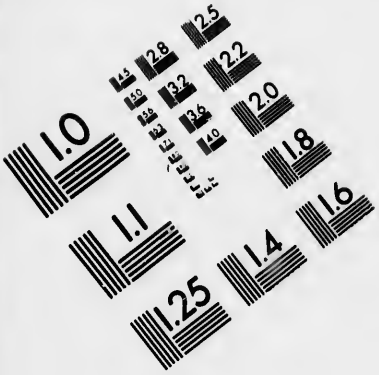



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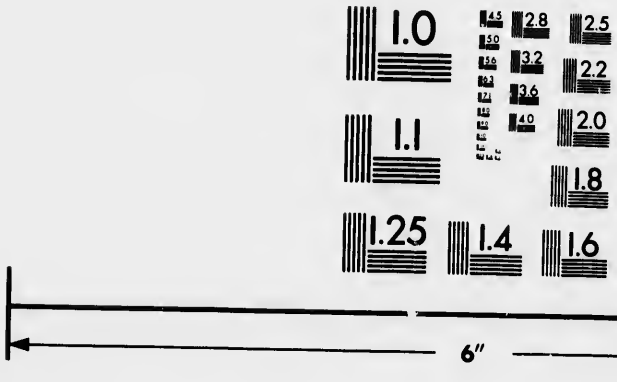



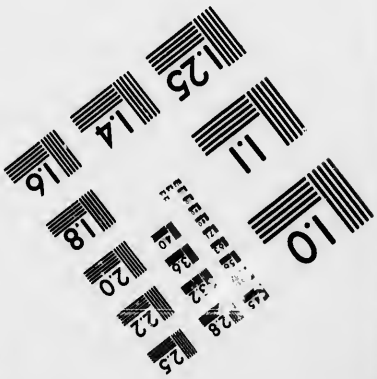


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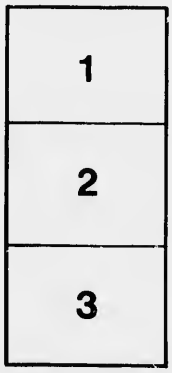


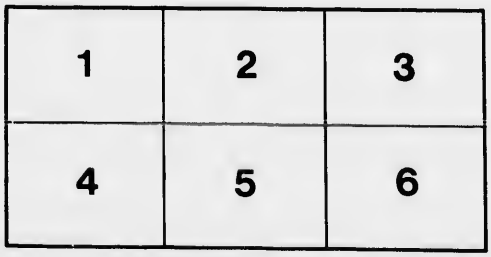


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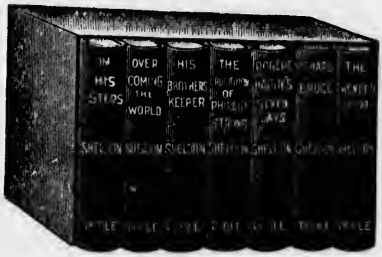


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# Overcoming the World

## THE STORY OF MALCOM KIRK

BY CHARLES M. SHELDON

Author of "In His Steps," "The Crucifiction of Phillip Strong," "His Brother's Keeper," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days," "Richard Bruce," "The Twentieth Door," Etc.

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# PREFACE

The Story of Malcom Kirk is the last in a series of stories written originally to be read to my Sunday evening congregations in the Central Church, Topeka, Kansas. It is not an imaginary story, but has its basis in the living experiences of actual men and women of today. The author sends it out with a prayer that its message may help many struggling souls to "overcome the world."

CHARLES M. SHELDON.

*Topeka, Kansas, 1898.*
*Central Church.*

# Dedication

TO JOSEPH WARD,

WHOSE HEROIC LIFE WAS AN INSPIRATION TO ALL WHO KNEW HIM ON THE FRONTIER IN THE EARLY DAYS OF WESTERN LIFE, THIS STORY IS DEDICATED BY HIS NEPHEW,

CHARLES M. SHELDON.

# Overcoming the World.

## THE STORY OF MALCOM KIRK.

### CHAPTER I.

The senior class in the theological seminary at Hermon had just had its picture taken by the photographer, and the members were still grouped about the steps of the chapel.

"There's one thing the photographer forgot," said a short, red-faced man who sat in the middle of the group. "He didn't think to say, 'Look pleasant, now, if you please.'"

"He didn't need to. We all look so, anyhow." The man who spoke sat immediately behind the first speaker and had his hands on the other's shoulders.

"I'm sure we don't feel very pleasant. I mean, we are not pleased to think this is almost the last time we shall be together as a class," said a tall, delicate, pale-faced man who was standing up at the top of the steps with his back against the door.

He spoke in a quiet, low voice, and there was a hush after he spoke. There is as much sentiment among theological students as among any average number of professional men. In some directions there is more than among the like number of law or medical students.

After a moment of silence, someone began to ask questions about the future prospects of the class. The red-faced, jolly-looking young man in the center was going to take a church in Northern Vermont. The man just be-

hind him had received a call as assistant pastor of an institutional church in Philadelphia. The delicate featured student up by the chapel door was going to teach school a year and find a church as soon as he had paid off his college debts.

Every member of the class had spoken of his prospects except one. This one sat on the extreme edge of the group as if he had purposely chosen to be as inconspicuous as possible in the picture. A stranger carelessly walking by would have instantly judged him to be the homeliest, least interesting man in the class. He had dull brown hair, very heavy and stiff, pale blue eyes, a rather large mouth, the lips of which, however, were firm and full of character, high cheek bones, and an unusually high forehead. His arms and legs were very long, and his general attitude as he sat on the edge of the steps was almost strikingly awkward.

"Here's Kirk, hasn't said a word yet," cried the little man who had first spoken. "What are you going to do, Kirk?"

Every member of the class turned and looked at the figure sitting on the edge of the group. It was noticeable that while several of the class smiled at the question, "What are you going to do?" there was no disrespect in the smile, and on every man's face was a look of real interest amounting to an excited curiosity.

Malcom Kirk smiled slightly as he looked up. He did not look at any member of the class in particular, but seemed to include them all in a friendly interest that was affectionate and gentle.

"I don't know. I am waiting for a call. I've had one and accepted it, but I need another before I can go to work."

Everybody stared. The man up by the chapel door had a look in his eye as if he understood what Kirk meant, but no one else seemed to catch his meaning.

"My first call was from the Lord, several years ago. I feel perfectly satisfied with it. He wants me to preach. But so far none of the churches seem to agree with Him. At least, none of them has asked me to preach. So I'm waiting for my second call."

He spoke without the least touch of irreverence or even humor. The impression made on the class was a feeling of honest perplexity concerning the future prospects of Malcom Kirk.

"I don't see," said the man who was to be the assistant pastor of the institutional church in Philadelphia, "why Kirk hasn't had a call to a large church. We all know he has more brains than all the rest of us put together. I think it is a shame the churches should pass by such a man and—"

"It's easy enough to see the reason,"—Kirk spoke without the shadow of any irritation in his manner. "You fellows know, as well as I do, that brains under hair like mine don't count with the average city congregation." He laughed good-naturedly, and the class joined him. Then someone said:

"Why don't you dye it black, Kirk?"

"I can't afford to," he replied gravely. "That isn't the only reason I don't get a call. I'm too awkward in the pulpit. Did I tell anybody the last time I preached in the Third Church at Concord I knocked a vase of flowers off the pulpit with my elbow, and when it fell on the floor it waked up every officer in the church. Of course, I never could expect to get a call from that church."

Everybody laughed, and Kirk drew one of his feet up under him and smiled a little. At the same time no one could detect a trace of ill-humour or lack of seriousness in his tone or manner. The first impression Malcom Kirk made on people was that of downright sincerity. The longer people knew him the stronger this impression grew.

"That's nothing," exclaimed one of the class after the laugh subsided. "I had a great time two weeks ago when I went up to Manchester to preach. I laid my notes down on the desk, and there was a strong breeze blowing across the pulpit, which stood directly between two open windows, and while the anthem was being sung half my sermon blew out of one of the windows."

"The congregation was spared just so much, then, wasn't it?" said a man down on the bottom step.

"Accidents will happen to anyone," said Kirk, quietly. "But mine are not accidents. They're habits of life. I can overcome them, though. The churches don't know that. So I don't blame them for not giving me a call."

"Well, I think it's a shame, as I said," the assistant pastor of the institutional church repeated. "The churches think more of the way a man dresses and behaves in the pulpit than they do of what he says. And they criticize everything from his prayers to the polish of his boots."

There was silence again. The class had been over all that many times before, and they were practically a unit in their opinion of what the churches seemed to demand in a successful candidate for a call.

Finally someone recurred to the class picture again. "I don't believe Kirk's in this picture at all. He sat too far out. The photographer kept telling him to move in farther. But I believe he moved out again just at the last minute."

"I only moved one of my feet out," said Kirk, solemnly. "I thought one of them was enough. I didn't want to have to pay extra for more than my share of photograph."

"But we want the whole of you in the picture, Kirk," said the man next to him, laying an affectionate hand on Kirk's arm. The entire class turned again towards the awkward, shambling figure and seemed to repeat the gesture of the one classmate. Then the talk drifted back

again to the future plans of the members and to serious and humorous reminiscences of the three year's course, until one after another went away, and the class group was broken up into little knots of two and three as the men walked to their rooms or lingered under the great elms, arm in arm.

Kirk and the companion who had laid his hand on his friend's arm remained a little while on the steps.

"What will you do, Kirk?"

"I think I shall offer myself to the Home Missionary Society and ask them to send me to the hardest place they can find out West, somewhere."

"But how about all your scholarship, your—your ability?" The other man hesitated for the right word.

Kirk coloured slightly, the first indication he had shown of sensitiveness in that direction.

"I can use anything I know anywhere. Preach I must, even if I have to go into the streets and speak from the tail-end of a wagon, and never have a parish. But I do want a parish and a people. I can love people like everything. I feel hungry to have a parish of my own."

The other man was silent. He had never felt just like that, but he thought he could understand.

"I hope you will have such a church, some time. I would like to be a member of it."

"Thank you!" Kirk smiled. "Wilson, if you were that church, I would have a unanimous call. I am sure there is a work for me somewhere in God's great world. Else, why did He give me such a passion to speak to men and love them?"

Malcom Kirk looked out across the great seminary campus and spoke with a conscious cry of heart-longing. The beautiful June day was nearly gone. The future for him was as indefinite and unsettled as any condition can be. Yet the strong, patient, undisturbed realities of his call to preach the Gospel were as unmoved as the sky of

that lovely June day. The light would soon fade out of the heavens, but the sky would still remain.

The next day was commencement at Hermon Seminary. The chapel was filled with a representative congregation of Hermon people, friends and relatives of the classes, the trustees and officers of the Seminary, and the usual number of undergraduates.

Before the speaking began, the president of the faculty came forward to make the usual list of announcements concerning the annual prizes and scholarships.

It was the custom at Hermon for the annual announcements to be made at the close of the exercises of commencement. For some reason, however, this order was changed, and the audience listened with unusual interest to the president's remarks.

He had read the names of the winners in Hebrew and New Testament Scholarships, and the successful man in the general work of the entire course. He paused now at the end of the list, and then read the last name, looking down at the graduating class as he did so.

"The German scholarship is awarded to Malcom Kirk, of the graduating class."

There had been a slight rustling of applause as the different names were read, but when Kirk's name was spoken the class applauded vigorously, and the clapping extended over the chapel very heartily. Kirk sat bolt upright and blushed very red, and Wilson, who was sitting by him, exclaimed in a loud whisper, "Good! That means seven hundred dollars and a year abroad."

Kirk said nothing. There was no question he was pleased. His lips trembled and he shuffled his feet under the pew, and his great hands opened and shut nervously. When his turn came to go up on the platform to speak, he felt as if his natural awkwardness and shyness had been doubled by the attention directed to him by the winning of the best scholarship in the gift of the Seminary.

The minute he began to speak, all this shyness disappeared. It was true, Kirk loved to face an audience. He loved people, and after the first moment of conscious fright was passed, he eagerly entered the true speaker's position and enjoyed both the audience and his own effort in addressing it.

His subject was "The Business of Preaching." What was it? How did it differ from oratory? What was the object of preaching? What were the materials of preaching? He spoke with his heart in what he said. It was the thought of more than one minister in the audience that this man who had won the German Scholarship had a remarkably good voice. More than one pastor felt like envying the peculiar tone of that voice. It had a carrying quality that commanded attention and held it. And nearly every man on the Seminary faculty was wondering why Kirk had received no call from any church. There was no question as to his ability. He had both brains and heart. It is true his face and figure were not in his favor. He was not of the orthodox ministerial cut. His clothes were not a very good fit. But were the churches looking for a fashion plate? For an ornamental failure behind the pulpit?

In the audience that morning there were also two other persons who had paid close attention to Kirk while he was speaking. One of these was a young man nearly Kirk's age, with a face and manner that spoke of the most sensitive, refined breeding. It was the face of a dreamer. Dark eyes, waving dark hair, handsome features, thin, delicate, curved lips, the hands of an artist. His clothes were made of the finest material and bore the stamp of that unconscious gentlemanly feeling which always goes with a man who has all his life been used to expensive details. As he sat there listening to Malcom Kirk this morning, Francis Raleigh was attracted by the voice of the speaker. He had listened to the others with a conventional interest that did not mean anything to him.

He started the moment that Kirk spoke the first word and fastened his look upon him until he was through. He then resumed his previous attitude of mild indifference to the program.

The other person who followed Kirk's speech with especial interest was a young woman who sat in that part of the church reserved for the trustees of the Seminary and their families. It is said that the young women who work in the nitro-glycerine and dynamite establishment at Ardeer, Scotland, have the most perfect complexions in the world, owing to the nature of the peculiar materials they handle and breathe. It is very certain that Dorothy Gilbert had never lived or worked in any more explosive atmosphere than that of her own intense energy, but her face would fairly have rivaled that of any Scotch lass in Ardeer. There was a striking resemblance in many ways to Francis Raleigh's beauty. It might have been due to the similarity in training and in tastes. The New England type of independent, morally calm, but thoroughly interested activity was well represented in Dorothy Gilbert. Her father sat beside her, a dignified, carefully dressed man of fifty-five, iron grey hair and moustache, a successful book publisher, with a beautiful home in Hermon and business in Boston. Dorothy was the only child at home. She had graduated a year before at Northampton, and was now taking a special course in music, going to the city three days in the week.

She did not attempt to reason with herself about the interest she felt in Malcom Kirk's appearance. Theologues in general were mildly stupid creatures to her. She had been born and brought up in Hermon, and classed the theologues as a part of the fauna and flora of the town, but her interest had never gone any farther than that. She had met Malcom Kirk several times during his three years' course. Once she had sat by him at a dinner given by her father to the class. She had found him an

interesting talker, and was surprised when she thought it over afterwards. His homely hair, his shyness, his remarkable awkwardness had amused her. She had laughed a little with her father about something that happened at the table. But she could not help listening to him today with added interest as he went on. Was it the voice? There was something very winning in it. There was none of the Yankee, New England nasal tone about it. It was full and deep, and suggested an organ pipe exactly tuned.

Like Francis Raleigh, she seemed to lose all vital interest in the morning's program when Kirk finished. While the next speaker was on the platform, she turned her head to look over the chapel, and her eyes met those of Francis Raleigh. He smiled, and she returned the smile, while a slight color deepened on her face. And he thought to himself it was certainly more interesting to glance now and then at a face like Dorothy Gilbert's than to stare steadily at a tall, solemn young man on the platform who was talking about the Philosophy of the Prophetic Idea and its evolution in the Old Testament.

The program was finished at last, and the friends of the graduates lingered about the platform congratulating the different speakers. Very many of the visitors came up and warmly greeted Kirk. Among them was one alert, active, middle-aged man who said he wanted to see Kirk especially on a matter of importance. So the two went up to Kirk's room and the stranger explained his business briefly.

## CHAPTER II.

KIRK RECEIVES HIS SECOND CALL AND ACTS UPON IT.

"I'm superintendent of missions for Kansas. I want you to take a church out there. You're just the man I've been looking for. Don't say no, for I must have you."

Kirk looked at the superintendent thoughtfully. Was this the second call he had mentioned?

"There's this scholarship. I feel the need of the training abroad."

"All right. Go on with that. But there's a church that will be ready for you at the end of the year there. It's in the growing town of Conrad, and a great opening for hard work. The man there now will leave at the end of the year."

Kirk said nothing. He looked out of his window. Right across the campus stood the beautiful residence of Dorothy Gilbert's father. It was not the first time he had looked in that direction.

"Of course," continued the superintendent, briskly, "you understand the church is a home missionary church and cannot offer you a large salary. They can raise, perhaps, four hundred or possibly four hundred and fifty dollars. The society will grant two hundred or two hundred and fifty. You could count on about eight hundred dollars, probably."

Kirk was silent. He turned his head away from the window and glanced around his room. The shabby-backed books, the simple pieces of furniture, the carpet, the meagre furnishings, all smote him keenly. It was not the first time his poverty had thrust itself upon him coarsely, but he seemed to feel it more deeply than ever.

As he faced the superintendent, who was waiting for a reply, Kirk had a most astonishing and absurd feeling come over him. He was not thinking about his German scholarship or about the superintendent. The superintendent would have been smitten into bewilderment if he could have read Kirk's thought. What Kirk was saying to himself was "How can Dorothy Gilbert and I live on eight hundred a year in a home missionary church?"

"Well," the superintendent spoke with a slight trace of impatience, "what do you say? Give me a favorable answer. You can make your mark out there. Plenty of hard work, but a good field. Tell me you'll take it."

"Very well. I promise to take the field if it is open when I finish my studies abroad."

Kirk spoke quietly, but his lips closed firmly, and he turned his head and looked out over the campus again.

There was a little more talk between them, and the superintendent went out.

The minute he was gone, Kirk pulled down his curtains and locked his door. It was a little after noon, and the regular commencement dinner was served at one. He walked up and down his darkened room, talking to himself. His future was at last decided, at least, for a time. He had some place in the world. Someone wanted him. He was ambitious as a Christian gentleman should be. He wanted to do great things in the kingdom of God on earth. Could he do them in that little home missionary church?

It was not at all contrary to his regular habits of life that he kneeled down and prayed. It was a prayer of thanksgiving and also one of petition. He knew with perfect clearness as he kneeled in his darkened room that he loved Dorothy Gilbert with all his might. The complete absurdity of his position had nothing to do with the fact that he loved her. She was rich, she was accomplished, she was beautiful, she was of an old and distin-

guished family, but he loved her. He was poor, he was plain-looking, he had no prospects beyond his scholarship and seven or eight hundred dollars a year in a home missionary church, but he loved Dorothy Gilbert. It made no difference that his Christian training seemed to rebuke the choice of one so far removed from him in every way. That did not destroy his feeling for her, and did not change it. In his prayer he cried for wisdom, he asked to be led by the Spirit.

He was not the man to wreck a life of Christian service on a passion of the heart, even if its hunger were never fed. But when he arose and went over to the Alumni Hall to join the class there at the final banquet, he carried with him the knowledge that the future for him must have Dorothy Gilbert with it if he would do or be all that he felt he had a right to pray for.

The week that followed Commencement Day at Hermon found Kirk almost alone in the Seminary building. He had been employed by one of the professors in doing some special copying of a book manuscript. In a few days this would be finished. He had fixed on the following Thursday to sail for Liverpool. He had determined to begin his studies as soon as possible. He had been to see the president of the faculty about his scholarship, and to his great relief found that he was largely free to study in the way that seemed of most value to himself.

