong passion for this strong pure man? Who but her Maker? So she answered again.

"God."

"For what purpose? To deny it, restrain it or let it outflow and enrich and bless its object? Why do you think God taught you to love Herbert?"

"Oh, I don't know! I am troubled and perplexed. I cannot think straight, but I must do what is right, Mrs. Gardenell. I have always wanted to be a missionary."

"So has Herbert."

The girl's gray eyes flashed joyfully to the lady's face.

"I know it. I used to sympathize so much with him over it and pray for him. It brought him near to me because I too was hindered."

"Who hindered you, Lee?"

"God," slowly, thoughtfully.
"Did you ever wonder why? He always has a purpose in all He does. He hindered you and He hindered Herbert. He threw you together, taught you each to love the other above every earthly thing. Now this did not happen, it was planned. That which first attracted you to Herbert was exactly what first attracted Herbert to you—your common denial of a good you coveted. Was there no object in this? How God shines through it all!"

The girl's radiant face was lifted to the speaker's, but a shadow crossed it.

"Yes, it looks like His leading. But two weeks ago—Missionary Sunday—I feel sure He called me fully to the Foreign Mission work. I must not let anything, not even such a love as this, hinder me."

"No, certainly not. Lee, do you think that Herbert would even wish to keep you from strictest obedience to the will of God?"

"Never!" she cried. "I know he would not."

"That is why you love him, is it not? because he is so true, so pure, so Christly?"

"Just that," she answered eagerly. "It makes me better just to look in his face and hear his voice. It makes me love God more."

"And yet you think, dear, that God, who has brought all this to pass—who makes Herbert what he is—who has taught you two to love each other and yet love His will better than each other,

will let you fail of His will if you cherish in a natural way the love He sent and fostered?"

"I have so many thoughts," said the girl timidly. "I have wondered if God may not have set me free on purpose that I might do that which I longed and was not able to do in other years. I realized that Sabbath morning that the last bond was loosed, I was absolutely free to follow Him. I do not know why I did not realize it before."

"You had hardly time, your sorrow was too close and the new surroundings too real. Then, perhaps, God was giving time for another tie to strengthen, to cement."

"Then why wake me at all to the realization of my liberty and His call?"

"That He might prove to yourself what is plain to His heart—your willingness to forsake all and follow Him. Lee, you would not hesitate to sever any tie at His command however your heart might shrink?"

The voice was low but unswerving that answered, "I had decided to do that before I sought you this morning."

"Lee, if my son was anything but what he is, if his consecration and devotion did not measure fully up to yours, if in anything it seemed possible for him to stand between you and the will of God—farther than that—if he had not himself received like yourself a call to this same work—a call I feel sure he must some day be permitted to answer—I would hardly dare advise you as I do. But

you cherish in a fostered?"

the girl timidly. "I do not have set me to that which I do in other years. I do not at the last bond to follow Him. I will make it before."

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but what he is, did not measure it seemed possible and the will of God that himself received the work—a call I permitted to answer you as I do. But

look at the facts, my child, see how exactly your experiences match. You speak of the last tie binding you to your native land as severed. But is that true? Does not your affection for Herbert bind you as truly as his affection for me binds him? Does God give you liberty to say with your lips the nay that gives a lie to your heart? to refuse the positive, assured position of helpfulness and honor open to you for what is as yet dimly defined and uncertain? Does He not ask you rather to take a first step in faith that the next will be made plain? Are you not willing to wait with one whom God Himself seems to have chosen for you?"

There was silence for a few minutes then Lee spoke. "Does not God sometimes ask us to give up our dearest for his sake?"

"Yes, when they stand directly across the path of His will for us. Seldom when we are desiring in all things to reach that perfect will, and shaping our lives and our loves to His pattern. We should take great care to have His wisdom in such matters, dear."

"Why should He call me if I am not to go?" this was the ever-recurring question.