"You see it's this way, sir," he had explained to the president. "It will do me very little good to go to a German university and take some special course in language or history. I feel the need of another method of study. If I can use this scholarship to study human conditions in large cities, going to the people for my material at first hand, it will be of infinitely larger value to me and to the seminary than a course in lectures and books.

"You are free to mark out your own methods of

study," replied the president. "According to the terms of the scholarship the only condition is a year spent abroad in some regular course of study, with a report of it to be made within six months to the seminary."

So Kirk was happy in his thought of the year's work, and when the treasurer had given him the check for the $700, and he had gone to Boston and engaged his passage in the intermediate cabin, he felt as if he had a very interesting year's life before him.

He had come back to his room and made his final preparations for leaving. They were very simple, necessarily. He was going light-handed, to live in the most frugal, economical manner possible. It was now Tuesday evening. His vessel sailed Thursday afternoon. He was all ready to go, and yet he had an irresistible longing to see Dorothy Gilbert before he went.

He fought against the inclination until eight o'clock, and then did what he knew he would do all along—he dressed in the most careful manner he knew how, and walked straight across the campus to her house.

As he went up the steps he heard the piano. Dorothy was playing. When he was in the hall he glanced into the parlor and saw Francis Raleigh standing there.

Then a fit of timidity seized him. Something in Raleigh's face and manner made him feel that it was impossible to see Dorothy Gilbert with the gifted artist. He asked the servant if Mr. Gilbert was at home, and said he wanted to see him a few moments.

It was the nearest to a lie that Malcom Kirk ever approached. However, when the servant ushered him into Mr. Gilbert's library, he was not sorry to have a talk with the publisher.

Mr. Gilbert had been abroad. Kirk asked him several questions about cities and people on the continent. He grew every moment more interested and stayed for more than an hour. Mr. Gilbert insisted on presenting him

with two or three copies of Baedeker, and followed him out into the hall when he finally rose to go, wishing him a successful year of study.

The piano had stopped and the door into the parlour was closed, but Kirk could hear voices, and it seemed to him that they were unusually earnest. He imagined he could detect a tone of pleading in one of them.

He went out into the night and walked the seminary campus under the grave elms for two or three hours. He felt disappointed. He went over his prospects. He viewed from all sides his position as a man with a career, and before he let himself into his dingy room he had gone down into a depth of self-depreciation that measured a valley of humiliation for him.

But when he awoke the next day he determined, with a dull obstinacy that was a part of his character, that he would see Dorothy Gilbert before he went away. And when evening came he walked over to the house again.

She was playing the piano again, but this time alone. She turned around as Kirk entered and smiled as if she were glad to see him, and before he had time to think of any possible shyness, he was talking about his prospects, the places he expected to visit, the methods he was planning to use.

As the talk went on, Dorothy Gilbert grew more interested. Kirk's voice had something to do with it. But aside from that he was at his best while talking about his life work. Dorothy forgot that he was a theologue. Several times she was startled at her response to his enthusiasm. He had planned an original trip abroad, and the details of what he intended to do roused her native intensity to see results.

But right in the midst of his explanation of what he expected to do in London, Kirk paused.

"I heard you playing the Traumerei when I came in, Miss Gilbert. Will you please play it again?"

Dorothy looked surprised at the abrupt change, but without a word went to the piano and began. Kirk knew enough about music to know that she played well. Better than anyone he had ever heard.

When she finished she turned about and said, "You will hear some good music while you are abroad, Mr. Kirk. The Germans, especially, furnish the people with the very best music in the parks and gardens at a very small price."

She suddenly coloured deeply, as she thought he might imply that she was thinking of his poverty, of his inability to hear expensive music in expensive places. If he thought of it, he made no sign that he noticed. But he said:

"I shall never hear any better music than I have heard to-night."

The minute he said it he felt the same timidity seize him that came over him the evening before. But it passed away quickly, and to his relief he felt a certain inward strength and indomitable courage fill him. Dorothy was at first amused at the compliment, then she was suddenly excited by it. Kirk was as simple-hearted as a child. He had revealed his secret in the tone and manner of his words. It was the last thing in the world he had expected to do when he came. But greater and better and wiser men than Malcom Kirk have done as he did.

He rose at once and walked straight over to the fireplace. On the mantel was a miniature of Dorothy, painted by a New York artist, a young woman who was famous for such work.

"I have no right"—Kirk spoke without a tremor, "but if I take this and keep it for a year, sacredly to guard it from every eye but my own and never to speak of it, and then return it when I come back—"

She was so surprised that her self-possession failed her.

Kirk's hand was on the miniature with a mastery that Dorothy noticed even at that moment.

"You are not unwilling? I make no claim. I have none. I simply shall keep it for a year. Perhaps the constant sight of it will prove to me how hopeless—"

The man paused and looked straight at Dorothy. There was something so hungry and at the same time unaffected in his look that again Dorothy was speechless. He took the picture and it lay in his great palm a moment, and then his fingers closed slowly over it. He looked up at her again. She had turned away, and was nervously tracing lines with her fingers on the table.

"I have no excuse to offer for what I have done," he said, and there was that in his voice that made Dorothy look up.

"I realize all the distance between us. It will do you no harm to let me have the picture, and may do me good."

Dorothy at last found her voice.

"I have not let you have it. It seems to me you have taken it, anyway."

"You did not say no," replied Malcom firmly. Then he paused as if waiting an answer. And again she was silent. He moved towards the hall. "I love you, Dorothy Gilbert," and he looked almost handsome as he said it. He stood there an instant, and then he was gone, and Dorothy remained like one who has felt some great emotion, not yet measured. She had refused to let Francis Raleigh have the miniature. He had begged for it. He, also, was going abroad to finish his studies in art. But when he asked for the picture, she had told him no, and he had gone away without a definite answer to his petition that she give him the original of the picture. For he had told her of his love before he went. And now this other! And he had gone with the miniature, after all! He had actually taken it! Dorothy said, "He had no right, but

why did I not tell him so!" Somehow, Malcom Kirk was a part of her memory now. She had not time to ask what it might all mean. One moment she laughed, then she grew serious. Then she turned and played the Traumerei again. Then she wheeled about and said to herself with a short laugh, "The idea! a theologue! and homely and awkward at that! Why, I have actually laughed at him!" But, nevertheless, she felt the impossibility of laughing at Malcom Kirk any more. No true woman ever laughs at the honest love of a man, no matter how poor or unattractive he may be. And Dorothy Gilbert was a true woman at heart.

As for Malcom Kirk, he went on board the steamer the next afternoon with a feeling that was almost content. It is true he felt a little uneasy to think he had told Dorothy Gilbert so plainly that he loved her. But then he was sure it had done no harm. It was the truth. And, besides, when he came back, would he return the picture without a word? Might he not claim the right to keep it always?

He scarcely pretended to answer this question. He found his way to his room in the intermediate cabin, and came out on the deck again. As the steamer went down the harbour, he thoughtfully reviewed his course and looked out into the new life before him with quiet hope.

It was ten o'clock when he went down to his room. As he proceeded to arrange his few effects in the little apartment called a cabin, one of the stewards came by. There were two or three other men sitting at the table in the dining and lounging room.

"Any of you a clergyman?" asked the steward.

No one answered, and Kirk, after a moment, stepped out and said, "I'm a clergyman. What is wanted?"

The steward looked a little doubtfully at the long, unattractive figure.

"There's a woman down aft, here, in a poor way. She wants someone to pray with her."

"I'll go," said Kirk, quietly, and he followed the steward, not knowing as he went that this, his first ministry of service, was to prove one of the most remarkable events in his eventful life. Meanwhile, the steamer had reached the limits of the harbour; the great ocean now lay wide and solemn before her, and the lookout on the forward deck was saying to himself, "It's going to be a beautiful night."

On the promenade deck two men were pacing up and down.

"But how did it happen, Raleigh, that you took passage on the Cunard line? I thought you were planning to go by the Anchor line from New York."

"I did plan to go two weeks later, but circumstances changed my movements. I shall be glad to get to work again, and I'm thankful to be thrown in with you, Ed. We can talk over old college days."

They turned in front of the music room, and the light fell on Francis Raleigh's face. It was at this moment that Malcom Kirk, down in the intermediate cabin, kneeled to pray. The lookout on the bow was saying, "We shall have a quick voyage."

## CHAPTER III.

### A DEATH IN MID-OCEAN.

When Malcom Kirk entered the little cabin room to which the steward led him, he found the assistant surgeon of the steamer bending over the figure in the berth there.

A woman was sitting near by.

The surgeon rose and beckoned Kirk to step outside a moment.

"You are a clergyman?"

Kirk nodded.

The surgeon looked at him as doubtfully as the steward had done, but he seemed satisfied at last.

"Well, you might as well know the woman has consumption. She may last until we reach Liverpool, and she may go before Sunday. She ought never to have been allowed passage."

"I can tell how that is," said the steward. "I noticed the woman came on with her baby. She looked as bright and pretty as anyone. Seemed strong and sat out on deck until we left the dock. Then she came down here and went to pieces. I've known one or two such cases before."

"That's true," said the surgeon, gravely. "I'll be back before midnight. It will do no harm for you to see her." He spoke to Kirk and went away, leaving him standing somewhat awkwardly by the half-open door.

The woman called in a faint voice, and Kirk went in.

"Are you the clergyman?" she asked.

"Yes," replied Kirk, simply. "Can I be of service to you? Do you want me to pray with you?"

The woman nodded. Kirk kneeled, and the other woman who had been acting as nurse bowed her head.

It was the first time Malcom Kirk had been called on to pray by the side of a dying person. The first service he had ever paid to suffering and sorrowing humanity when he was asked to take upon himself the burden and the joy of comfort. His own life had been free from physical weakness. His own family had moved away and scattered when he was a lad, and the death of both his father and mother when he was a child had left no impression on his early memory.

The situation, therefore, now impressed him strongly. But the impression was redeemed from painful egotism by his intense longing to be of help to this stranger. When he had told his seminary classmate that he loved people, he had spoken one of the largest truths of his great hearted character. So his prayer went out to the God of all comfort, and it is very certain that he touched the heart of that human hunger for Divine compassion. For when he finished, she thanked him, with a sob, while the other woman made no attempt to conceal the tears that ran over her face. She looked at Kirk as he rose with increased respect. He said a few words simply, but cheerfully, and then went out. The woman who had been nursing followed him and closed the door a moment.

"Thank you for coming in. It did her good. It's a sad case."

"Yes. Has she any friends or relatives on board?"

"No; as near as I have learned she has a sister in London. This sister has been writing her for some time to come there. This woman's husband died a few weeks ago. Since then she has been supporting herself in Boston by sewing. Her baby is six months old. She sold a few things, and with the help of her sister, who sent her a little money, she bought a ticket, and with a great effort reached the dock this morning. The ship's company did

not know of her condition, or they certainly would never have let her come on board. That is all I know of the case. Of course, we will do all we can for her and the baby now. The sea air may be a help to her, after all."

The woman who spoke was only what some people call a "common" person. Kirk could see that. Yet she was one of the great army of quiet, unselfish women, who give the world true definitions of the term "motherhood."

She stepped to the door of her own room, which was close by, and beckoned Kirk to look in and see the baby.

He was sleeping in the upper berth, and Kirk looked at him gravely, wondering what sort of future awaited that bit of humanity. The woman shut the door gently and went back to the mother, while Kirk retired to his own narrow quarters, and in spite of the strange noises and the sights of the ocean through the little round port, he was soon fast asleep after a prayer for blessing on all who suffer and all who are in trouble.

The next day the woman sank rapidly. Everyone in the intermediate cabin wanted to do something. There was no lack of care for the baby. Every woman wanted to help. Saturday the mother sank yet more rapidly, but rallied, as is often the case, and when the passengers gathered for a little service which Kirk was asked to lead, she wanted her door left open so that she might see and hear the singing better.

This was a novel experience for Kirk. The intermediate cabin was not crowded as it would be on the return voyage. The passengers were mostly from what the English people call the "middle classes." We, in America, say the "common people." This means the people out of the plain ranks of labour, not necessarily very poor, often well read, with love of home and, in most cases, with a religious life that flows deep through narrow channels, but is always true in its application to duty.

Kirk preached a simple sermon about Christ in his

relation to the sea and those who live upon it. He touched on Christ's love of human kind, and his compassion for all sorts of trouble. The sermon was easily understood. It helped. Kirk saw tears in many eyes. Many of the passengers thanked him after he was through. He went in and prayed briefly with the sufferer. And the day passed on slowly, with an unwonted calmness, as Sunday on board ship at sea is so often. The ocean was quiet. The sun went down without a cloud about it. And the sick woman seemed to rest easier as the lights were turned on, and the great steamer with its freight of human tragedy and its uncounted value of souls sailed untiringly on towards the old world.

Near morning, the woman who was watching the sufferer, sent for the surgeon. He came down, and Kirk, who was wakened by an unusual noise, heard him going by and rose and dressed, going out into the large cabin. The wind was roaring over the water and the vessel was beginning to rock for the first time since they left home.

"We are in for a storm," he heard one of the passengers say. He steadied himself and walked down to the sick woman's door and sat near, waiting expectantly as if he knew he would be summoned. In a moment the door opened and the surgeon looked out.

He beckoned to Kirk, who instantly rose and went in. The great change was coming. Kirk had never seen anyone die, but he knew at once what the look on the face meant. He kneeled, and the woman feebly opened her eyes. He took the hand and prayed again, and knew that she heard and understood.

"We'll see that your baby is cared for," said Kirk very gently. "He's a fine boy, and we are going to pray that he may grow into a noble, Christian man. You don't have any fear to go, do you? We have talked about that. You can trust the love of Jesus. You know he has prepared a place for you?"

She could not speak, but they knew she understood. As the storm rose and the vessel began to pitch and toss under the resistless grasp of the heaving hand of the tempest under it, the woman neared her harbour of peace. And she entered it gently, just as the grey dawn was creeping over the water, now lashed into great sheets of spray that went over the decks and fell in torrents on the hatchways.

A death on board ship in mid-ocean is soon known by all the passengers. Before noon everyone knew that there was an orphan baby in the intermediate cabin. The storm increased as the day wore on. Nearly everyone was sick. One after another of the women in the cabins gave up the struggle and retired.

This was what led to an unexpected experience for Malcom Kirk. The baby woke up, and for the first time there was no one to take care of him. The three women stewards were busy with their duties, and one of them, who had prepared the baby's milk, suddenly came up to Kirk, who was standing by the long dining table, and asked him if he couldn't take the baby a while.

"I don't know what we'll do," she said, in great perplexity. "The women are all sick, and we have our hands full caring for them. You can hold him all right, can't you? He's the best baby you ever saw."

By this time the baby had developed a good, healthy cry that could be easily heard through the roar of the storm. Kirk looked doubtfully at the stewardess.

"I'm afraid I'll drop him," he said.

"Drop him! A great, strong man like you!" said the woman, who Kirk was sure was laughing a little at his hesitation. "He'll be all right as soon as he has some dinner, poor fellow."

"Well, bring him here, then!" said Kirk, desperately. And the woman quickly brought out the baby and placed him in Kirk's long arms.

If the few passengers still in the dining room had not been so miserable from approaching seasickness, they certainly would have laughed at the sight of Malcom Kirk holding that baby. He really tried to be as gentle with it as its own mother ever was, but it seemed to him that he sprawled all over the cabin in his efforts to keep the baby where the woman said he ought to be.

But the tremendous storm was partly to blame for that. Kirk braced his feet against the legs of the table and held onto the baby as if it was a life-preserver. The milk in the bottle was first in one end of it and then in the other. Every time the baby missed getting it he cried with a vigour that made Kirk afraid he would burst a blood vessel or rupture his lungs. Finally, however, matters were adjusted so that the baby's hunger was satisfied. Kirk was so afraid to carry him over to the cabin where he had been kept that he held him for nearly an hour. The storm howled over the vessel, and there was a remarkable confusion of all sorts of noises in every part of the steamer. Kirk noticed, however, that the stewards and one or two officers who happened to pass through the cabin were unconcerned. "It will blow itself out before morning," was the statement of the surgeon, who came down in a lull of the tempest.

He laughed at the sight of Kirk and the baby. But, being a man with a baby of his own at home in Liverpool, there was also a little moisture about his eyes that was not caused by the ocean spray.

"You'll do, man," he said. "And the boy will make a fine sailor, looks like. He sleeps through the storm as if he were used to being 'rocked in the cradle of the deep.' But we must be after looking up the other woman when we get across."

"Yes, yes," said Kirk, eagerly. He had a long talk with the surgeon, and next morning, after the storm had

subsided, and they had gone out to breathe the fine salt air, Kirk had no difficulty in persuading the surgeon to keep the body of the mother and help, in some way, to get it to the sister in London.

"Ay, ay, we'll arrange it all right. The company will see to that. But the expense of the rest, man; can't you see to it that the passengers do something for the baby to give him a start in life?"

"I had already thought of it," said Kirk, and the fact revealed one of his great qualifications for the ministry. "I'll go up on the other deck and see the first cabin passengers about it."

The surgeon was a Scotch Irishman, with a big heart. He had influence with the purser, and easily persuaded that gentleman to call the passengers together in the dining and music rooms, which joined, and then suggested that Kirk himself take the baby and go up and tell his story and appeal for help.

This time Malcom Kirk required no urging to have the baby placed in his arms. He would have gone with it into the presence of all the crowned heads of Europe and their families, even although he knew well enough that he looked and felt as queer as a long-legged, long-armed, awkward man ever looked and felt.

The women wrapped the baby up, and he smiled when Kirk's hands clutched him.

"He doesn't care how homely and awkward I am, anyway," said Kirk to himself, with a gulp in his throat. He climbed up the rather steep stairs out onto the lower deck. The storm was almost spent. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and when he reached the promenade deck he met the purser himself, who led the way into the dining saloon.

The first cabin passengers of that steamer will never forget that incident in their passage. They had gathered to the number of a hundred or more, many of them old

travellers, who were not affected by storms. They had been told that the orphan baby's friends below wanted to tell his story, and they were ready to listen to it, but they were not prepared for the sight of the baby himself and his strange nurse.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RALEIGH SKETCHES MALCOM AND THE BABY.

A smile crossed nearly every face as Kirk entered. As he began to speak, the smile passed off, and another look crept over the faces of the rich, refined, leisurely people gathered in that steamer. The first cabin drew very near the intermediate for a few moments at least. Kirk told the baby's story very well. How could he help it when he saw, in his imagination, the face of that worn-out mother lying nearly beneath where he stood, still and cold. The baby looked out from its shawls with a curious inquisitive look on its face and kept perfectly quiet as long as Kirk was speaking.

"It seems to me," Kirk concluded, "that we might help the baby to start in life. I understand that the mother left only a few dollars, and the sister in London is a shop-keeper in poor circumstances. If I was in a church I think I would say, 'We will now worship the Lord with our offering."

He said it in such a tone that it was irresistible. A portly, dignified old gentleman sitting in the middle of the dining room rose, and in a husky voice, which betrayed his feeling, said: "I'll be one of twenty-five gentlemen to give ten dollars."

Instantly more than a dozen men arose, followed in a moment by a dozen or more. Some one in the music room began to pass a hat. Money was thrown into it until it was half full. Under the inspiration of the moment one of the young ladies suggested a concert and literary entertainment, to be given the next night, and the suggestion was taken up at once. One of the men offered

to take charge of the funds, and help Kirk or some one to see that they were properly placed, and Kirk started to go out. The ladies had crowded around the baby, caressing him as he never had been caressed before in all his meager, pitiful life.

It was at this moment that Kirk saw Francis Raleigh. He had come out of the music room, and the minute he saw Kirk he came to him and held out his hand.

"Mr. Kirk, isn't it? I heard you at Hermon a few weeks ago. At commencement. You remember me? We have met once or twice. Raleigh is my name."

"Yes, I remember," said Kirk. He had met Raleigh at some receptions. "Excuse me for not shaking hands. Mine are full just now."

"Excuse me, I see they are," said Raleigh, laughing. "You did that very well." He spoke very kindly, but in a tone that he did not mean to be patronizing. It was only the Raleigh manner. It belonged to the family. He might have spoken differently if he had known that in the upper vest pocket of the homely figure before him was the lovely face of Dorothy Gilbert. But there was this fact about the situation. Kirk knew that Raleigh was in love with Dorothy. Raleigh did not know that Kirk loved her, or that he had ever thought of such a possibility.

"I am glad for the baby's sake," replied Kirk soberly. He ignored the compliment, and finally succeeded in getting down to the lower deck again.

The intermediate cabin was excited over the result. Nearly five hundred dollars had been contributed, and the concert would bring a hundred more. In fact, when the concert was over and all of the first cabin had been solicited, nearly eight hundred dollars was given for the baby's start in life.

When the vessel reached Liverpool, Kirk, with the help of the surgeon and one of the cabin passengers,

secured a nurse for the baby and arranged with one of the women, who had cared for the mother in the intermediate to go down to London and see the baby safe in its home there. Kirk himself had the sad pleasure of meeting the sister, and while he was in London doing his special work of study in the East End he secured lodging near by, and often went to see the family. He grew wonderfully attached to the child, and when he was obliged to leave and pursue his studies on the continent he parted from the baby with genuine sorrow. He supposed at the time that this little chapter in his life was closed and completed. It was one of the future events that no man can foresee that opened to him afterwards a continuation of that human affection. For he was unable to return to London again, and when he said goodbye he had no dream of ever seeing that part of his life return.

It was two weeks after the steamer reached Liverpool and while Kirk was working hard in the East End slums that Dorothy Gilbert received a letter from Francis Raleigh, dated from London, Gordon Square, near the British Museum. She had not encouraged him when he pleaded the privilege of an occasional letter, but, on the other hand, she had not refused him, and he was too careful of his future to risk the mistake of writing too often or in a tone of sentiment. He wrote a very interesting letter. Dorothy enjoyed reading it, while she felt a little disturbed to think she must answer. She did not want to encourage him too much. At the same time his undoubted love for her and his great talents as an artist appealed to her strongly. The only reason she had not accepted his affection was a lack of feeling on her own part. She was fearful of herself. She wanted to be absolutely sure of her own heart. She had known him since they were both children. It was not as if they were in

any way comparative strangers. She also knew well enough that her father favored Raleigh's suit.

There was one passage in the letter that intensely interested her. It might not have pleased Francis Raleigh if he had known all the reasons for her interest. It was a passage describing a scene on the vessel during his recent voyage across.

"You may remember," the letter went on, after a description of some famous paintings in the National Gallery, "a theological student by the name of Malcom Kirk, who graduated this year. Had an unusually good voice for a theologue, and received the German scholarship at graduation. You would remember him if for no other reason on account of his almost phenomenal awkwardness. Well, he was on the Cephalonia coming across, and I fell in with him, and had several interesting talks with him." Dorothy looked up from her reading, and the color deepened in her face as she pictured the two men together. "I found him a very intelligent fellow, and, to tell the truth, not at all like the typical theologue. There was a somewhat tragical affair in the intermediate department, where Kirk was a passenger. A poor woman, the fifth day out, died of consumption, leaving a six months' old baby for the passengers to take care of. Kirk got in the habit of holding the baby a good deal, and the last two days of the trip he used to come out on deck and hold the baby there. Once or twice he sat just below the stairs leading up to the promenade deck, and I had a good chance to get a good sketch of him. I enclose it, thinking you may be interested in a little touch of humour. It is not exaggerated much, and I pride myself on having caught Kirk's attitude pretty well. I showed the sketch to him in order to save myself from a feeling that I had possibly done an unfair thing to take him unawares, and he laughed very good naturedly, and seemed very much amused, without a particle of resent-

ment. He asked me to let him have the sketch, and I drew him another, which he took with evident pleasure. He was a gentleman and will do some good work in his line, but I should think his general appearance would always stand in the way of his advancement in the ministry."

Dorothy spread the sketch out on the table and looked at it. Raleigh had not said too much when he wrote that he had caught Kirk's attitude very well. It was, indeed, a splendid likeness. There was just a little exaggeration to the stubborn brown hair, a little touch of unnecessary grotesqueness to the face, but it was "Malcom Kirk, plain enough," as he used to say of himself. The baby lay in his arms, satisfied and smiling. There were tears in Dorothy's eyes after she had looked a little while. Malcom Kirk's great-hearted love of humanity as it was represented by that helpless bit of it in his long arms somehow appealed to her. She seemed to feel as if there was a world there into which she had never entered, but which she could enjoy with all her eager enthusiasm if once she were introduced to it. She folded up the sketch and carefully laid it away by itself. She did not put it with a collection of drawings which Raleigh had given her when he finished his course of art.

Malcom Kirk went over on the continent, and spent the year in France, Italy, Germany, and even two weeks in Russia. How he lived all that time would make a story in itself. He walked a great deal. Always lodged in the most inexpensive places. Six months after he had been away from home he sent to the president of the seminary a written report of what he had been doing. It was so remarkable in many ways that the president showed it to Mr. Gilbert. The Boston publisher urged its publication. The president wrote that the seminary would assume the expense of publication, and Mr. Gilbert's house printed

the report in a neat pamphlet form that at once attracted attention.

One night of the first issue of the pamphlet Mr. Gilbert brought a copy of it home.

"By the way, Dorothy, you remember that theologue who took the German scholarship, Kirk?"

"Yes," murmured Dorothy, demurely. If Dorothy's mother had been living it is possible she might have told her about Kirk's declaration. Her father was another person. Besides, he had not asked her to be his wife. He had only told her very bluntly that he loved her. That was in one sense his secret, to be kept for him from others.

"Well, here's a bit of work he's been doing abroad. We brought it out to-day. Knowing you have always been interested in this work, I though you might like to look this over."

Her father spoke with his usual precise calmness, and left the pamphlet on the table. The moment supper was ended, Dorothy seized the report and went to her own room.

She read it through as if it had been a fascinating novel. It was written in a simple style that possessed no merit except its simplicity, but it was a record of how humanity lived, and the pathos, the reality, the fact of how it lived, stirred Dorothy Gilbert as her mind and heart had never been stirred. And all through the reading she seemed to see Malcom Kirk with that baby in his arms. She knew that if that sketch had been put in as a frontispiece it would have exactly expressed the contents of the pamphlet. She rose and walked her room, strangely excited. Who was this man to stir her feelings so deeply? Francis Raleigh had never been able to do it. No man, for that matter. All the other men she knew were busy trying to have a good time or win fame or make money. This man was interested in people. He

wanted the world to know and feel for humanity. He was unlike the others. Besides, he loved her. He had her picture. She glowed at the thought. For the first time in her life she trembled at the thought of being loved.

A few days later she read the report again. People in Hermon were talking about it. It had actually stirred the life of the village in some ways. Dorothy placed the sketch of Kirk in the pamphlet and put them away in her desk.

Malcom Kirk finished his year and took passage on one of the French steamers for New York. He had used his money well, but he had so little at the end of the year that he took steerage passage. That was one degree lower than the intermediate, and he smiled a little grimly to himself as he crowded into his noisy, close quarters with French peasants and a colony of Mennonite emigrants. However, it was literally true that he loved people, regardless of their condition, and to many a simple, ignorant soul in the steerage the American clergyman, who somehow was strangely there, became, during the nine days' voyage, a friend and companion from whom they parted with real regret and with loving memory.

He started at once for Hermon. He would have nearly two weeks there to write out his report for the seminary. Then for his home missionary field in Kansas. And Dorothy Gilbert? He had not heard except indirectly anything of her. Once in Berlin he had chanced to meet one of the Hermon professors, who was taking his vacation. From him he had learned that the Gilberts had been spending the summer at the home of Dorothy's aunt in Beverly, and were expected home early in the fall. He wondered if he should see her before he was obliged to go west. The superintendent had written him that the church would be ready for him in September. He took out the miniature. He would be obliged to give it back. Would he? But what possible alternative could

there be? He still loved Dorothy Gilbert. Somehow he felt as if she would be a part of his future as she had been of his past.

He reached Boston in the morning, and took the first train for Hermon. He bought a paper as he entered the train, and as it was moving out of the station he began to read. Among the first items that caught his eye was this:

"The publishing firm of Sydney, Gilbert & Co. assigned yesterday. The company was involved in the recent syndicate failure in the book business. Mr. Gilbert's loss is heavy. It is thought he saved little, if anything, from the failure."

It was simply one item out of a score of others stated in a cold, newspaper style without comment. But it made Malcom Kirk trembled all over. What effect would this have on Dorothy Gilbert? If he, Malcom Kirk, was poor, and Dorothy Gilbert was now somewhat nearer him in condition, what of his love for her now?

He reached Hermon and went at once to the president's house. The president had not come home from his vacation, but was expected the next day. Dorothy and her father were still out of town. He learned that they might return that week. He looked up the steward of the building and secured the key to his old room, where he had been allowed to keep his few books and pieces of furniture until he returned. The room was not very desirable, and had not been occupied by any of the new students.

He went in and opened his curtains and sat down. There across the familiar campus was Dorothy Gilbert's house. He sat there thinking deeply about his future. Then he took out the miniature and laid it lovingly in his great brown palm.

## CHAPTER V.

### MALCOM ATTEMPTS TO RETURN THE MINIATURE.

The next day Malcom Kirk doggedly set to work on his report. In the evening he went over to see the president, and consulted with him as to certain details, and then for the next three days he gave himself up to his task of getting together the great mass of material he had accumulated while abroad.

It was the fourth evening of his return, that he saw the lights in the Gilbert house across the campus, as evening set in. The house had been shut up and dark.

"She is home again," was his first thought. He was unable to work well that evening. The next day he continued, but the evident nearness of Dorothy made him restless to see her. Once she came out on the porch, and he readily recognized her, even at that distance.

That evening he did not pretend to himself that he could do anything worth doing on his report, and resolved to go and return the miniature without waiting any longer. He had kept it more than a year now. He was under promise to give it back. As well now as any time.

He rang the bell with a tremor at heart that instantly bounded into fever when Dorothy herself opened the door.

He stood there in the light of the porch and his trepidation did not hinder his observing that Dorothy looked very pale and even as if she had been crying.

"Won't you come in, Mr. Kirk? I am very glad to see you," said Dorothy. She spoke so easily, so kindly, that he recovered his self-possession at once, and went

into the parlor and sat down, wondering at the commonplace details of his meeting with the one woman in all the world to him.

"You will excuse me for coming so soon after your return?" he said simply.

"Certainly," replied Dorothy, smiling. "Would you like to see father?"

"No," said Malcom Kirk. "I came to see you." It was so evidently true, that Dorothy could say nothing for a moment. There was an awkward silence. She broke it by saying:

"I have read your pamphlet describing the life of the people on the continent in the cities. I thank you, not for the pleasure, but for the pain it gave me."

He looked at her gratefully. He understood exactly what she meant. The opening had been made for talk along the lines of his deepest life, and before he knew just how it had been brought about, he was telling her some of the experiences of his year abroad, things he had told to no one else, and had not even been able to put into his report. All the time he felt the miniature in his pocket. But he seemed to fight against the knowledge that he must give it up.

As for Dorothy, she experienced a feeling of exhilaration in her talk with this man. She was sick of the empty nothings she had been hearing all summer. The recent experience of her father's failure also had excited her. There was much in everything that pervaded Malcom Kirk's life work to attract her at the present moment.

It must have been nearly an hour that they had been talking, she asking questions and he replying, and every minute grew increasingly full of interest to her, when he suddenly stopped as he had done that evening a year before and asked: "Would you—do you feel as if you could play something?"

He was simply battling for time, and he was in a con-

dition where he could not run the risk of speaking something he ought not. The longer he stayed, the deeper he knew his heart longed for Dorothy Gilbert. He felt that while she was playing he might measure his duty and his inclination better.

She was never able to tell herself why she played as she did. She began with the old German Lorelei, "Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten das Ieh so traurig bin," "I know not how it is that I am so sad," and then before she could control her fingers or her thought, she had passed on to the Traumerei, which Kirk had asked her to play before.

When she finished, she hardly knew her own feelings. When she turned about he was standing, and he had the miniature in his hand.

"I promised to return it when I came back," he spoke with great simplicity and, as his fashion always was, looked straight in her face like a man who is not ashamed or afraid. "No one but myself has seen it. The keeping of it has not—."

He hardly dared to trust himself to say what lay within his heart. In truth he knew well enough that he would be a far different man for the rest of his days if he could only have this woman for his wife, but at that moment he felt as if such a possibility was too remote for even thought.

He had walked to the mantel, and was about to put the miniature down in the place where it had been, when a sound in the library startled them both. It was a sound as of some one falling heavily.

"Father!" Dorothy exclaimed in terror. She ran into the hall, but swift as she was, Malcom Kirk was before her. Even as he leaped forward he was conscious that he held the miniature still, and before he reached the library he had mechanically put it into its old resting-place in his pocket.

They found Mr. Gilbert lying on the floor unconscious. Dorothy kneeled on one side of the body, Malcom Kirk on the other, and for a moment there was a wild fear in Dorothy's heart that her father had in some way killed himself. His business failure had been the great humiliation of his life.

Kirk put her mind at rest.

"He has had a shock or stroke of some kind." He lifted the body up, placed it on the lounge and instantly ran out of the house for the doctor, who lived only a few doors away.

When he came, he pronounced the case serious, but gave Dorothy hope. Malcom Kirk came back, but in the excitement he could do nothing but express his sympathy and finally go back to his room, after the president's wife and some others had come in to stay with Dorothy for the night.

Mr. Gilbert had been a typical New England business man of the old school. When his failure came, and he had begun to recover from the first effect of the blow, he had no thought of any other course but to pay dollar for dollar of his honest indebtedness. To do it meant the loss of his beautiful home in Hermon. Dorothy felt as he did about it. He had no fears on her score. The integrity and firmness of such a moral course were never in question with either of them. So he had come back from where he had been staying with his sister, and the night Kirk called he was busy in his library arranging the business of the Hermon property, going over all the details of his recent loss, and making what provision he could for the future. He was nearly fifty-five, and he manfully determined to begin all over again. He could leave Dorothy with her aunt, who was alone much of the time, and needed her at present, and himself struggle into place again with honour untarnished and the good name of the firm free from commercial stain.

So the honest, sturdy publisher thought as he sat at his desk with his papers before him. Then, suddenly, just a little after Dorothy had ceased to play, he felt a new and awful pain seize him, he reeled in his chair, vainly tried to call out for help, and sank unconscious to the floor.

The next few days were days of great anxiety to Malcom Kirk. He could see the doctor's carriage before the Gilbert house every morning. One morning he saw the doctor go up the steps with another man, who entered with him. The doctor's carriage remained in front of the house that day until noon. In the afternoon Kirk called to inquire, and the servant came out at the back porch and told him Mr. Gilbert had been sinking rapidly. A celebrated physician from Boston had been in consultation, and he said there was little hope.

Kirk passed an almost sleepless night, and next morning as he looked across the campus he knew that the woman he loved best was alone with her grief. He could see the wreath of flowers on the door, and it told him at once that John Gilbert had passed on, never more to be vexed with the struggle of the life that now is on the earth.

The week following was one of the most trying that Malcom Kirk ever knew. The funeral of John Gilbert was held in the Seminary chapel, and attended by the professors and townspeople generally. Dorothy's aunt was with her. Kirk had no opportunity to see Dorothy and be to her the comfort he longed to be. It was agony to him, after the funeral was over, to think that there across the campus in the great house was the woman he loved passing through a great sorrow, and he had no right to go to her and share that sorrow with her. He felt as if he could not break in on her grief to speak even of his love. So the days passed restlessly for him, and he tried to work on his report, but made very little real pro-

gress. He laid the miniature on his table, and tried to write with the face looking up at him, but he made no progress at all then, and the close of the week found him walking his room in great uncertainty of heart and mind.

On Monday, the week following, he was obliged to go down to Boston to consult some authorities in Settlement work, and when he came back the next day the Gilbert house was closed, and Dorothy and her aunt had gone to Beverly.

It was the very next day that Kirk saw in a Boston paper the name of Francis Raleigh, arrived a few days before from Liverpool on the Cephalonia. Looking over the columns a little farther down he saw in the local news from Beverly this statement:

"Mr. Francis Raleigh, the Hermon artist, recently arrived from a year's study abroad, is the guest of Mrs. Arthur Penrose, sister of the late John Gilbert."

That was all, but it roused Malcom Kirk to instant action. He knew with all the vigor and intensity of his deep, honest nature that his love for Dorothy Gilbert was now the largest part of his life. He had consecrated his time and strength to the ministry. He did not deceive himself. He knew what such a consecration meant. He faced, open-eyed, the entire meaning of a minister's career in a home missionary church "out west."

But, looking at it all through dispassionate eyes, he said as he walked his study: "She must choose between him and me. I cannot go to my work without speaking to her. My love for her is honest and true, and if God grant that she can love me and share my life with me—"

He left the rest unspoken, and going back to his desk he sat down, trembling a little, as he put his face in his hands and prayed that the hunger of his heart might be satisfied. He had made up his mind to act, and act quickly,

and once he had decided on his course he was free from all doubt as to its wisdom.

He took the afternoon train for Beverly, and reached the place before dusk. Mrs. Penrose lived in one of the handsome summer villas near the sea. The whole place smote Kirk as with a blow aimed at his poverty, his obscurity, his whole future. And yet he said to himself as he walked up the steps that there was something in his life which money and all its attendant elegance could not buy, and he believed that Dorothy Gilbert somehow, if she ever loved any one enough, would feel the same way towards all the outward display of wealth.

The servant who came in answer to his ring said that Miss Gilbert had gone out, and had not yet returned. He at once asked for Mrs. Penrose. When she came in where Kirk was standing, in the reception room, she surprised him by greeting him very warmly by name. He had merely met her at the time of Mr. Gilbert's illness, but not more than once or twice, and then very briefly.

She was a woman of great tact, and she made Kirk feel at ease. She had not the remotest idea that he was in love with Dorothy, or what was the object of his call, and in a few minutes, seeing this, he made up his mind what to do.

"Dorothy is down by the beach with Mr. Raleigh. They will be back for tea. You have met him, Mr. Kirk? I would be pleased to have you stay and take tea with us."

"Thank you. I shall be glad to do so," replied Malcom promptly. All the while he was fast arriving at a determination to tell Mrs. Penrose what he had come for.

"I believe you met Mr. Raleigh while you were abroad? He was telling us something about you this morning?"

"Was he?" said Malcom Kirk quietly. "Yes, I met him on the Cephalonia going over. We had several little visits together. I enjoyed them."

Mrs. Penrose was sitting where she could see, from the reception-room window, the stretch of beach. She looked out and said: "I don't see them coming yet. They will be here soon, I think. You were saying, Mr. Kirk, that you enjoyed meeting Raleigh. Excuse me if I say that he spoke in warmest terms of you. He told us about your care of that poor baby. He wondered what became of it afterwards."

"It's quite a long story," said Kirk, "but pardon me, Mrs. Penrose, if I don't try to tell it now. I want to tell you why I am here. I love your niece, and I am going to ask her to be my wife."

## CHAPTER VI.

### "WHOM GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER, LET NO MAN PUT ASUNDER."

He had come directly to his subject, feeling that it was best so. Mrs. Penrose looked at him in the greatest astonishment.