"Who says you are not to go? not I, not He, who has bade you walk beside His anointed son. Herbert might ask that question also, Lee. Delays are not nays, God's 'wait' is not denial. It is often but the preparation for a more abounding 'yea' a more pre-emptory 'go.'"

"The Syrephenician woman so learned when Christ said to her, 'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' Beyond those unanswering lips and avoiding eyes she saw the throbbing Christ-Heart. The blessing she had sought for one, blessed two then and many a thousand since. 'My daughter' she cried out of the limitations of her finiteness. But His infinity embraced all the tormented sons and daughters of all the mothers in the age to come.

"To presume on God's love is to honor his heart. May he not have delayed Herbert that he might find you, and you that you might find him? My dear child, is it not possible—since it is so difficult for us to know ourselves—that one reason for the assurance with which the call to another field came to you that Sabbath morning may have been the apparent hopelessness of the love you had for my son?"

The girl's eyes fell but she did not reply. Mrs. Gardenell smiled.

"It is written one shall chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight:—Two of one heart and one mind, Lee;—of His heart and His mind. Oh, my darling, that Canaanitish woman and you and I are kin. Not more infinitely finite was she in her weakness and her need than are we. And God is as infinitely willing to change our weakness into strength as he was hers, and our need into boundless store; to answer the daring of our little faith with His almighty 'Even as thou wilt.'"

The girl was weeping softly. "I have been afraid of prosperity," she said. "I felt that this

bleessedness could only have come as a test of my fidelity to God in giving it up. I need so much to grow, I am so immature, and I have always felt sorrow to be the great grace-grower."

"Sorrow and joy. They go together, and God gives us always the most of the last. Joy brings sorrow's fruit to perfection as the sun ripens what rain and soil develop. Oh, Lee, my child, my precious one, you are yourself an answered prayer, the answer to much prayer. I thank God for you."

They were still quietly talking together, Lee with her head on his mother's bosom, when Herbert entered unannounced.

"Am I intruding?" he asked in the happy tone of a man who fears not his answer.

"We are only discussing calls," said Lee, flushing under his smile.

"I hope mamma has defined your position as clearly as she has mine," he answered. 'Called to the field, appointed to the recruiting office,' I think that is how you put it, mother. Let me suggest that you make Lee's read thus, 'Called to love and be loved.'"

Something in the glance his affianced flashed him assured Herbert she had read the deeper meaning of his words.

"To love," she cried eagerly, "and to love Him utterly is, after all, doing His highest will. Love asks us to-day to walk unafraid and content in the path he opens to-day, watching His eyes and trusting His heart for the leading of to-morrow."

The eyes of mother and son met. Mrs. Gardnell led the maiden to the young man's side and went to the organ, running her fingers lightly over the keys.

"He will have to teach me to be unafraid of joy," Lee said as she stood before her lover with drooping eyes. "Sorrow and hardship are old friends, I know their faces. But this," her voice faltered, "it seems almost a sin to be so happy."

"Heresy, heresy," he said merrily. Then with tender sympathy in smile and voice, "It is written nay, commanded, 'Rejoice evermore.' Joy is the language of heaven on earth, Lee, and foreign to our tongues. But the children of the better country acquire it readily."

And from the other side of the room came a voice sweet and pure and thrilling, as when it enchanted thousands:

"I know not what is before me,
God gently holds my eyes,
And o'er each step of my onward way
He makes new scenes to rise.
And every joy He sends me comes
A sweet and glad surprise."

And two clear young voices joined her on the closing verse; one a tenor, one an alto.

"So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might."

And as the words fell from their lips two hands met each other in earnest clasp, and two hearts joined in an unuttered amen.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MARRIAGE-BELLS AND FAREWELLS.

"We've only to wait,
In the face of fate
For the green grass under the snow."

—ANNIE A. PRESTON.

"The children of God need never say good-bye."

—CHARLES GEORGE.

HERBERT wrote a letter to Africa. We have only room for a short extract.