"You—love—Dorothy?" she said slowly.

"Yes," replied Malcom Kirk, simply. "I have loved her for four years. Ever since I entered the seminary, in fact."

Mrs. Penrose sat still and looked more keenly at the awkward, homely figure in her reception-room. She was a woman of great quickness of perception. To do her justice, she had pre-eminently a large fund of fairness and a sense of justice which came to her through a long line of Pilgrim ancestors. She saw in the man who had just declared his love for her niece so abruptly something more tha a common, average man. There was a look in his eye that spoke of limitless endurance, and his voice was of an unusual quality, very nearly if not quite equal to a rare gift of music or art.

She rose and walked over to the window and looked far down the beach. Then she turned towards Malcom Kirk and said with some emphasis:

"What you have so suddenly told me, Mr. Kirk is, I need not say, a complete surprise to me. I suppose you know that Mr. Raleigh is a lover of Dorothy."

"No more than I am," said Malcom Kirk, quickly.

"I suppose you know he is an old friend of the familly, and that Mr. Gilbert favored his suit?"

"That has nothing to do with my love for her," said Malcom Kirk, softly.

Mrs. Penrose smiled slightly. Then she frowned and looked somewhat anxiously at him.

"What do you expect to do?" she asked somewhat vaguely.

"I am going to ask Dorothy Gilbert to be my wife."

"If she loves you?" said Mrs. Penrose a little grimly.

"Of course, if she loves me," replied Malcom Kirk, simply.

There was silence in the room. A servant came in quietly and lighted two long candles on the mantel. The dusk and the candle light blended together softly, and Malcom Kirk looked out of his side of the room at Dorothy's aunt with a somwhat pale face, calm, however, and fully self-possessed. Even Francis Raleigh, with all his inherited instincts towards gentlemanly habits, was not equal to Malcom Kirk during a supreme crisis.

Mrs. Penrose went over to the window again. Then she returned and took a seat nearer Malcom Kirk.

"Of course, after what you have told me, Mr. Kirk, it will be—you see the awkwardness of the situation—it will be embarrassing for you and Mr. Raleigh to meet."

"Why?" asked Malcom Kirk.

"Well, it will, won't it?" she asked in some slight irritation.

"I don't think so. I have nothing to be embarrassed about."

Mrs. Penrose was silent again. After the lapse of a few moments she said:

"I have not asked you what your prospects are, Mr. Kirk? Pardon me if I seem abrupt, but you have set me the example. I am the nearest relative Dorothy has now, since my brother's death. She has been accustomed all her life to the comforts of wealth. To such comforts as these." Her glance swept the room carelessly, but

with studied meaning. "May I ask what you can offer Dorothy in case—"

"In case she becomes my wife?" said Malcom Kirk, completing the sentence.

"Yes, in case she becomes your wife."

His face had grown a little paler, and the muscles around his mouth had stiffened while Mrs. Penrose was speaking. But he observed her calmly enough.

"I can offer a home and comforts. I have a definite position. I do not need to say that I am poor. My life in the home missionary field to which I am going will be full of hardships. My wife would share them with me. I ought, perhaps, to say"—he spoke with the first hesitation he had yet shown—"that I have a possible source of income in my pen. I expect to earn as much as my salary by that means. I have once or twice done that during my college and seminary course."

"So that the most you can offer my niece would be twelve or fifteen hundred a year?" asked Mrs. Penrose, with the nearest approach to sharpness.

"By no means, madam!" said Malcom Kirk, and his face glowed with the eloquence of his answer. "That is not the most I can offer her. The most I can offer is the love I bear her, and all the money in the world without that would be very little to offer."

"He's right about that," Mrs. Penrose spoke to herself, softly. Malcom Kirk did not hear what she said, but then, at that time he did not know her history nor the inner emptiness of her unloved married life.

There was silence again in the room. The two candles on the mantel were distinct and clear now as the dusk had slowly deepened.

A step came up the path and the door opened. Mrs. Penrose and Malcom Kirk both rose as Dorothy entered the reception-room alone.

She came in with her head erect, and there was light

enough for her aunt and Malcom Kirk to see in her face the tokens of some recent excitement.

"Where is Francis?" Mrs. Penrose asked.

"He is not coming back to-night," replied Dorothy, softly, and then for the first time she saw Malcom Kirk standing there by the fireplace.

She took an eager step towards him, and then suddenly stopped, while her face glowed rosy red in the candle light. As for Malcom Kirk, he stood very erect and still, but out of his eyes shone the lover's look as he faced the woman of his heart's longing. He did not try to conceal it, and Dorothy knew as well as if he had spoken it aloud that he said: "I love you, Dorothy Gilbert, and I cannot do my life's work best without you." Mrs. Penrose saw that look, also, and respected it.

The servant entered and announced that tea was ready, and Malcom Kirk found himself shaking hands with Dorothy and saying some very common thing about being glad to meet her. A few minutes later he found himself at the table with Dorothy and her aunt. He ate and talked at first with a repressed excitement that gradually became a source of eloquent conversation. No one asked any more questions about Francis Raleigh. It is certain that Mrs. Penrose and Malcom Kirk understood that he had pleaded his suit with Dorothy, and had again been unsuccessful.

"She has given him his answer," said Malcom Kirk to himself, and there was the first positive hope in his heart that he had dared to feel. He had never appeared to such good advantage. Mrs. Penrose, experienced as she was in the ways of society and familiar with some of the most brilliant men and women, felt a positive charm in Kirk's voice and manner. His awkwardness for a while was subordinate to his higher gifts.

Mr. Penrose was in New York on business. Malcom Kirk learned afterwards some things in his history, and

why John Gilbert had been allowed to meet his great financial losses without help from his own sister, who, to a large extent, had been powerless to persuade her husband to come to her brother's aid. But he was absorbed tonight in the thought of Dorothy. He knew that a crisis in his life had come.

After tea they went into the reception-room again. Mrs. Penrose stayed for half an hour, and then suddenly went out, and Dorothy and Malcom Kirk were left alone.

He was fully aware that the whole future of his life work would be shaped by the events of the next few minutes, but he had never felt more a Christian than now. There was a positive religious excitement of the highest, purest, noblest character in all the thought of his love for Dorothy. There always had been. He felt that it was no cheap, or silly, or shallow sentiment that moved him to think of her as of no other being in the world. There had not been a night of his life since he began to love her, when he had failed to speak her name in a prayer. He knew that his Christian faith was sanctified and beautified by this human love.

He rose and went over near her. He had the miniature in his hand. When he spoke it was in great simplicity, but in great directness.

"You know what I have come for. You know that I love you wholly. You know what my life will be. You know that I am poor. Dorothy, can you share such a life with me? Must I give this back, or may I keep it always?"

She was sitting with her face partly in shadow, and she slowly rose and turned and faced him. Like all girls who dream of lovers, she had her dreams, her ideals, her imaginings. She looked up at him now, and the blood rushed impetuously through him as he saw the beginning of her answer. She had learned to love him during his absence abroad, during her recent sorrow, during the days

that followed her bereavement. It was not so sudden as it might seem, for Dorothy had learned when Raleigh spoke to her that afternoon that the greatest reason why she could not love him was because she already loved Malcom Kirk. So she gave him then and there what he asked. Ah, Malcom Kirk, not this side of heaven will you know the power of that flood that lifted your heart and all it contained when you first heard the woman you loved say, as she lifted her face to yours, "Yes, I will share your life with you. Yes, I love you."

Two hours later Malcom Kirk went out into the starry night and down on the sea beach, and with the freshness of the sea breeze blowing about his uncovered head, he thanke God for the precious, priceless gift of this woman's heart. They had had much to say, as true lovers always have. Always they had come back to the undying theme of their love for each other. "She loves me!" he kept saying to himself. And the waves, and the night wind, and the stars, and the harbor lights, and the pines near the beach all joined in the same song. He walked up and down the sands until the early morning. He found his face wet once with tears. He ran across a long strip of beach exultant, and waked from one of his reveries to find himself knee deep in water, for the tide was coming in, and he knew nothing of tides, only of the one that had risen in his own spirit.

But he drew back out of the water laughing; and finally found his way to the inn down by the pier, where he had breakfasted. But what he ate, or whether he ate anything, was probably unknown to him, at least he was not able to give Dorothy satisfactory answers when he came back to the house.

His dream was a reality. She met him with the look on her face that was never to die out of it as long as he lived, and together they went in to see Mrs. Penrose.

Dorothy's aunt was somewhat perplexed, and, to tell

the truth, a good deal astonished at the events of the last twenty-four hours. Dorothy had told her all, and there was no question in Mrs. Penrose's mind that the daughter of John Gilbert had made her definite glad choice of this awkward, unhandsome, poor young minister as her future husband. She could not deny that the young man was a gentleman. Also that he had very superior qualities of mind and heart. But the fact remained that he had no prospects except his Home Missionary field and a somewhat uncertain income from occasional writings.

When she pictured Dorothy in a sod house, or a dug-out, or a shanty, in that vague, wild, uncouth place called "out west," living in a parish of plain, uncultured people, such as she placidly took for granted lived on the prairies, Mrs. Penrose felt as if Dorothy's strange choice was the strangest thing she ever knew.

"And yet she loves him truly," she said to herself as Dorothy and Malcom Kirk came in that morning, both of them glorified by the greatest thing in all the world. Dorothy had never looked so beautiful. Kirk had never felt so like a giant in possibility.

Dorothy had anticipated remonstrances and opposition from her aunt. She was surprised and gratified to find how calmly Mrs. Penrose accepted the matter. Even when Malcom Kirk expressed his wish, gravely, but with firmness, that they might be married at once and go together to the new parish to begin their life together, Mrs. Penrose offered no decided objection.

"You are neither of you children," she finally said to Dorothy with a sad smile. "You know your own minds by this time. I want you to be married here in this house, of course. It seems very sudden. But I don't blame Mr. Kirk."

"Of course not," said Malcom Kirk decidedly, as he looked Dorothy in the face.

So it came about that a month later the president of the

seminary faculty came down to Beverly one morning, and Dorothy and Malcom Kirk were married in the presence of a very few of Dorothy's Hermon friends and two of Kirk's classmates, who had been settled over parishes near Boston. Kirk had made all his preparations for leaving. A few days before he was married, the president of the faculty had surprised him with the announcement that the sales of his pamphlet had been set aside by the publishers for the benefit of the seminary, but by unanimous consent the entire amount, something over two hundred dollars, was now at Kirk's disposal. Malcom Kirk was not going to be a penniless bridegroom in any case. He had already received since his return from abroad several checks for writing he had done during his last year in the seminary and while in London. So he was able to start towards the new home with much courage and the knowledge that Dorothy would not miss too many of the old luxuries.

But Dorothy, once she had given her heart to Malcom Kirk, and said to him that she would share his life, entered upon a new and contented experience, such as in all her luxurious life she had never before felt. It is perfectly true that she loved him without condition. She put her hand in his with the trustful confidence of a child, and it is no exaggeration to say that she would have been happy with him anywhere, rich or poor, famous or obscure, successful or defeated.

The train whirled them on into the west. Into the land of the prairies. Into the land of new things, of those vague possibilities that always go with an untried community. And Dorothy every moment felt more and more content. Malcom Kirk satisfied her ideals. His noble nature was continually revealing to her new phases of his Christian purpose. He had enthusiasm, and he was the only man who had ever been able to kindle hers. The thought that they were to work together filled her with a

heavenly delight. She rejoiced in his strength, his manhood, his inward life.

As for Malcom Kirk, he was transformed by all that he now possessed. His poor Home Missionary church became to his thought a gigantic engine of power, with this glorious woman now his wife, who was to be by his side henceforth. He trembled at the extent of such a love and consecrated it every moment to the infinite eternal life that belongs both to this world and to that which is to come.

They reached their journey's end at the close of a day, and entered the town by night. There was quite a little gathering at the station, curious to see the new minister, and the superintendent himself, who happened that week to be in that part of the state, was present to welcome them and introduce them to a little handful of their parishioners.

There was a parsonage, a furnished house of five rooms close by the church. A supper was ready for them. A little company came in afterwards to greet them, and the people seemed to be truly glad to see them. The sight of Dorothy's beauty astonished them all. She was a little amused at the evident look of disappointment with which everyone first saw her husband.

"When they know him they will love him," she said to herself with unfaltering trust in his victory over them.

She came out on the porch with him after all the members had gone away, and together they tried to get some idea of the place which was to be their home. The night was starry and the prairie vastness impressive to them. They had never either of them lived outside of a hill country.

"How large did you say the town was, Malcom?"

"About fifteen hundred people, so the superintendent says."

"How many church members are there?"

"Fifty-seven on the roll. About forty living here."

"Can't we go over and look into the church? I am curious to see it," said Dorothy. She spoke in such a glad, happy voice that Malcom Kirk, as he stood there with his arm about her, said, "You are happy, little woman, aren't you?"

"Can you ask?" she replied, and he was satisfied. One of the trustees had left a church key with him. They walked across the parsonage yard, taking a lamp from the house with them, and together they went in.

It was a small room, with seats for about one hundred and fifty. A small class-room in the rear and a choir railing in front of the organ, which was in a little recess at one side of the platform.

Malcom Kirk set the lamp down on the pulpit and with his wife stood looking over the room.

"My dear," said Dorothy, nestling up close to him, "Do you think we two can help to 'bring in the kingdom,' as you say, into this town?"

Malcom Kirk looked at the room, at his pulpit where he was to preach, and at his wife, and he fully understood what Dorothy meant.

"Do you mean that we will see how much two people can do to make heaven on earth for fifteen hundred other people?"

"Yes, and whether in our life-time we can redeem whatever is evil here and give it back to God."

"We will do it by His grace," said Malcom Kirk, gravely. It seemed to him almost as if they two, there in their little church, had made a solemn promise to redeem the souls of all the lost in Conrad. They passed out of the church with the same feeling deep in their souls. Their hearts kindled at their opportunity. And in the infinite places of the heavenly hosts, good and evil, God and the devil noted the entrance of these two children of light into that lawless, unchristian town of twenty-five years ago, and from what at once began to be there it seemed within

the reach of a tremendous reality that heaven and hell began to struggle for a supremacy marked by events which will leave their record in the Book of Life with startling clearness. For these two Christians had entered the arena of the great human battle for victory over the world, and the two greatest forces in the universe now began to test their powers as they had never yet been tested in that place.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

Nearly three years after Malcom Kirk and his wife had made their promise in this little Home Missionary Church of Conrad, one evening in September a stranger stepped out of the east-bound Chicago express upon the platform at Conrad, and enquired for the residence of the Rev. Malcom Kirk.

"He lives up by the church," said the man to whom the question was put. "Come out to the end of the platform and I'll show you."

The stranger followed, and the man pointed up the street where the tower of the little church could be seen.

"You'll find him in the parsonage close by, at the right of the church."

The stranger thanked him and started down the platform steps, when the man called after him.

"They're having trouble at the minister's house. I thought if you didn't know I ought to tell you. They have a very sick baby there."

The stranger paused and looked uncertainly at the man.

"I won't go there, then, if I ought not. I am one of Mr. Kirk's old seminary classmates. I stopped off on my way home from Colorado, where I have been taking my vacation. Perhaps I had better not call there to-night. I didn't know of his trouble. Do you know how sick the baby is?"

"No. It's serious. The doctor has been there nearly all day."

The stranger hesitated, and finally moved on towards the parsonage.

"I will simply stop and enquire at the house, and then go to the hotel," he said to himself.

When he knocked at the little parsonage, Dorothy herself opened the door.

"This is Mrs. Kirk? I am Mr. Wilson, one of Mr. Kirk's classmates at Hermon. You remember me? I was on my way from Colorado and stopped off to see him. I just heard of the illness of your baby. I—"

"Come in, Mr. Wilson, I know Malcom will want to see you," she said, and he entered with some reluctance to intrude at such a time, but her manner assured him that his presence was grateful to them.

Three years had made some changes in Dorothy. She was very beautiful still, and there was something more in the face which God's children always have after trial and suffering have purged the life within. Wilson noted in a glance the simple furnishings of the room, the unmistakeable sign of economy.

He was struck, also, with the profound atmosphere of the first great trouble that had come into this woman's home. It was so positive that he felt unable to say anything commonplace by way of sympathy.

In the next room Malcom Kirk was walking up and down with his baby in his arms. The day had been very hot, and the upper chambers of the little house were stifling.

The Rev. George Wilson will never forget that sight this side the deathless paradise that all of the redeemed shall sometime enjoy. When Malcom Kirk turned and came towards the door where his wife and Wilson were standing, his classmate saw on his face a look of suffering which the strong, homely, marked features emphasized.

For three weeks he had hardly closed his eyes.

He had prayed, his wife beside him, every night, on his

knees by the little crib, that their first-born son might be spared to them. But to-night, as the baby lay in his arms, he knew that the loving Father had some great reason unknown to them for taking to Himself this bit of humanity that for a few months had made the little parsonage on the prairie the very garden spot of all the world to them.

Dorothy, without a word, took the baby from her husband, and he, without a word, clasped his old classmate's hand, and the men stood there a moment praying.

"It's you, George?" said Kirk. "It seems good to see your face. We—"

Malcom Kirk sat down and buried his face in his great hands and sobbed. It was the first time he had broken down in the presence of Dorothy. The sight of his old classmate had revived his Hermon memories. He saw again the old campus, its great avenues of elms, the noble landscape of hills and woods, Dorothy's home across the campus, his own dingy little room, his love for the woman who now was sharing this great trouble with him. And he cried, without attempt at concealment. For his heart was sore at the coming loss of the baby out of a home where God Himself had blessed the love of man and wife as rarely in human lives it has been blessed.

Finally he lifted up his face and spoke calmly.

"We've hoped all along, of course, but the long continued heat has been against his recovery. It's hard to part with the little fellow. See—" Malcom Kirk rose and took the baby again from his wife, while Dorothy sat down near a table and laid her beautiful head on her arms, but still she was without a tear. "See, the little fellow smiles at me still."

The baby opened his eyes, looked up into Malcom Kirk's gaunt, agonized countenance and a faint light went over its face.

"Malcom, oh, Malcom!" cried Dorothy. "I can't endure it!"

It was the first protest that had escaped her. Like him, the presence of this friend from the old loved place in the east, had stirred her heart, and even as she cried aloud in her anguish, the pent-up tears came, and she cried in sobs that rent her husband's heart even more than the baby's sad smile.

Wilson choked as he rose to go, and said, "Kirk, may God bless and help you at this time. I would stay and watch with you, or help in any way—"

"No, it will not be necessary. The neighbors and church people have been very kind to us. No one can do any more."

He went away to the hotel, promising to come in the morning to enquire, and the night grew on for Malcom and Dorothy. The doctor came in, a few of the most intimate church members, also, but no one could do any more, and Malcom Kirk held the baby with a tenderness that relieved its sufferings, for they had not been able to place its body in a restful positon on a bed, and it had grown used to its cradle of long, strong arms.

It was towards morning, when no one was in the room except Malcom and Dorothy, that the baby died. It seemed to these two as they watched it go, that their hearts broke, and the world turned black and empty before them, when the last breath was drawn by that frail, trembling body. For a little while Malcom held him. Then he laid the body down on a couch, and kneeling there, with his arms about his wife, he joined with her in a moment of unspeakable anguish for the death of their first-born.

The sun came up dry and red, the heat of another day began to pour into the little room, and it seemed to the bereaved parents as if the earth was a great, dry, burned-up wilderness. The neighbors called. Wilson came, and his presence and silent sympathy were a blessing to Malcom and Dorothy. But when, later in the day, the baby

had been laid in the little coffin and placed in the center of the room with a bunch of white geraniums on its breast, brought in by the members of Dorothy's primary Sunday School class, Dorothy laid her head down on the table beside the casket, and her grief was very, very great. Malcom stood beside her, looking hungrily at his baby's face, and the people in the little room quietly went out and left them alone for a while.

Next day Wilson read the funeral service and prayed at the house, and after the simple service a little company went with Malcom and Dorothy to the cemetery just on the edge of the town, and the baby was buried there, and these children of the All Father went back to the little parsonage.

It was a great blessing to them at this time that Wilson was with them. He, seeing how they clung to his presence, stayed over Sunday and preached for Malcom. It was during this stay that he learned something of what Malcom and Dorothy had been doing. A short extract from a letter written by him to his wife in the east will show us something of the first three years of Malcom Kirk and his wife's attempt to make good their pledge to help redeem the lives of the people of Conrad.

"I cannot tell you what a profound sense of sympathy I have felt for my old classmate and his wife during their great trouble, but I am simply astonished to find how great a work they have done in the three years they have been here. This is a place of about two thousand people. It is having a boom at the present time.

"The agitation over the saloon is increasing, and I am told by Kirk and others that things are nearing a crisis, and in all likelihood the next legislature will pass a prohibitory amendment. The liquor men laugh at this probability, and scout the idea that such a law can ever be passed. There are ten saloons here in Conrad, and all apparently flourishing. Among other things that the

whisky has attempted during Kirk's stay here has been to antagonize the business men in his church against Kirk, with some success. Kirk's wife has been a great help to him. I think I never knew a more happy union of workers in all my life. She has been the organist and the leader in Sunday School work, and her social influence in the town is very strong. The church membership has grown from forty odd to over one hundred, and Kirk has managed to gain a hold on a large group of young men, I think largely on account of their admiration for his unusual muscular development. I think it is probably true, from what I feel and hear, that already the influence of Kirk and his wife and their little church in this wild western town is the strongest influence that ever entered the place. They are very much broken up by the loss of their baby. It has been a tremendous disappointment to them. I am very anxious for them, as I think of what the result may be on their future work. The pay of a home missionary out here is very small, and for some reason Kirk has not been able to make much with his writing. I cannot help asking myself how the loss of their baby will affect their whole work here. Mrs. Kirk seems to be stunned by the blow. I shall leave here Monday, and my greatest regret is that I cannot be of more help to my old classmate. He is at a crisis in his career, and everything depends on the way he accepts this death of his baby."

This is only a fragment of Wilson's letter, but the number of times he referred to the death of the baby as marking a crisis in the lives of Malcom and Dorothy revealed the depth of the impression made upon his mind by the manner in which they were affected by their loss.

He went away on the morning train, and Malcom, who had gone to the station to see him off, came slowly back to the parsonage and went into the little room next the kitchen which he had fitted up for a study.

Dorothy was at work in the kitchen, and Malcom sat down at his study table and looked out of the window across the prairie. It was unfortunate that he could see in the distance the little cemetery from that window. He finally rose and drew the curtain close down, and went back to his desk. He took up his pen and dipped it in the ink, and then sat there, thinking, thinking, of his baby. He recalled every little look, its smile, its new habits, added day by day. His heart swelled at the thought of all that he had dreamed for his boy's future. Was God good? Was it true, this gospel of comfort he had been preaching these three years? Why, then, was he not comforted? The baby had died Thursday night.

Three days now, and yet the world expected him to go on with his work, write sermons, make calls, attend to the thousand little details that must be remembered or someone would notice and begin to complain. How could he take up the burden of life and carry it? How could he regain his old enthusiasm or help Dorothy? Were they not both smitten to the dust by this heart loss? He found himself saying all this, and even half fearfully asking himself if Dorothy had not made a mistake to share her life with him. What could he offer her? What career was possible for them now in this little place?

The ink had dried on his pen, and he sat there holding it, unable to write a word. Dorothy had gone out to the well, and when he missed her step in the kitchen and glanced out of the other window to see her, she was sitting on a bench he had built under the cottonwood in the yard, the only tree in the place. She had left her pail at the well and sat there looking [illegible] towards the little knoll which he had shut out of sight when he drew down his curtain.

He sat down with a groan, and for a moment the world seemed utterly empty and useless to him. He had sat there for a long time, feeling all the while that his place

was by his wife's side to comfort her, but hesitating for the first time since their marriage as to the right thing to do or say, when a knock at the door roused him. He knew someone must have knocked several times. He went through the sitting-room and opened the door.

A little, old woman stood close up to the door, and a farm wagon and horse were out in front of the fence.

"You don't remember me, Mr. Kirk?" said the little woman, in a voice so thin and feeble that Malcom was instantly reminded of a cat he had made in the spring on a family living on what was called "The Forks," eight miles from Conrad, in a very desolate ravine between two ridges of land that formed almost the only hill country for miles around.

"Yes, I do," he replied; "it is Mrs. Barton, isn't it?"

The woman's face lighted up faintly.

"Yes; and I'm in trouble, great trouble, Mr. Kirk, and I want you to help me."

Malcom stared at the shabby, dusty, worn-out figure, and instantly it flashed into him that she had probably not heard yet that his baby was dead. Her next words told him that was the fact.

"I've come straight here from home. My boy, Mr. Kirk, have you seen him? He left the farm Saturday with the double team and a load of hay. I haven't seen him since. I know he is in some saloon, drinking or drunk, and the money for the hay all spent. Oh, Mr. Kirk, for God's sake help me to find him and get him home again! For the love of your own baby that you expect to grow up into a good Christian man to comfort and bless you, help me to get my boy out of this hell and save him, for my heart is broken when I think of how he was once as innocent and happy as your own baby."

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE BEST SOLACE FOR OUR OWN GRIEF IS TO LIGHTEN THE SORROWS OF OTHERS.

For a few moments Malcom Kirk experienced a feeling of anguish on his own account that shut out entirely this other forlorn and bleeding heart. Then there sprang up in his soul a most tremendous and overpowering revolution of feeling. He said to a very dear friend several years afterwards, that as he stood there on the threshold of his parsonage, with the hot, dusty glare of that withering day smiting him and the figure of that old woman on the doorstep, he knew that perhaps the most important event in his own inner experience was taking place. For this appeal for help, this cry to him to share a burden while his own seemed greater than he could bear, revealed to him the Christ life in our human lives, and the glory of overcoming the world for His sake. Certain it is that as Malcom Kirk stood there that morning his soul felt the touch of a healing and beneficent love, and he looked at his life again as worth while and then began already to know that the fire of this own sorrow was destined to make him more serviceable to others.

What he actually did the next minute after all this was to ask Mrs. Barton to come into the house. He took her into his study, and then, after a single moment of hesitation, he went out into the back yard to Dorothy.

She was still sitting on the bench, dry-eyed and oblivious of everything around her, living over the last three days. Malcom came up and put his hand on her shoulder.

"Dear," he said very gently, "will you come with me

into the house? There is someone there who has come to see me, to see us both."

She did not know what he meant, or hardly what he said, but she rose and went into the house with him.

"Mrs. Barton, this is Mrs. Kirk. I want you to tell her what you have told me."

The little woman could see that something unusual had happened at the parsonage, but her own trouble practically absorbed her feelings. She looked at Dorothy, however, with the admiration which her beauty of face often excited in what we call ordinary people.

"Oh, ma'am," she cried, "I've come to see if Mr. Kirk won't help me to get my boy home again. He's been drinking. I live in a lonesome place, at 'The Forks,' and I don't very often come to town, but I have heard of your husband, and they say people all around have gone to him for help, and I know he will do what he can for me. My boy will be twenty-one next week. I told your husband that some day your baby would grow up into a good Christian man, to comfort and bless you. That's what I hoped and prayed my boy would do. And he might, if the saloon had not tempted him."

She was going on, for her heart was full of her trouble, when the look on Dorothy's face stopped her.

"Don't you know, has not Mr. Kirk told you, that our baby—our baby—died last week?"

The little heart-broken woman looked at Dorothy in astonishment. There was nothing refined or sweet about her, but God gave her the right word to say at that particular time. She rose and with her hands clasped, walked over near Dorothy. Malcom never forgot that sight. "Oh, Mrs. Kirk, may God help you! Forgive me! I have not been to town for several weeks. I did not see the paper last week at all. The last time I knew anything of your baby he was well and happy. I would never have come with my trouble if I had known yours." She paused

for a moment, while two tears ran down over her thin cheeks. Dorothy began to sob. She had not cried before since that day when the baby was laid in its coffin. Not even at the grave.

"Oh, ma'am," Mrs. Barton went on, "your baby will never be a drunkard. My husband was. We lost a good farm back in Ohio on account of the drink, and then my husband died, and I took the boy and came out here. I went purposely to a lonesome place to keep my boy from the town. I may have made a mistake, but I did the best I knew, and I feared for him on account of his father. Oh, ma'am, your heart is sore, I know it, but it's not as sore as mine, for your baby never broke your heart. I would sooner see my boy in his coffin than see him as I have many a time during the past two years. There's trouble and trouble. May God help us to bear our own. But your baby's safe now. How can I tell if mine ever will be?"

She spoke the last words in such a tone of hopeless sadness that Dorothy lifted up her head and looked at her.

"Don't say that!" she said, and the tears flowed down her face faster. They were merciful tears. Her heart, which had been fast bound within her, as if it would burst, felt the first relief she had known. God was leading her. She still did not know that what Malcom had experienced had come to her also. But the lonely, stricken woman in the little study, representing so much human sorrow of a kind that neither Dorothy nor Malcom knew, had touched her. She, also, was able to say to her husband years afterwards that she felt as if the coming of that other burden into their own heavy-hearted lives was a part of the loving Father's plan for their victory in overcoming the world, the world of what might have grown to be a very selfish sorrow.

What happened, all that was said in that little study room after that, is not easy to tell. But when Mrs. Bar-

ton went out, Malcom Kirk went with her. Dorothy went into her own little room and prayed, and there was that in her prayer that revealed to her the loving Father. For the first time she saw her baby surrounded by the Infinite love, and when she came back to her work in the kitchen there was hope, immortal hope, and a large measure of the peace of Christ in her heart.

Malcom Kirk got into the farm wagon with Mrs. Barton and they drove to the main business street of Conrad.

"Now, Mrs. Barton," Malcom had said, "if you will wait outside, I'll go into the saloons and see if I can find your boy. While I'm looking, you might question passers-by, and ask them is they have seen the hay wagon and horses anywhere."

She thanked him gratefully, and he noted that even in the burning sun her thin, sorrowful figure trembled and shivered and her lips quivered as if she were cold. His compassion for her motherhood increased every moment.

"God help her," he said as he stepped down out of the wagon. "This boy is one of the lost ones in this town that Dorothy and I pledged ourselves three years ago to rescue. Heaven give me strength and wisdom to make that promise good."

He had never been inside of a saloon in his life. He shrank from the ordeal before him, with all the shuddering of a highly sensitive spirit in the presence of an ugly, repulsive, hideous evil. But he went at once into the first saloon on the main street and stopped inside near the door and looked around him.

It was not yet ten o'clock in the morning, but there were a dozen men and boys in the room, which was quite large, seated with stools, and furnished with small, round tables.

At first his entrance attracted no attention. A few of the men were lounging at the bar. The rest were seated at the tables. But as he remained by the door, two or

three of those nearest him turned and looked at him. One of the men was a laborer who had several times been employed by Malcom in odd jobs about the house.

Instantly Kirk walked over to him and held out his hand. "Carver, do you know Mrs. Barton's boy? Philip is his name. She is looking for him. He left home Saturday, and she is sure he is in one of the saloons somewhere."

The man looked very much embarrassed. He shuffled his feet nervously in the dirty sawdust under the table.

"I saw him yesterday. He was in Valmer's place in the next block."

"Thank you," said Malcom, slowly. "Can any of you gentlemen tell me anything about him? Has anyone seen him to-day?"

No one answered, and there was a painful silence. The barkeeper, who had been eyeing Kirk, suddenly broke the silence by saying with a short laugh.

"You won't find him here. I won't say he hasn't been here. He knows a good thing when he sees it. Won't you step up and take a glass of iced beer this morning? We keep the best in the town on tap for preachers."

There was a laugh from one or two of the men nearest the speaker, but Malcom simply looked him in the face without a word. He then laid his hand on Carver's shoulder and said softly:

"I'm sorry to see you here, Carver. You promised me you would quit it."

The man writhed in his seat, but did not say a word. Kirk looked at him sorrowfully.

"Come, Carver, come out of this. I'll give you something to do. Don't lose your soul in this place."

"Say," said the barkeeper, who had been leaning with his elbows on the bar listening, as had also every other man in the saloon, "you leave my customers alone, will you, and mind your own business."

"That's just what I am doing," replied Kirk, earnestly, and as he spoke his pale blue eyes filled with a high, white light. "It's my business to destroy your business. Man, do you know that just outside that door is a mother's broken heart that you have helped to break? And hers is only one out of thousands all over the world. Mind my own business! It is exactly what I intend to do, until every hell like this is wiped out of this town."

He spoke very quietly, almost softly, his voice did not declaim, but the unusual quality of it thrilled everybody there. He looked into their faces a moment and, with a last appealing look at Carver, he turned and went out.

"Whew!" said the barkeeper. "First sermon ever delivered here. Score one for Parson Kirk!"

The other men did not respond with much enthusiasm. Carver had risen from the table.

"Better have one before you go," said the saloonkeeper.

"I won't drink again to-day," Carver retorted with an oath that was a curse. He staggered to the door and went out into the glare of the hot, withering sun. Down the street he could see Kirk just entering Valmer's place.

"I'm half a mind to help Mr. Kirk hunt for the boy," Carver muttered. He hesitated for a moment, and then went on down the street, following the minister.

That forenoon Malcom Kirk went into every saloon in Conrad, but he failed to get any trace of the missing boy. Always behind him, unknown to him, Carver staggered. In two or three saloons the man was unable to resist the invitation to drink, but he managed to keep just sober enough to know where Kirk was and to follow him.

The sights that greeted Malcom in the saloons were never forgotten by him. He was astonished to see the number of men and boys gathered in the saloons. Many of the faces he knew, and his entrance invariably created a distinct embarrassment through the company. The ma-

jority of customers, however, seemed, from their dress and talk, to be composed of farmers, young men from the ranches outlying Conrad. Malcom was simply appalled when he thought of what such a fact meant.

He said to himself every time he came out and faced the dumbly-appealing face in the farm wagon, "And yet we, Christian people, license these enemies of the race and allow them to continue their devilish work, although we know well enough how devilish it is. May God help us as a state to declare against it by statute as well as by prayers and sermons." He lived, as did every temperance man in Kansas at that time, in the great hope that the day was not far off when the saloon would be declared outlaw, but how near that day was not even he was able to predict.

It was nearly noon when he finished his tour of the saloons, and as he came out near the lower end of the main street there was a large group of men standing there looking off across the prairie and talking eagerly together. The wind had risen and was blowing almost a gale, carrying great clouds of dust through the town, and off as far as men could see there was a column of smoke spreading out with great rapidity.

"The prairie fires have started early," Kirk thought, but it was only when one of the ranchmen in the street spoke that he realized what the fires might mean.

"If this wind keeps up, this town will have its hands full in about an hour."

The speaker ran to his horse, jumped on it and was soon galloping out of the town towards one of the new ranches in the direction of "The Forks."

"Mrs. Barton, it is possible that your boy has gone home since you left."

"Yes, yes," cried the woman, snatching at any hope. "I will go back. If the fire should come into 'The Forks' I ought to be there to see that my other boy has

help in getting the stock behind the fire guards. We ploughed ours early this year on account of the dry weather. We lost all our hay-stacks one September from fires."

She drove out of town, after thanking Kirk earnestly for all that he had done, and Malcom promised to continue the search after dinner.

He was just starting home, after asking several men if there was really any immediate danger to the town from the fires, when through the dust, racing in from the prairie, came a team of powerful farm horses drawing an empty hay wagon. The lines were trailing on the ground and the harness was broken, and as they rushed by someone shouted, "That's Phil Barton's team."

A little farther down the street the horses were caught and stopped.

Kirk ran up with a crowd of other men.

"No sign of Phil Barton," said one of the men who had helped catch the team.

"He's probably been thrown out somewhere."

"Drunken men never get killed."

"I wouldn't give much for his chances if he fell off in the gully grass over there," said another, pointing towards the district from which the horses had come into the town.

Malcom's mind was in a whirl.

"He may be near by. We ought not to leave him without looking for him."

As he spoke, he heard the boy's mother saying as she faced Dorothy in the study, "My boy may never be saved."

"We've got our hands full looking after the town. We might as well face that fact. No rain for two months, water all out of cisterns and low in wells, and that fire coming down on us forty miles an hour," said one of the business men.

Kirk looked around him. The citizens were coming out of the stores and houses, and the whole town was roused to face and fight the coming danger. For it was true, unless the wind changed or died down, Conrad was threatened with the fate which that year befell more than one ranch and settlement.

"I believe Dorothy would tell me to go," he said to himself. Then he spoke aloud. "I don't feel like giving young Barton up if he is anywhere near. We can perhaps reach him before the fire reaches us. Who will go with me?"

"I will," said Carver, who was at Malcom's elbow.

"Come on, then," Malcom cried. And together the two men started on a run in the direction from which the horses had come in.

"Was Barton a friend of yours?" asked Carver, as he panted by the side of the minister.

"No, I only knew him slightly."

"What are you trying to find him for?"

"For his mother."

The men ran on. Over on the near horizon a line of flame and smoke over twenty-five miles long marched down towards them and the town of Conrad, with a prairie gale behind it, and human love and courage in its path.

## CHAPTER IX.

### KIRK PREVENTS A LYNCHING.

As Malcom Kirk and Carver ran on, directly in the face of that wild line of fire and smoke, there was only one supreme thought in the mind of Malcom. He saw the boy's mother, and while he ran he heard her voice as she had appealed to him in his study.

Instinctively, the two men bore off from the road over which the horses had entered the town, towards a swale where the grass and rosin weeds grew deep, and it was but a few feet from the beaten track of the prairie road that they saw the body of Philip Barton, lying face downwards, the hands clinched, and holding tightly to a broken piece of the lines of the harness.

No time then to stop and ask whether he were living, but up with him between them, and back to the town with all the power of their pulsing manhood.

Carver was entirely sober now. He was naturally a man of great muscular endurance. Malcom had kept up his physical training in his work with the young men in the chur h.

Not a word was said. They realized that the time was short, and they ran with their unconscious heavy burden between them.

Meanwhile, men, women and children had organized in a desperate effort to save the town. There was one fact in their favor. It had been the custom for those living on the edge of the town to picket their animals out on the prairie near by. The grass was cropped short on this account. Under any ordinary circumstances this fact would have insured safety from any usual fire. But the

whole prairie was aflame, everything was as dry as two months of drought and hot winds could make it, and water, for a long time, had been very scarce in wells and cisterns. Back of all that advancing line of fire was a prairie gale that shot the flames straight forward, and old settlers, some of whom had seen the great fires in Dakota in the early sixties, looked at the sight now before them with grave faces.

Dorothy came to the door of the parsonage, stood there a moment, and then ran, with other women, her neighbors, down to the main street.

Bucket lines were being formed from all the wells and cisterns that were available. She instantly joined with the others in handing the water. A large company of men, armed with wet cloths to whip out the fire, began to form as far from the houses as they dared. It was too late now to plow fire-breaks, and too windy to make a back fire. The only hope that any one had was that the shortness of the grass near the town would check the fury of the advancing whirlwind of flame.