"I did not run away from you that night so long ago, when we were walking on the veranda and you spoke to me of Lee, Olive, because I was offended. No, it was because you read my heart and I dared not stop and listen any longer. But you were right, and your words never left me. Lee and I always did belong to each other and we have found it out. Before this letter reaches you she will be my wife."

"Come here this moment, Stanton, I cannot wait," cried a little woman authoritatively from the veranda of the mission-house to a tall dark man standing a little way down the compound.

"Isn't it beautiful?" as he approached obedi-

ently and read the missive she thrust into his hand. "Don't you wish they were coming here for their wedding trip?"

"I can wait," answered the gentleman smiling. "I am so sure they will take a trip here some day."

"Say it again, my brown-eyed prophet," said his wife rapturously. "Say it again. What you say I believe, your predictions so nearly always prove true. I must go and tell Harry the news."

They went on their wedding trip not to Africa but to one of our western states. Aunt Jessie had written, "Bring her to me, Herbert, I want to see her, I want to put her next to Fred in my heart:" and Lee chose to go.

Ray, whose work for the Mission Society was ended, and who had offered himself for appointment as a missionary to South America, came on to fill Herbert's pulpit while he was gone and to "tie the knot" as he expressed it. He was immensely amused over his small daughter's evident jealousy of her uncle's friend.

"Your nose is broken, Bunch," he said solemnly the night after their arrival, as the child stood looking askance at Leo.

She put up her hand to the aforementioned article. "It doan' feel like it am, papa."

"It isn't hurt the teentiest mite," said her uncle, taking her in his arms. But she soon clambered down, uneasily hovering about the young lady in whom she was interested. Evidently her mind

was weighty with matters too great to be kept with safety.

"You is my *most* auntie, an' my papa is goin' to make you my *truly* auntie an' gib you my name," she said. "Oh, dear," in sudden distress, "everybody gettin' anuzzer name but *me*. My Aunt Ollie isn't her own name an' you is, an'—an'—" in a burst of despair, "I'se afraid Uncle Hervit is somebody else!"

Everybody laughed over this outburst, her father declaring it was like the "goody-goody stories" founded on fact.

Herbert took the little one again to his arms and kept her happy.

"Uncle Hervit," she whispered, "my papa is a great *change* man."

"Is he?"

"Yes, he changes people's names an'—an'—you *don't* like any other girl better'n me?"

"Not any other *little* girl," answered Herbert, keeping within the boundaries of truth.

"Then I wish you'd *look* 's if you didn't."

They were married in church to please Herbert's congregation. The little girl seemed intensely interested in the ceremony, watching her uncle out of jealous eyes. Eddie, whose charge she was, had been obliged to appeal to her conscience to prevent her from "interrupting" the proceedings. They were hardly over before her little hand slipped into Herbert's and she insisted on riding back to the house in the same carriage and on his knee.

'They had scarcely reached home before she drew Lee's head down to her lips and "whipstered" in a voice her father heard several feet away.

"Say, dean' you fink you is too big for Uncle Hervit to carry on his shoulder?"

"Much too big," answered the lady with emphasis. "Besides, I would not want to be carried there."

"Wouldn't you?" in surprise. "Why, I would. Say," with a decisive hug, "I do love you, Aunt Lee, if Uncle Hervit does look at you."

The midnight train whirled them away.

There was a great deal of talking and planning going on at the old parsonage while the young couple were gone. There were serious decisions reached, for Eddie felt sure at last that he was to accompany Raymond back to South America. In his estimation there existed no needier field, and none for which he was better fitted. When Herbert and Lee returned it was to find both brothers under appointment and expecting to leave their native land together in a few months.

"So it seems our family circle is to be a triangle," Herbert said to his mother, and it was not without some feeling of loss as well as gain that he again picked up his work. He had hardly well begun, however, when an important letter reached him. It was written at the dictation of the executive committee of the mission board he served, and had received their hearty approval.

Aware of his former desire to engage in the

foreign work, and uncertain whether the reason which then hindered him still held good, they wrote to inquire if he would entertain a proposition to serve his board in China. They had need immediately of a strong man to fill an important position suddenly left vacant. He was already familiar with the language and work. They knew of no other individual in the denomination better fitted to hold the place to the entire satisfaction of all. Would he not give the subject his careful and prayerful consideration before deciding to refuse?

It was not Africa, but it was missions. There was a tender almost wistful look in his eyes as he placed the sheet in his wife's hand. There was something of the same look in hers as she perused it.

"Herbert, this may be God's open door."

"But mother," he answered.

"There are no buts with God," she replied.

"No, *but*"—smiling—"she could not go. I must not leave her alone. She was my father's choice gift to my care."

"And your heavenly Father's as well. But—you see I can use the word—I am looking for an open door, I feel almost sure it will come soon."

"Little wife but not of little faith," he said fondly. "I have not yet considered the foreign work from the standpoint, of my new possession. It means so much more—involves not my sacrifice only now but—doubly mine—yours: I am not certain I would not dread it."

"Then surely I shall cease to be a blessing." She came to his side and lifted his face to her own with her hand. "You are mistaken, Herbert," she said, "I read the contradiction of your words in your eyes. You would rather have me in direst danger than out of God's will and in His will is no danger."

"I think I shall be able to say of you, my wife, what my father said to his—and greater compliment or more deserved, never a woman received—you have always met my spirit's highest aspirations before I voiced them, held me *to not from* God's best, *helped not hindered* me, in reaching the fullest possible expression of His will."

"I should never want you to say less. Yet it will be the God in me alone that will make it possible," she made humble reply.

"We will not mention this letter to mother," she said presently.

"Not for the world, my darling. We will just wait and pray and know His will is sure to be done."

"It is done already since we wish it to be done," she whispered.

It was only the next day, and Herbert was in his mother's room.

"My son," she said suddenly, "it is time for me to set you free."

"Mother," he answered gently, "have I ever felt bound by your love?"

"Never, dear, never. At least you have never

made me conscious of it. But I think I shall soon lose my self-respect, begin to despise myself if I hinder you further in the first desire of your heart. Olive is gone, Harry is gone, Eddie is soon going."

Her son tried to stop her mouth with kisses, but she went bravely on.

"Your father put a limit to your term of service. It was for a time—until the boys were grown and educated. The time is past."

"Yet I will not give you up, mother, or leave you alone."

"No, my darling, you will not. I am going to leave you—think of my courage!—going with Raymond and Eddie who need me much more than you do. Eddie is my baby, I must keep close to him."

Her son was taken utterly by surprise.

"Mother!" he cried, "Mother! have you considered what all this means? your health?"

"I have consulted a doctor," she answered.

"Horace not only gives his permission, but favors the change. He thinks it will be a benefit. Herbert, my dear boy, you are astonished, troubled! I did not want you worried unnecessarily, I did not wish you to know of my thought until I was sure it was not mine only, but God's." Then she clasped her arms about him and cried a little.

"It is the hardest thing of all to part from you," she said. "I am very human, and never mother

had such a son as mine. No, dear, you must not reason with me or urge me. Eddie and Ray need me, and this is settled, Herbert, I settled it on my knees."

So quickly did Lee's door open!

Mrs. Gardenell was touched, indeed, when she was informed of the letter and its contents, and found her leading so apparently in the order of God's will. All that perplexed her was the field to which her son was appointed.

"It is China, Herbert?" she said, a questioning inflection in her voice.

"It is the will of God," he answered. "Long since I settled this, mother, that I was called not to Africa or America or China, but to the will of God."

How quickly things happen when God gets ready! Only a few weeks and every plan of life seemingly changed. Only *seemingly*, however, since their plans and His were one.