"Have you seen Mr. Kirk?" Dorothy asked as she first joined the others. And they told her. Her face blanched, and her lips breathed a prayer as she worked on silently. She knew that he whom she never loved as she loved him at that moment was in the line of duty, and she would not have called him back from it. But her heart cried out for help, and she agonized for him whom her soul dearly loved.

Down came the great wall of fire and smoke. The hot air scorched the faces of the fire-fighters. Dim figures out on the advance line were seen desperately struggling with the element. The town was enveloped in smoke and burned-out ashes of prairie grass that sifted over the workers until the faces and hands of all were black and grimy. Scores of men rushed upon the fire line as it came on, checked some by the short grass, and stamped out

the flame with their feet, with rags, with old brooms, with pieces of carpeting and bedding torn from their own houses. The outstanding line of fighters was forced back, burned and exhausted, but the fire had been checked, and as it broke out in new places, fresh groups threw themselves upon it and fought for the life of the town.

Dorothy could not remember how she came to be with the fighters on the prairie, instead of with the water-carriers, but it was undoubtedly her anxiety for Malcom's safety that urged her out towards the fire. Her dress had caught on fire and been put out several times. Some one had thrown water over her, but she had hardly known it. She worked with all the others in a silent frenzy. Suddenly she was conscious of a tall, awkward figure near her, looming up through the smoke, threshing at the fire with powerful energy, a very incarnation of resistance and stubborn refusal to surrender.

"Malcom!" she cried, and, faint as she was, she felt new life at the sight of him.

"Dorothy! Thank God! We got back with him just in time."

There was no time to say more. The danger was still great. Near together now, husband and wife fought on. The citizens of Conrad afterwards bore witness to the way in which they fought.

"Say, did you see Mr. Kirk?" A group of men at the postoffice, several days after the great fire, were talking it over.

"These New England folks beat every other kind when it comes to never giving up."

"Yes, or fighting the devil. Our minister beats all the rest at that," said Carver, who spoke of Kirk as "Our Minister," although he had never been a member of any church, and rarely went to hear even Malcom preach. But it was a tribute to the hold Malcom had secured on

such men that they appropriated him somehow to themselves, or to the best that was struggling in them.

It was nearly the middle of the afternoon of that eventful day that the people of Conrad, exhausted, burned, blackened, saw the great danger pass around them, and the galloping whirlwind thundered off beyond the town, leaving a mighty and desolate expanse of black and smoldering prairie behind it.

Then it was that the severest trial of all came to Malcom and Dorothy.

They had gone into the house of one of their parishioners, where the body of Philip Barton had been carried. He was living, but had received some injuries from falling out of the waggon, probably, when the team ran away.

They had come out of the house, and were on their way home, when some one in the street suddenly clutched Malcom's arm, and, pointing through the smoke, cried:

"Look there! The church is on fire!"

The church and parsonage stood at the opposite end of the town from the prairie fire, and the danger had been the least in that quarter. That part of the town had been entirely deserted while the fight had been going on at the other end.

"If the church goes, the parsonage will go, too," thought Malcom, as he and Dorothy ran through the street.

When they reached the parsonage the roof had already caught from a flying timber blown off the church tower. The water of the town was exhausted. The well in the parsonage yard was already nearly empty. Malcom rushed into the house, and by desperate work, helped by several other men, succeeded in carrying out some furniture and a few of his books.

One of the boxes in Dorothy's room was blazing as he carried it out and threw it over, and a pile of papers in a portfolio was scattered. Dorothy, as she worked

helping carry some pieces of furniture to a place of safety, felt something blow against her face, and, putting up her hand, she caught a piece of paper.

Even in the excitement she saw what it was. It was the sketch that Francis Raleigh had drawn on board the Cephalonia three years before, the sketch of Malcom holding the baby. Dorothy sobbed as she saw what it was. Her own baby! And now their home and nearly all the things they counted dear!

It was over soon, and in a little while the church and parsonage, the work of many a weary struggle for their little company of disciples, were dreary heaps of ruin. A hard fight on the part of the worn-out citizens had kept the other houses from being burned. The church and parsonage had stood in a large lot by themselves.

"After all," said Malcom, when it was all over, as he sat down by Dorothy on a trunk, while a little group of neighbors stood by discussing the incidents of the fire, "After all, dear, we have a good deal to be thankful for."

"Yes," said Dorothy, with a smile. It was a little hard for her, as she sat there, to imagine that Dorothy Gilbert, who, once back in the old New England home, had been noted for the elegance and refinement of all her ways and surroundings. Nothing but the great love she bore the man who had asked her to share his life now made her insensible to that former life before she was married.

Malcom Kirk sat there gazing at the ruins of his home and his church, and deep down in his heart there was a mighty conflict going on. He had lost his books, nearly all that were of value, and the other losses were great. He was blackened and burned, his clothes hung in ragged rents about him, his great fists were bleeding, and here, beside him, was the woman who had left all, for—what? To share such privations, dangers, losses?

For a moment he hardly heard what some of his par-

ishioners were saying. They had been talking excitedly together.

"Mr. Kirk, we are of the opinion that this fire was incendiary."

"How is that?" asked Malcom, rousing up a little.

"The first seen of it was in the tower. Now, the fire from the prairie could not possibly have caught up there. Some one must have set it."

Then different ones began to whisper their suspicions.

The next day, while Malcom and Dorothy were staying with one of the church members, who took them into his home, the rumor grew that the fire was the work of the whisky men.

Down on the street excited groups of men gathered that evening discussing the matter. Everyone knew that Malcom Kirk had fought the saloons from the first day of his entrance into Conrad. He was feared and hated by them more than any one else. He had succeeded, to a large degree, in getting the other churches to act together in the agitation now going on all over the state. He was already noted for his leadership throughout the county, and had written and spoken on every possible occasion for the proposed prohibitory amendment.

So there was reason in the suspicion held by the citizens. As the evening wore on proof of a certain saloon man's guilt seemed almost sure. Two or three persons had seen him coming out of the parsonage yard that afternoon of the fire. A child had seen the same man on the steps of the church a few minutes after Dorothy had left the parsonage.

It was now 10 o'clock. The crowd at the corner by the postoffice grew every minute larger and more threatening. Groups of men stood surrounding some speaker, who urged lynching as the only satisfactory punishment for such a crime. The citizens were exasperated and nervous from the great strain of the last two days.

Malcom Kirk came down town late that night to get the mail from the east-bound express, and walked into the mob just as cries of "Lynch the fire-bug!" rose from many voices. As soon as the crowd saw him, it surrounded him, excitedly.

"Mr. Kirk, we've proof that 'Big Jake' set fire to your church."

Malcom looked over the crowd a moment in silence. He had not been thinking so much about the loss of his church and parsonage as he came down town as about Dorothy and his future prospects. But the sight and sound of that mob of citizens brought his mind back to the situation, not only in the town of Conrad, but throughout the entire state. For the time, therefore, he let his own personal plans go, as he faced the fact of a grave crisis in the temperance movement.

He had, more than one Sunday evening, held out-door services at the very corner where the crowd now gathered.

Dorothy had often helped him at such services by playing and singing. Every man in Conrad was familiar with the tall, homely, awkward figure that now towered over almost every other head, and every man in Conrad respected him.

There was an empty dry goods box near one of the stores, and Malcom Kirk asked some of the men to drag it out to the corner of the sidewalk. The minute he had mounted it the crowd became silent.

It is a rare gift to be able to speak to a great crowd of men out of doors, and hold them. Kirk possessed that gift. His voice was a splendid instrument, and he knew how to use it. It is said of Gladstone that in the days of his greatest power as a speaker people would linger in the corridors of the House of Commons when he was talking, simply to enjoy the sound of the tone of his voice, although they could not distinguish a word that was said. Something of this same quality made Kirk's voice a fasci-

nation for an audience. Whatever it was, it could truly be called a great gift of God.

And he used it now in a God-like manner. He began by calling attention to the fact that the people of the state were trying to abolish the saloon by legislative amendment to the Constitution. At such a time as that, for the temperance people to act in a lawless manner, towards even the enemies of the home and the church, would be an act of folly so great that it might endanger the entire movement for prohibition.

"I am, perhaps," continued Malcom, "the most interested person in this whole matter. It is my church that has been burned, and my home that has been destroyed. And yet I say to you men, that if you attempt to use violence towards 'Big Jake,' or any other saloon-keeper on the ground of this circumstantial evidence, and take the law into your own hands, I will defend him from such violence at the risk of my own life. Let us act like men in this matter; like men who see farther than personal vengeance, and are determined that our fight shall be directed, not against the saloon-keeper so much as against the business he represents. That is what we want to fight for in behalf of all our homes and churches, and our state and country."

He got down off the box, after he had spoken, and appealed, in a quiet but powerful manner, to some of the most influential men in the crowd not to let the men act lawlessly. His speech and appeal had their effect. A small group of men on the edge of the crowd gathered farther up the street, and after Kirk had gone home they marched up to 'Big Jake's' saloon, only to find it closed and the proprietor fled.

## CHAPTER X.

### DOROTHY PROVES HERSELF A HELPMEET.

Next day Malcom Kirk had the melancholy pleasure of taking Philip Barton out to "The Forks." He had recovered sufficiently to be moved, and Malcom borrowed a spring waggon and placed him in it comfortably. He complained of feeling queer in his back, and could not stand on his feet, and the doctor told Kirk before he started that it would not be at all unexpected if Barton should be paralyzed. "In fact, Mr. Kirk, my examination makes it almost certain that the boy will probably never recover so as to use the lower part of his body. It seems probable that the wheels of the hay waggon passed over him after he fell out."

The prairie was one vast, burned stretch of plain, with the road grey and distinct through it. Philip Barton lay back on the cot that had been arranged in the waggon box, and looked up at Malcom with a white, strained face as he drove slowly along over the smooth, elastic prairie road.

At first Malcom drove on silently. The boy seemed to be quite comfortable, but unwilling to talk, and during the first two miles hardly a word was spoken. Then Malcom stopped the horses, and bent down to arrange some part of the cot. When he had finished and gathered up the lines to go on again, young Barton spoke.

"You were one of the men that found me and brought me into the town, Mr. Kirk?" The boy had asked it twice before.

"Yes," replied Malcom, smiling. "You can't imagine what a great joy it was to me when we found you."

"And Carver was the other man?"

"Yes."

"That seems queer to me. How did he happen to go with you?"

"Well, I don't know exactly. He seemed eager to go."

"Was he—had he been drinking?" The question came with evident painful effort.

"Yes, I think he had," replied Malcom, frankly. "But he was sober enough when we found you."

There was silence, and Malcom gathered up the lines again and started on. The day was very still, and there was a great cloud coming up in the south-west which promised rain before night.

"It was a great thing for you to do," said Philip, slowly. "I'll never forget it, Mr. Kirk."

"It was a very little thing, my boy, compared with what was done for me once," said Malcom, gravely.

"What was that?"

"I was lost once in a great wilderness and surrounded with wild beasts. I was sick and starving, and unable to save myself. Night was coming on, and every minute added to my danger. Just when I had given myself up as lost, and the wild beasts had gathered around me in the growing darkness, a friend suddenly appeared. He saved me, but in doing it he lost his own life. That is a good deal more than I did for you."

Philip had listened intently. But something in Malcom's manner kept him silent.

"That wilderness where I was lost," continued Malcom, softly, as his early life before he entered the seminary came back to him, "was the wilderness of sin, and the wild beasts were my passions, and the friend who saved me was Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the lost, who gave Himself a ransom for many."

There was not a particle of cant or attempt at preaching in what Malcom had said. It was so simple, so natural, that the boy on the cot hardly realized at first what the minister had said.

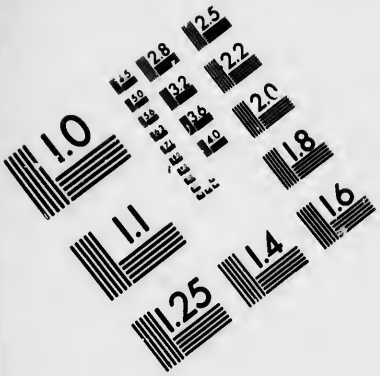
When it dawned upon him that Malcom had spoken of his own conversion, he closed his eyes, and his face twitched under his emotion. When he looked up again, Malcom had turned, and was looking down at him.

"Do you mind if we pray here?" said Malcom.

Philip moved his head, and in his eyes a look of expectant wonder grew. Malcom stopped the horses. The prairie was wide and desolate, and black. Not a sign of life anywhere. The atmosphere was still. The sun shone over it all. The town lay distinct in the near distance. And, somehow, it seemed as if Kirk spoke to God close by. He sat with his hands on his knee, and looked out into the line of the horizon.

"Father in heaven," he said, "we do not know what it all meant when the Lord came to this earth and lived, and suffered, and died. But we know enough to feel sure that love for us was what made Him do it. Love for sinners. We are always asking something, Father, but what we want now is what Thou dost want. Save another life, this one here that is in so much need. His body has been saved for a little while from physical death. Save his life for all time from eternal loss. His mother is praying for him. All heaven is anxious for his salvation. If Thou wilt show us what more we can do, dear Lord, we will do it. But lead him to Thyself, for we cannot forgive his sins nor keep him from them. Thou canst do it if he will let Thee. For the great love of Jesus to us we give Thee all we have. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. Amen."

He gathered up the lines and went slowly on, and for the next mile not a word was said. Then, Malcom, hear-





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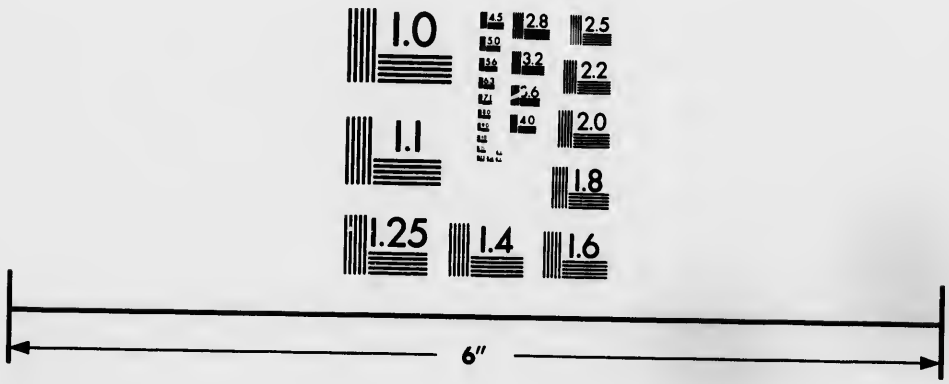



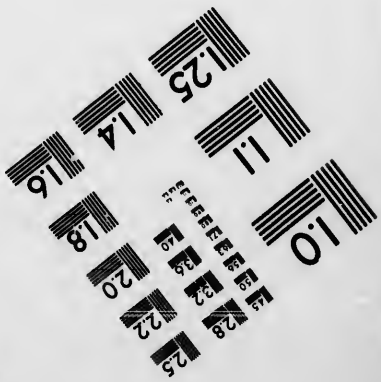


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ing the boy move to change his position a little, turned and looked down at him.

"Do you believe that, Mr. Kirk?" he asked, while his lips quivered.

"What?"

"That 'all heaven is anxious for my salvation'?"

"Why not? The Book says 'there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' Why shouldn't heaven be anxious to have us repent?"

"I don't know, but—"

"'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' He cares as much for you as for any soul on earth," said Malcom, gently.

Philip was silent after that during the rest of the drive. He lay with his eyes closed, and Malcom did not think it wise to talk any more to him, but a continual prayer went out of his heart for another sheep gone astray.

When they drove up to the house at "The Forks," Mrs. Barton came running out. She helped Malcom to lift Philip into the house, and, as the boy was being lowered upon a bed, he reached up his arms and put them about his mother's neck. The poor woman sank on her knees, and, with her face buried on the breast of her boy, sobbed out her heart's joy at his home-coming. When Kirk was ready to return to Conrad, she held his hand, reluctant to have him go.

"Heaven bless you, Mr. Kirk. I owe you more than I can tell. The fire carried off our grain stacks in the field out there, and we lost several of our sheds, but I would gladly go out into the world a beggar if Phil would only turn to God and give up the drink. And you and Mrs. Kirk have your great burden. I am selfish to add mine to it."

"'Bear ye one another's burdens,'" quoted Malcom, and added, instantly, "'Cast thy burden upon the Lord,

and He shall sustain thee.'" So he left her standing there, looking after him, comforted.

He went back to Conrad and faced the situation there with a courageous heart and an outward cheerfulness for Dorothy's sake more than anything else. There was no attempt on the part of either of them to disguise the fact that the prospect before them was one that would try all their Christian courage and faith. The winter was coming on, the crops had been almost a total failure owing to the hot winds, and the little boom of which Wilson had spoken in his letter had collapsed, leaving the town in a wrecked condition financially. The fields that had been planted to corn stood dry and hard, unfit for fall plowing, and even the storm that broke over the town that night was only local, and had no far-reaching result on the general situation.

It was also a new, and in some respects, a terrible condition that faced Dorothy. For the first time in her life she knew that she was poor. Malcom Kirk had never known anything else. Poverty was a heritage to him, and, while it was full of discomfort and privation, it had no terror. But Dorothy had, for the first time, on coming to that home missionary field, felt the touch of grim and stern economy. Her little dowry, saved from the wreck of her father's failure, had been added to Malcom's small salary, but the illness of the baby and the constant calls on their help from various sources had eaten into this little fund, and it was gone. Dorothy's aunt would gladly have helped, but her own resources were shortened by business failures within the three years that Dorothy had been west. Now, the loss of the parsonage with nearly everything it contained was added to all the rest.

"Little woman," said Malcom, that evening, after he had been to "The Forks," "we have very little left except our good looks, and the balance is in your favor.

They were sitting in the little room kindly offered

them by one of their church members, and had been talking over the situation with the frankness that had always characterized their married life.

"I used to read in the novels," said Dorothy, with a peculiar smile, "about the girl who married the poor but gifted young man and spurned the rich and high-born suitor, but I never thought I should be material for such a story myself."

Malcom looked at her, and deep in his heart there was a battle going on that he hardly dared to analyze. He only knew that he longed, somehow, to be able to grapple a physical, tangible something, and fight it for Dorothy's sake and prove to her that he could be more than a poor man.

"Malcom," Dorothy said, as she came over and sat down on a stool near by, and put her hands in his great brown palm, looking up at his sober, anxious face, "Malcom, once for all, if I need to say it, I am not afraid of being poor. I trust you. You do not think I will add to your burden by being weak at such a time as this? Was it not through sickness and health, for better, for worse, that I vowed to give you all I have and am until death do us part?"

Malcom Kirk caught up his wife and a great shadow swept out of his soul, and a great burden fell off his heart. He had not really doubted Dorothy's ability to face any possible event in their lives, but he eagerly welcomed her loving unconditional statement of it.

Nevertheless, he began his struggle for a new church and parsonage during the weeks that followed, with vague questionings of his choice of a place for his life work. He no longer had any fears for Dorothy's sake. But he found himself longing to give her what he could not give, from any human foresight, in the home missionary field where they now were.

It was at this time, with this experience, personal and

peculiar to his married life, that Malcom Kirk, fighting against great odds, began a work in Conrad that had the farthest possible results on its after life. This work was an attempt to unite the various churches in a combined and constant crusade against the saloon. Matters were nearing a crisis for the temperance cause. All over the state meetings were being held. The agitation for a prohibitory amendment was growing into such proportions that men who felt the pulse of the common people predicted victory. And still the whisky forces sneered at the possibility of an amendment.

Kirk succeeded in uniting the five other churches with his own in a series of union meetings during the week, as well as on Sundays. His own church secured for the use of worship, a little store room on the front street while waiting to hear from the Church Building Society to which they had made application for a grant of $500 to help rebuild church and parsonage.