It was not without some natural sorrow that the old ties to church and home were riven; the church and home so long and so peculiarly identified with the life of this family. Alone with his God, Herbert bade farewell to the old pulpit in the very spot where his voice had arrested the feet of a sinner, and turned them into the road which led to martyrdom and glory. There he solemnly gave up the charge he had accepted that night so long ago, and covenanted again with God for another work to another people.

Tenderly they went from room to room of the parsonage, each like the face of an old friend, each with some story done up in its very furniture. The nursery—play-room and work-room—mother's room—the old study—places of birth and death, which is only another birth.

However it was better than it might have been. At Herbert's suggestion, Eddie Campbell had been called to his old pastorate, and he would occupy the house. It was pleasant to know the dear old rooms were still to be consecrated to pure family life. That the voices of little children and of holy song and prayer were to hold it true to its highest uses. Surely these new-comers could only get blessing by their sojourn where the very atmosphere was charged with a present Christ.

Both mission parties were to start from their native land about the same time. Their farewells were said, not on the wharf at the out-going of some steamer, but in the old home where a large company assembled to say good-bye; and at the railway station in the morning where a select few watched as they steamed away toward the Pacific coast. There they were to separate from each other and go their different ways.

Last days are so fleeting. One beautiful clear autumn morning, those we have followed so long gave last embraces, said last words, took last lingering looks in' each other's faces as their steamers lay at anchor almost side by side.

"You remember what Stanton wrote us, Her-

bert," whispered his mother, "that heaven is very near and direct from the foreign field? If I see your father first I will tell him you are lifting the banner of the cross in China."

"And if I see him first," he answered, "I will tell him you are repeating in word and song the old, old story to the lost daughters of South America."

"Oh, the glory of it!" she cried, "the glory of it, that He should count me worthy! I never dared hope so much; my cup runneth over. God's thoughts are always so much higher than our thoughts."

"Lee," turning to take her daughter to her arms, "I never aspired to be more than the mother of missionaries. He has made me a missionary mother. Never a holy desire of my heart, but sooner or later He has satisfied it."

"Then," said Herbert reverently, "I shall see Africa."

And the Angel of Destiny smiled, for he knew that it was written in the plan of the great King that in a day not so very far off this man would be a necessity in the Dark Land. That Herbert and Lee should clasp in their loving arms the brown-eyed prophet and his little wife and noble Harry Gardenell and Ruth. And though they were not to linger together, must labor many miles apart, they were yet to meet occasionally, and ever know that all their toil was for the same people, for the same end—the rising, amid the dense dark-

ness, of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings.

And the angel, catching already some strains in the heavenly chorus raised by voices trained beside the lowly workers in the jungles of Africa, knew that it would be swelled by ten thousand more in the great Reaping-day who should call this man, this woman blessed.

But their eyes were holden and they could not see. But they could believe, and that is the next thing to omniscience.

"Herv, father and brother both to me, good-bye. I will be true, God helping me, to your teachings and His will," said Eddie, embracing Herbert and kissing Lee.

"Here's to long service before promotion, old fellow!" said Ray, as he gave his brother his hand in a parting grip.

"Amen," was the hearty response, as Herbert unclasped two dimpled hands from about his neck and laid his little niece in her father's arms.

The two boats floated out of harbor together, each party on either deck saying last words before they began to drift apart.

Farther and farther away from each other. Herbert—with his wife clinging to his arm—saw his mother's face growing dim in the distance and lifted his own to the skies. God must doubly keep her now. His heart seemed breaking, yet not altogether with sorrow. Over the sea-air his voice floated in holy song:

"Oh, what wonder! how amazing!
Jesus glorious King of kings,
Deigns to call me His beloved,
Let me rest beneath His wings."

There was a tremor in his wife's alto as she joined him, but there was no tremor in the triumphant voice from the other steamer that caught up the refrain and sang it back.

"All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
Resting now beneath His wings."

And Raymond, and Eddie, and Gatty joined her with the two dear ones floating from them—in the repetition of the same.

"All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
Resting now beneath His wings."

THE END.

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