Together with all this work in the town, Malcom was constantly sent for to speak in the district school houses. His reputation as a temperance talker was growing. He often went out during the week and spoke to crowded houses, returning late at night.

It was during his absence from Conrad on one of these school house campaigns, that one evening four letters came to him, and Dorothy opened them, as Malcom had always asked her to do, in order that answers might be sent, in case he was detained from home several days at a time.

The first letter was from the superintendent of the Home Missionary Society, and read as follows :

"Rev. Malcom Kirk, Conrad, Kas.

Dear Brother,—It is with great regret that the Society is compelled to announce to many of the brethren who are commissioned on the frontier that, owing to a

lack of funds in the New York treasury, it will be impossible to forward the quarter's salary when due. It is with the greatest possible regret that I am obliged to make this statement, but it is unavoidable. It is probable there may be a delay of three or four months before the money can be sent. Meanwhile, your church must be urged to do all it can for your support until the wealthier churches respond to the special appeal now being sent out by the Society in behalf of the missionaries at the front.

"I am, Your Brother, etc."

The second letter that Dorothy opened was from the Church Biulding Society, expressing great regret that, owing to excessive calls from other fields, the Society did not have funds to spare at present to assist the unfortunate church at Conrad, but hoped to be able to do so at some future time, etc., etc.

Dorothy hesitated before she opened the next letter, and in spite of her effort at self-control, a tear fell with a hot splash on the envelope. She knew only too well what a real disappointment the letters she had already opened would be to Malcom.

The third letter bore a Boston postmark, and was from the editor of a religious paper. It acknowledged the receipt of an article sent by Malcom some two months before, and retained it with a view to publication when the press of matter already accepted would permit, etc. Payment for the article would be sent when it was published.

Dorothy's face flushed with pride at Malcom's success as a writer, and at the same time she could not help feeling that if the editor of that paper only knew how much they needed the money he would pay for the article when he accepted it, instead of keeping the author waiting until it appeared in print. But she was unfamiliar with the customs, of magazines and newspapers in this respect,

and she rejoiced after all that her husband had been able to write anything that such a famous paper wanted.

The last letter also bore a Boston postmark, and after reading the letter Dorothy laid it down and rose to walk the little room, while her cheeks burned with excitement and her eyes flashed with a light that had not been seen in them for many days.

"My dear Mr. Kirk," the letter read, "For several months we have been considering your name in connection with a vacancy on our editorial board, and have at last decided unanimously to ask you to assume the place of assistant under the chief editor of the magazine. We have been led to this decision by our knowledge of your work on the German Scholarship three years ago, and also from a perusal of several articles recently written by you, and printed in the Boston Review. In addition to this, we know of your work in Conrad, through Mr. Wilson, your old seminary classmate, who, last year, was on our board for a time. We make you this offer, and hope you will see your way to accept. The salary will be $2,000 a year, with opportunity of increase. The press is as powerful as the pulpit in these days, and you may be sure your usefulness will not be shortened or lessened by making this change. We await your reply, hoping it will be favorable to us."

Here followed the name of a person who was at the head of one of the most influential papers published in New England. Dorothy knew well enough how much Malcom thought of the man, and how often he had expressed his admiration for the character of his literary work.

She picked the letter up and read it through again. What was there in Conrad, this wild, uninteresting western town, struggling against a financial depression and a future as well as a past failure of crops? How could Malcom ever rise to any place worthy of his powers in

this little church, so feeble and so poor? "It is true," she found herself saying, "it is true he chose the ministry as his life work, and he has often said he would not do anything else. But—"

She went to the door and stepped out on the little porch. It was after 10 o'clock, and a frosty night. Down the main street she could see the lights from the saloons. There was a brawl going on in front of one of them. But that was common. A group of cowboys galloped down the street, firing their pistols as they came. That was not unusual. Dorothy shuddered. What of that promise she had made with Malcom to try to redeem the lost of Conrad. Was it worth while, after all? It would be so much pleasanter to live in Boston. They could have things, and live as other people lived, and after awhile her husband would become famous, and—

"Well, little woman, won't you take cold out here?"

It was Malcom, and he led her into the house again. She had not seen him come. He had unexpectedly finished his engagement, and been able to return much sooner than he expected.

She saw as he came in that he was very tired, but was making a brave effort to appear cheerful and contented. She hesitated about showing him the letters, but he had already seen the open envelopes on the table, and his hand went out towards them. Dorothy stood between him and the table.

"Will you read them in the order I say?" asked Dorothy.

"Certainly. Must I get ready for bad news?" he asked, soberly.

"It is for you to say," Dorothy answered. And she gave him the letters in the same order that she had opened them, and stood watching his face, hungrily, as he read them.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A MOMENT OF DOUBT.

Malcom read the four letters through, one after the other, without a word of comment. Only, Dorothy, watching him, noted the expressions on his face. When he finished the letter from the Boston magazine, he looked up.

"Well," said Dorothy, slowly, as if Malcom had asked a question.

"It's a great offer," said Malcom. He was evidently very much moved by it. And he rose and walked up and down.

Finally, he stopped near the door.

"I shall have to go out doors and walk off the excitement," he said, looking at Dorothy with a faint smile. She was familiar with that habit. Malcom had often done that when tired of the cramped quarters of his little study in the parsonage.

He walked to the table, took up his hat and went to the door. He opened it, and then turned back to Dorothy, who sat with her elbow on the table and her chin in her hand, thinking.

"Will you go with me, dear?" Malcom asked, quietly.

She rose without a word, and, putting on her hat and cloak, went out with him. They walked out of the yard, and then, after a moment of hesitation, they turned and went down the narrow board sidewalk towards the main street of the town.

It was almost 11 o'clock. Nearly all the stores were closed, but every saloon was wide open. As they went by one of the largest on the first business corner, two or

three men near the door recognized Kirk, and touched their hats, saying very respectfully as they did so, "Good evening, Mr. Kirk!"

"Good evening, gentlemen," replied Malcom, touching his hat. He passed on with Dorothy, but with all the inner conflict going on, she had time to think of the little incident and say to herself, proudly, "Even the loafers and drinkers respect my husband."

And it was true, because they knew in their hearts that Malcom Kirk loved them, wretched, useless creatures as many of them were, down at the very bottom of the human scale, down where nothing but love could reach them.

As they went past one of the dance houses, they could hear the jingle of spurs on boots, the wild laughter of the women, the clink of glasses at the bar.

Dorothy shuddered, and drew up closer to Malcom. To both of them it is probable that there was borne in upon them the lost abandoned life that always goes with the liquor trade, the desperate, lawless character of young men and women who represented so large a part of the social life of the town. What a relief it would be to get away from it all, back to the culture and refinement of books and companionable people, and the life of freedom from moral struggle for the life of others that awaited them in that New England home that might be theirs for the taking!

They had walked through the street, and were out on the prairie road before either of them said a word.

Then Malcom said, while he pressed Dorothy's arm close to his own:

"What do you think I had better do?"

She was not prepared to have him ask a question, and she was not ready with an answer.

"What would you do in my place?" he asked, after waiting for her to answer his first question.

"Don't ask me, Malcom!" cried Dorothy, almost tearfully.

He bent his head, and in the starlight saw her face moved with unusual excitement.

"It is true," he began to talk to himself, "it is true, as he says, 'the press is as powerful as the pulpit in these days.' I could certainly do as much good that way as any. I feel as if I could use my pen for the good of humanity."

"Yes! Yes!" Dorothy cried, eagerly. She spoke as if Malcom's word had been a great relief to her. Then she went on almost passionately.

"What can you do here, Malcom? You can slave yourself to death out here with this little church and never accomplish much. You cannot do the church work and the writing, too. You will break down under it. How can you ever build again, with the hard times and so many families moving away, and winter coming on? And your salary, little as it is, so cruelly delayed; it is a humiliation to keep on this narrow, pinched life, with no companionship to speak of, no money to buy new books, with a dead life on a poor struggling church that will wear your life out before you have reached your prime. I don't mind for myself, Malcom, you know; it was 'for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,' but it seems to me your life will be simply thrown away if you remain out here. Such an offer as this will not come to you again probably. If I were you—"

She stopped, and Malcom eagerly waited for the rest.

"If I were you," Dorothy went on, strongly, "I would answer the letter at once, and accept the offer. I want to see you succeed in life. I want to have the world know your strength as I do."

He made no reply, and they walked on a little farther. Then Malcom spoke as if again reasoning with himself.

"I certainly could do as much good that way as any."

He was silent again. They had reached a place where the road branched off to The Forks. They turned and went back towards the town. When they reached the first houses, they took the street which led past the ruins of the church and parsonage. They seemed to do this without saying to each other that they would. Their walk back had been in silence.

When they reached the corner where the church and parsonage had stood, they stopped and looked at the ruins.

These were mournful, as such ruins always are. The foundation line of the church building looked pitifully small to Malcom as he thought of the little congregations that had so often met there for worship or the prayer service. And still, he could not, even there, as he viewed what seemed like a failure in life, he could not shut out of his sight the picture of Dorothy and himself as they had gone into the church that first night of their arrival in Conrad three years before, and had there made together their solemn promise to redeem the lost of Conrad. Were they about to break that promise, because difficulties had come into the struggle? Was it possible that they were going to declare themselves beaten in the attempt to overcome? Were they about to choose the easy, comfortable physical life and shun the agony of the spiritual conflict with the evil forces? Were they about to run away from duty as cowards? Was it duty to remain in Conrad? How about his duty to the temperance conflict? If he had any real strength that way, ought he to abandon the cause at this critical time? But how could Dorothy live this life of privation? How could he go on with his meagre salary, humiliated by being in debt to the tradespeople, and dependent for his living on the spasmodic giving of the churches that "endorsed" home missions, to be sure, but left the home missionary often unpaid or the recipient of boxes which sometimes were

so clearly in the nature of charity that no self-respecting man could take and use the contents?

All this, and more, crowded into Malcom's mind as he stood there that night by the ruins of his church and home. The same thoughts were also in the mind of Dorothy, and with it all it seemed, too, as if to both of them came a half-suppressed doubt as to the course Malcom was on the point of taking.

"Don't you feel that we have tried our best to keep that promise we made that night in the church?" Dorothy asked, as she nervously pushed her foot against one of the stones at the corner of the foundation.

Malcom did not answer at first. Then he said evasively, as if he had been thinking of something else: "I'm sure I can do as much with my pen as I can in a church."

Dorothy did not look up or speak for some time. Then she said with rather eager emphasis:

"Why not write at once to the editor, and tell him that you will accept his offer?"

"I will," said Malcom, in a low tone.

They stood a little while longer by the ruins, and then turned away and went home. Somewhere in the great spaces of the infinite to Malcom and Dorothy it almost seemed as if a sigh from an angel of light breathed over the sleeping town that lay on the blackened surface of the prairie. What they felt was the inner uneasiness of spirit that the promise they had made three years before had been, if not broken, at least not lived out as it might have been. In Malcom's heart as he said to Dorothy, "I will," there was a distinct uncertainty of feeling. There was a lack of spontaneous joy at his action which he knew well enough meant that somewhere he had not been true to the best that was in him.

Nevertheless, in the morning he wrote the letter in answer to the editor, accepting the position, and asking

him to give him time to sever his relations with the church, etc.

He took the letter and went out early after breakfast to mail it. He would hand in his resignation at the week-day church meeing, and write to the superintendent later in the day.

He was thinking it all over as he neared the main street, when a farm waggon drove up noisily and stopped near him.

"Oh, Mr. Kirk, will you come right out to 'The Forkes' with me? Phil is in a terrible way, and has been calling for you all night!"

It was Mrs. Barton, and her thin, eager face looked down at Malcom as she sat there looking at him anxiously.

Into Malcom Kirk's heart there came a distinct shock, almost as if he had been detected in doing a selfish thing. Here, again, was this appeal for help coming at a time when it seemed to him as if the burden he was carrying was too great for him.

He looked up at Mrs. Barton.

"Why, certainly, I'll go right out with you," he said, every instinct of helpfulness in him rising and going out towards the cry for help.

Just then Carver came walking by. Kirk had the letter he was going to post in his hand.

"Say, Carver, will you mail this letter for me, as you go by the office?" Malcom asked, and Carver eagerly took the letter, more than willing to do Mr. Kirk a favor.

Malcom at once got up into the wagon with Mrs. Barton, and they drove out of town rapidly. Carver stood watching them a moment, then he turned and went on down the street. At the first saloon he hesitated, but finally went in. Before noon he had gone into three or four different saloons that lay between him and the postoffice, and the letter remained in his pocket forgotten.

On their way to "The Forks" Malcom learned from Mrs. Barton that while Philip was on his back, unable to leave his bed, one of the farmer boys living on the next ranch had brought out several bottles of whisky and smuggled them into the house. The result was that young Barton was having delirium tremens while in the terrible condition caused by his debauch at the time of the great fire. His mother had spent a fearful night with him, and at last, desperate and heart-broken, dry-eyed but weeping her blood away within, she had come into town for Kirk.

"It is all of the devil! this drink business!" groaned Malcom, as he went into the house and into the room where Phil Barton lay.

Never, in all his life, had Malcom Kirk seen such a sight. Barton knew him as he came in, and he spoke his name. Then he began to curse in the most awful manner. The lower part of his body was paralyzed, but his arms moved incessantly, and his head rolled back and forth on the bed while he called on all hell to blast every living creature on earth.

Malcom put Mrs. Barton out of the room and shut the door. Then for three hours he spent the most trying period he had ever known, by the side of a suffering and sinful human being. At the end of that time, Barton lay quiet, and Malcom was weak and trembling, wet with perspiration and unnerved as if he had been facing some great peril. The doctor came just as Malcom went to tell Mrs. Barton that Philip was sleeping. She had not been able to find any physician when she had gone in that morning, and had left word for one to come out.

"What is going to become of my boy, Mr. Kirk?" Mrs. Barton asked as he was getting into the doctor's buggy to go back with him.

Malcom had not the heart to say anything at first. In his soul a profound horror and a divine indignation

against the saloon greater than he had ever known had risen.

At last he said: "Mrs. Barton, I hope to live to see the day when your boy will not be near this temptation. The saloon and all it represents is an enemy of mankind. We will not cease to work, and pray, and suffer until the curse of it is removed from our life as a state." For the time he had forgotten he was going away.

"Promise me, Mr. Kirk, that you will do what you can for Phil. There's no one living he thinks so much of. You saved his life. Save his soul, too. Don't give him up, will you, Mr. Kirk?"

Malcom trembled. How could he tell this wretched heart-broken woman, living in that desolate, ruined home that he had already made his plan to leave Conrad. She clung to him as the largest and only hope for her boy that she knew. What could he say to her?

The doctor, who had been listening sympathetically, but in silence, had gathered up his reins, and the horses impatiently made a movement to start, and still Malcom Kirk said nothing.

"I know you won't give him up, Mr. Kirk. If you don't save him, no one else will. Don't you think he's worth saving?"

She stood by the buggy and laid her thin, worn hand on Malcom's arm. As he looked at it, he thought of some old verses he had read while in the seminary about a mother's hands:

"Not all the ladies in all the lands,
With riches, and titles, and fame,
Could boast of such beautiful, shapely hands,
As one that I could name.

"Her hands were without a jewelled ring,
And the fingers were thin and old,

But a baby's fingers would round them cling,
More precious than solid gold.

"My mother has passed this earth away,
To the land where death cannot be;
But I'll never forget her, as she lay,
Hands clasped in prayer for me."

They were old verses that someone had translated hastily from a German text, but Malcom remembered them, and they came to him vividly just now.

"Of course, I believe he is worth saving," said Malcom.

"You won't give him up, will you?"

"No, I won't give him up," replied Malcom, but he hardly seemed to realize what the words meant. Was he not planning to go away from all this burden bearing? Had he not already written the letter accepting the place where he would be free to use his pen without this constant struggle to help lives of others in this personal contact with them?

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BATTLE FOR PROHIBITION.

All the way back to Conrad his mind was at war. He knew, deep down in his soul, that he had no joy in the change he had planned to make. He knew well enough that his call to the ministry did not mean a ministry with the pen, but with the voice, and in the personal, living, hand-to-hand touch with humanity.

He knew when he said to Dorothy, there by the ruins, "I will." He knew it as he penned the letter that even now, he supposed, had started on its eastward journey. He knew it as he felt the touch of the sorrowful mother's hand on his arm. And no reasoning or self-persuasion could convince him otherwise, or satisfy him that he had made a decision that his conscience could approve.

The doctor had a patient at the lower end of the town, near where they drove in on the way back, and Malcom left him there and started to walk home. As he went up the main street, past the saloons, Carver came staggering out of one of them.

The sight of the minister seemed to sober the man a little. He muttered "How do, Mr. Kirk," and was shambling on, when he suddenly stopped as if he had remembered something, and ran back to Kirk, who had gone sadly on, sick at heart at the sight of him.

"Something of yours, Mr. Kirk. Letter you gave me to keep. No trouble to keep it. Glad to do favor," Carver stammered, his drunken brain proud of his apparent service to the minister.

He pulled out the letter Kirk had given him and handed it over. Malcom took it mechanically, without a word.

Carver stared at him, and as Kir' walked away he scratched his head and muttered :

"Sumpin' wrong with the minister, evidently." He shook his head in perplexity, and finally zig-zaggered into a saloon to see if he could clear up the mystery with a fresh drink.

Malcom thrust the letter down into his pocket and walked on like one in a dream. He went by the postoffice without looking up. He met several of his parishioners and answered their good day absently. He was going over the struggle he had experienced when his baby died, only this was a new form of it. Now, Dorothy was the person he was thinking of most. He was in the habit of making up his own mind quickly. If he ever did anything that his whole soul could not rejoice in, he felt suspicious of it ; he felt suspicious of his whole motive now in leaving Conrad. And Philip Barton—was that soul laid on him to rescue ? Was it true that he must assume the salvation of that particular individual and count him one of the lost souls he had really pledged himself to save? And this letter which came back to him, was he to take the event as a leading of the Spirit and interpret it all to mean that he was not to send it after all ? But Dorothy, how could he ask her to lead the life of hardship she must lead if they remained in this Home Missionary field ? After he had gone over all the grounds for going or leaving, he came back to that final question. And his mind was in a tumult.

He was within a block of the house now and still walking on absorbed, when someone touched his arm. He looked up and saw one of his church members, one of the poorest men in his congregation.

"How do you do, Mr. Kirk ? Wife and I have been talking over what we could do towards helping on the new church parsonage, and we have concluded to give this as our share." The man handed to Kirk a ten-dollar bill.

"We're sorry it isn't ten times as much. Our crops failed, you know, along with the sickness and Jim's death last spring. But we want to do something in memory of the boy. His mother—" the man choked up and did not finish the sentence.

"That was a good sermon you gave us, Mr. Kirk, last Sunday. It did us a world of good. We're praying for you at our house. God bless your work among us."

The man was gone, and Malcom stood there holding the money, and it was impossible for him to prevent his mind from trying to guess by what self-denial, hardship, sacrifice, that ten dollars had been saved. It was a little thing, but the meeting with this poor parishioner profoundly moved him.

He went on slowly, and had almost reached the house, when, as he turned a corner, he came face to face with the superintendent of his Sunday School. The superintendent was one of the leading temperance workers in Conrad. He had been specially active in the work carried on in the country districts. He was one of Malcom's best friends, one of the comparatively few men with whom he often counselled, and one whom he trusted entirely.

"I've just been to the house, Mr. Kirk, to see you. I won't take your time now, but I called to tell you that I was out at the Parker district last night, and the men out there want you to come over to-morrow or next night, if you can. They've never heard you. I'm sure you could do some real good work there. It's needed bad enough. The neighborhood is made up of young ranchmen who nearly all drink. If you can go, I can send word by one of the men who is driving out there this afternoon."

"Tell him I'll go to-morrow," said Malcom, in a low voice.

"All right. Oh, by the way, Mr. Kirk," the superintendent had started on, but he turned around and came

back a step, "it may encourage you a little to hear what I overheard in front of Valmer's place the other day. Valmer was out in front of his saloon and he said to one of his customers, 'I don't care for all the other prohibition cranks in Conrad except that preacher, Kirk. He has a way of getting his church members to believe as he does, and if they begin to vote that way'—I didn't hear any more, but that bit of a speech ought to be encouraging. We will never give up this fight, will we, Mr. Kirk?"

"No, we will never give it up," replied Malcom, with the same feeling at heart that he had when he said to Mrs. Barton, "No, I will never give him (Philip) up."

He walked slowly, and Dorothy knew the moment he entered the room that something unusual had happened. Malcom could never conceal his emotions.

He took out the letter that Carver had given back to him and held it out to Dorothy.

"It has not been mailed. I doubt if it ever ought to be," he said simply, but his face was pale and his lip quivered under his intense excitement, for he was stirred deeply by the events of the day.

"What does it mean?" Dorothy asked, as she took the letter, looking at Malcom, and letting the letter fall from her hand upon the table near which she had been sitting.

"It means, I think, yes, I am sure, it means that I must stay here. Neither my heart nor my mind have any real joy in the thought of leaving my work here. Dorothy, I cannot leave without seeming to myself, to my church, to the citizens, to all my friends here, to be guilty of running away from duty because of hardship. I cannot persuade myself that the Lord wants me to preach with my pen. I know as well as if He spoke to me with an audible voice that He wants me to speak to living men in close contact with them, to bear their burdens near by, to be one of the multitude in the struggle for a better world.

Especially I do not dare to silence the conviction within me that I ought to stay by the temperance fight in Kansas just now. The Lord has seen fit to use me to His glory in this great crisis for the cause of home and native land. Dorothy, if I were only rich! If I only had the means to give you what you ought to have!"

The last two sentences were suddenly wrung from him as he sat there watching Dorothy, who had listened in silence, her hands clasped in her lap, and her face, Malcom fancied, cold and hard.

For the first and the last time in his life he was deceived in Dorothy.

She suddenly lifted her head and smiled, while her eyes filled with tears.

"Do you think—do you think, Malcom, that I could ever be proud of you again, ever feel satisfied if you acted a part that was not true to your convictions? Do you think I married you for your money?"

"I always knew you never married me for my good looks," replied Malcom with a smile that revealed inward joy, "and you certainly did not marry me for my money, for I told you at the time that I hadn't any. But, oh, Dorothy, you know how I long to do and be everything to you, don't you?"

"Yes, I know it very well," Dorothy answered. She had come over to her husband and the anxious look on his face had given way to one of relief.

She had the letter to the Boston editor in her hand. Malcom took it from her.

"If we are not going to mail this, what do you think we ought to do with it?" he asked, looking at the stove significantly.

"Save the stamp, Malcom," said Dorothy. "You may need it if we are not going to Boston."

He tore off the corner of the envelope where the

stamp was, and opened the stove door and threw the letter into the fire.

"So that settles it," said Malcom, gravely. There was a pause in the little room. "I feel better," he added, looking steadily at his wife.

"Do you?" said Dorothy, gently. She kissed him, and they both seemed to remember their promise in the little church. Dorothy knew well enough that for a man like Malcom to do anything that in the smallest degree contradicted his convictions meant, for him, continual torture of mind. The minute she saw that his action in leaving Conrad meant that sort of moral conflict, she knew there was only one course open to them, and that was to stay in Conrad and battle out the life that duty called them to live there.

In all this, nothing but the great and trustful love they felt for each other made possible such a complete and unquestioning change of plans that affected their whole future. Malcom would not have been the man he was if he had not felt constrained to stay in Conrad. Dorothy would not have been the woman she was if, once seeing that her husband's moral strength depended on this decision, she had attempted to argue him out of it, or had failed to accept the situation cheerfully and once for all.

So, then, these two children of the All Father having settled thus simply, but decidedly, this question, faced the life before them bravely and silently, and no one in Conrad knew until years afterwards how near they had come to losing two of the greatest souls that ever came into the place. Malcom never told his church people. He simply picked up the thread of his affection for them where he had seemed for a while to drop it, and went on to love them more and more, and they, in turn, never dreaming of the moral conflict he had been having, grew to love him because they were enduring hardship together.

At the first church meeting held after that eventful

night and day in Malcom and Dorothy's lives, Malcom boldly called on his members to rally around the building of a new church.

He read the two letters, the one from the superintendent and the other from the Church Building Society. The members listened in silence. Malcom looked into their faces quietly. They were gathered in the little store room in the main street. Next door was a saloon, and that Sunday, as on many others, the congregation could hear the chinking of glasses and the drunken laughter of the men at the bar.

"We might as well accept the facts," said Malcom, and as he talked it is certain that the Holy Spirit was present in that little room in wonderful power, as He always is after a temptation and an overcoming. "We shall have to build this church without outside help. You know what my views are about raising money by means of fairs and suppers. I think the Lord will show us a better way. We are all poor together. I do not need to say that I am willing to share this struggle with you. We are not only going to build a house of wood in which to worship, but a church of Jesus which has for its habitation the throne of a human soul. This saloon," Malcom paused, and in the silence everyone could hear through the thin wall the noise in the other room; "this saloon represents a destructive force that we as a church must, by God's grace, overcome. How much do we value the church? Are we ready to sacrifice, to go without some necessities even, to build up the Kingdom and destroy the works of the devil? If we are, we can overcome. We can build our church and grow into a power. Let us believe in the power of the Spirit and go on in His might."

During the weeks and months that followed Malcom had great encouragement in his plans for building. He boldly went to several of the business men in Conrad, men who were not church members, and asked them to

help. They did so, and in many cases came to him before he went to them and volunteered assistance. The spirit of prayer pervaded the entire church. Before spring almost enough money had been raised to build a larger structure than the one that had been burned.

Before that time, however, the temperance agitation had grown into a great tide of feeling in Conrad. Dorothy never forgot the evening Malcom came in and with a glow in his face that transformed it, exclaimed :

"A telegram just received says the legislature to-day, by the necessary two-thirds vote, passed the resolution to submit a prohibitory amendment to the constitution ! I never cheered for the legislature before, but I propose three cheers, three times three, right away !"

Out on the main street that night the temperance people built an immense bonfire. The band came out and played, and there were speeches and temperance songs. One of the best speeches was by Malcom Kirk. He called attention during it to the fact that the battle had only just begun, that there were nearly two years yet before the people would be called on to vote on the amendment. All the time he was speaking he was conscious that outside the enthusiastic circle of temperance and Christian people was the whisky element, sullen, angry, surprised at the action of the legislature, venomous, just beginning to stir itself for the two years' struggle. It seemed to Malcom that he could even that night prophesy, in some degree, the satanic character of the conflict that made Conrad one of the fiercest centers of the fight.

But he was right in saying that the battle had only just begun by the act of the legislature. The weeks and months that followed witnessed some wonderful scenes in Conrad. Now the women of Conrad began to show their power, as they had already been a constant influence for years.

Dorothy suddenly assumed a place she once would

never have dared to take. The women in all the other churches, recognizing her ability, came to her and insisted that she take the presidency of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union that had been organized a short time before. She did so, at first with fear and trembling, then with a brave, joyful confidence that amazed her and her husband, but the Lord was leading her.

The time passed, and the election day drew near. Night after night before that eventful day when the people of the state were to vote on the qustion of saloon or no saloon in their commonwealth, the woman's union held street prayer meetings in front of the saloons. Dorothy worked and prayed incessantly. Her great beauty, spiritualized by her suffering, had wonderful influence. Many a young Frenchman went away from those prayer meetings vowing to vote for the amendment. The saloon men would come to the doors of their places and eye the groups of kneeling mothers and wives in sullen amazement. They had cause to fear for their unholy traffic when the women of the state were thus on their knees, calling on God and heaven to help the cause of "Home and Native Land."

The afternoon of that election day, Malcom was suddenly called out to "The Forks" to see Philip Barton. He had been steadily failing during those two years, and Mrs. Barton sent for Kirk in haste and he went, supposing it might be for the last time.

It was after dark before he came back to Conrad. Philip Barton had died that afternoon, unconscious at last of the prayer that Malcom had offered by the side of his heart-broken mother.

"God of mercy" cried Malcom, as he entered the street that night, "grant that this day's work in our state has killed the power of this enemy that has killed this boy and broken this mother's life!"

The election was over, but no one could predict the result. As Malcom came up the street, it was crowded

with men and women. The Christian Temperance Union had been at work all day. It had served a free lunch to all the voters, and now was holding a prayer meeting in front of Valmer's place.

The crowd filled the wide street and overflowed the broad sidewalks. Free whisky had flowed all day. The crowd was full of men who had been drinking, and they were now in a condition to quarrel.

Dorothy was kneeling in the center of the women. Malcom forced his way up to the edge of the sidewalk in front of the saloon. He had never loved his wife as he loved her now. Her face was glorified by the Spirit's work within. He was conscious of an unusual disturbance behind him, coming from the saloon. There were shouts and oaths, and a pistol shot. But still he continued to gaze at Dorothy, who, as calmly as if in her own room, kneeled there while the confusion in front of the saloon increased. And never again in all his life will Malcom Kirk feel the satanic venom he felt that night in the rum power which on that eventful day faced the prayers and the homes of the women of Kansas.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

Nearly twenty years had gone by since that night of the election, when Dorothy had kneeled in front of Valmer's saloon, in the main street of Conrad, when one evening a well-dressed, distinguished looking gentleman stepped out of the west-bound express upon the platform.

"Does Mr. Kirk live where he used to?" he asked of one of the loungers at the station.

"Yes, he lives up by the church," was the answer.

The stranger went on down the main street, looking about him curiously, and finally stopped in front of a comfortable-looking house close by a good-sized church building.

He went up the short board walk and rang the bell.

The door was opened by a girl about nineteen years of age, a girl with a great profusion of heavy, brown hair, and a face that people had to look at twice before they knew whether she was what is generally called "pretty" or not.

"Is your father at home?" asked the gentleman, smiling.

"I don't know. Will you come in? That is, unless you have something to sell, and then I am sure father is out." She said it without the least appearance of being pert or rude.

"I haven't anything to sell," replied the stranger, laughing. "I am George Wilson, one of your father's old classmates in Hermon, and he—"

"Come right in," said the girl. "Anyone from Hermon is welcome. I've heard father speak of you often."

"This is Faith, is it?" he asked, as he entered a pleasant sitting-room.

"Yes, sir," she answered, shyly. "Excuse me, I'll call father."

She went out of the room, and the Rev. George Wilson, of the famous Institutional Church of Boston, looked around him, and his look was full of the most absorbing interest.

What he felt and thought can, perhaps, best be told in a letter which he wrote home two days afterwards, while sitting in the guest chamber of the parsonage. The letter threw much light on the events of the past twenty years and is of value as coming from one who saw Malcom Kirk and his family at this time, both as a friend and also as an intensely interested spectator of a very remarkable life.

"I am sitting in Malcom Kirk's house," the letter began, "and it is difficult for me to realize all that that fact means. There is no question in my mind that Kirk is, in some ways, one of the most remarkable ministers in this country, and yet he and his talented wife have remained in this comparatively obscure place for over twenty years, working quietly and without ostentation, with some most astonishing results, until lately unheard of by the churches in the east.

"Since I was in Conrad about twenty years ago great changes have occurred in the state. Perhaps the greatest change of all has been the prohibitory amendment to the constitution. Everyone knows that the election on the legislature's act to submit the amendment resulted in an affirmative vote. Everyone also knows that the people have never reversed that decision, and it seems probable that they never will.

"You will also remember what an excitement was caused by one event in Conrad at the close of that famous

election day. I listened to the story from Kirk's own lips, and it was as exciting as any novel I ever read.

"He had been called out of town on the afternoon of that day to see a young man who died of the effects of a drunken debauch, and as he came back to Conrad in the evening, his wife was kneeling in the center of a group of other women, holding a prayer meeting in front of one of the most notorious saloons then in Conrad.

"He had only just come to the place when a great disturbance broke out in the saloon behind him. Someone broke through the crowd and attempted to throw a bottle of vitrol at Mrs. Kirk. It was afterwards shown that the man was crazy with drink, and awfully excited by the events of the day. He was only partly successful in his horrible attempt. Mrs. Kirk's face was burned on one side, but a man by the name of Carver, who had been drinking, but was sober enough to realize what was going on, grappled with the other and took away the bottle, receiving dreadful burns in doing so. This man is now sexton in Mr. Kirk's church, a devout, sincere Christian, and a good example, so Kirk says, of hundreds of men who will remain sober if the saloon is taken away and the constant temptation to drink is absent. And so far as I can observe, he is decidedly right in his belief.

"Well, Mrs. Kirk has recovered from those injuries, and her beauty of face, which is still remarkable, is marred only by a scar which gives her, to all who know her history, an added interest. The affair created an intense feeling here for a long time. Nothing so terrible had been known since that attempt to disfigure Mrs. Coleman, of Marville, Canada, while marching with other women in a temperance procession. The event opened many people's eyes to the satanic power of the drink evil. It was only one out of countless events where the whisky element has stood for the greatest crimes, and for which it must answer heavily at the judgment bar of a long-suffering God.

"It is difficult for me to write of Malcom Kirk, without seeming to exaggerate and over-emphasize his work. I want to speak of his beautiful family, which is a part of the best part of this western town.

"Mrs. Kirk has developed into a woman of rare power in all the church and social life of the place. Years ago the women here recognized her ability as a leader by making her president of the Christian Temperance Union. It was largely through her efforts that the township polled a very heavy vote for the amendment. She has thrown all her rare talents as a gifted musician, also, into the redemption of the town, with the result that no woman has such an influence as she has on all the young thoughtless life that has crowded in here during the town's rapid growth in the years of eighty-six and seven.

"There are three children, two boys, named Gilbert and Hermon, and a girl, the oldest child, named Faith. The boys are bright, handsome fellows, and take after the mother. Gilbert is seventeen and Hermon fifteen. Faith, who is nearly nineteen, is like her father. I have not yet been able to tell whether she is what you women would call 'pretty' or not, but she is one of the most interesting individual girls I ever met. She is fond of trying experiments, and resembles her father in that respect. She wants to know and feel things for herself, and is passionately fond of doing for other people. I begin to get the impression that she is thoroughly unselfish, and that she has the making of a remarkably useful woman. But I predict for her some trying experiences. She is one of those girls who would make her father and mother anxious for her future, if it were not for the fact that they and herself are Christian in their whole nature. That is the salvation of such a girl as Faith, and Mr. and Mrs. Kirk seem to be peacefully sure of that fact. All of the children are members of the church, and all three of them

are very evidently proud of their father and of what he has done.

"You ask, What has Malcom Kirk done?

"In the first place, in spite of what seemed like impossibilities he succeeded years ago in building a church and parsonage, both of which had been burned down, it is supposed, by the whisky men during the fight which went on before the amendment was carried. The church is a comfortable structure, seating three or four hundred people, with several class rooms attached. The parsonage is a good house of eight rooms, fairly well furnished, although Kirk's peculiar habits of generosity have not permitted anything approaching luxury even in the slightest degree.

"But the building of the church and parsonage is in one sense the very smallest thing that Kirk has done. It is not too much to say that he and his wife have revolutionized the moral life of this whole town. When they came here about twenty years ago, they found a community of fifteen hundred people. A great amount of lawless, thoughtless life crowded the saloons, the dance houses, the cheap resorts of amusement. Kirk and his wife, after passing through an experience of great suffering and temptation, most of which has always been unknown even to their own people, came out of their affliction with astonishing power over the life of the place. There is no question that the very thinking of the people here is shaped by Malcom Kirk's Christianity. The promise he and his wife made when they came here has been constantly in mind. The number of lost men and boys who have been attracted to Kirk's ministry and to Mrs. Kirk's singing and playing, and led to Christ, is amazing. Even the business and political life of the town has been shaped by Kirk's purpose in life. That means a great deal, as any one will acknowledge. This fact, however, is shown by the common allusions to Conrad by other

towns. They speak of it as "Kirkville." A higher compliment to a man's influence it would be difficult to find.

"It is, of course, still true that the devil does business in Conrad. Kirk has told me that the whisky men have never ceased from the day they were driven out of Conrad to attempt to come back in some form, and carry on their work. At the present time he tells me that through failure on the part of the officers of the law to enforce the law the whisky men have grown bold, and opened several places. He is right now in the midst of the old struggle again. This time is it a struggle with state and county officials who have broken their oaths of office. It is the same struggle in another form. At the bottom of the whisky business in any state, whether it has a prohibitory statute or not, is the incentive of great financial returns for a very little real labor, and also the human passion for drink, two things which, Kirk says, must be recognized by the temperance people, and always reckoned upon in the problem of temperance.

"It remains, therefore, to be said that, so far as Kirk and his wife are concerned, the contest they began here, the battle they entered for victory over the world, still goes on. Is there a place in the world where a Christian may cease from fighting the good fight of the faith? But I am profoundly touched by the extent of overcoming to be seen in this place. I have been unable to silence the question, 'What if every minister as he entered a new place, no matter how small or difficult, entered it with a passion like Kirk's to redeem the lost part of it, and bring it back to God?' I know this much is true of the work done here. There has been no unusual excitement and no extraordinary means employed to produce the astonishing results. There is no question that Kirk has certain qualities that have helped him. His voice is, as it always was, a fine instrument. He knows how to talk to people, and he writes uncommonly well. But, on the

other hand, he is still awkward, homely of appearance, and by no means always at his best. He loves people. He longs, as Paul did, for the salvation of the world. And there lies the secret of his work. It is nothing which other men may not also have. I don't know a minister in our churches anywhere who might not claim all that Malcom Kirk and his wife have claimed. They have overcome the world by means of their love, by following the plain path of duty at the cost of suffering, by not pleasing themselves. They are still engaged in the struggle. It will never cease this side of death and paradise. But I wish that every pastor and every church might come here and see what has been done and what the future seems certain to record. The most malignant forces of evil have evidently arrayed themselves against Kirk and his wife, and so far these two have overcome them all. Heaven has won the victory out here, and I do not know why it should not do so everywhere. Do we want the world to be saved? Do we have a passion to save it? Do we put the Kingdom first? If we did, should we not see the results everywhere that we see here? I shall return home from my visit to Malcom Kirk with that question sounding in my heart."

There was one brief allusion in this letter which meant even more than Wilson knew. It was his allusion to what he called Malcom Kirk's "peculiar habits of generosity." Indirectly these led to events which have to do with this history of the human conflict against sin, and involved in that growing conflict all the members of Kirk's family.

A few days after Wilson's departure, Faith and her mother were sitting together in the "common room," as Faith called it, the room that the family used for dining and sitting-room together. Dorothy was sewing, and Faith was helping her with some work on the boy's suits.

It was about 11 o'clock in the morning, and Malcom Kirk was upstairs in his study. The boys were at school,

and Faith, who had finished the high school, had been staying at home for two years helping her mother.

"Mother, how does Gilbert manage to tear his coat across the back like that?'" asked Faith, holding up that garment and looking at it with grave astonishment.

Dorothy could not help smiling, although the next instant she sighed a little.

"He said one of the boys pushed him against a wire fence last Saturday while they were out fishing near the Forks."

"Well, the boy that did it ought to be made to wear it after I have mended it. That would be 'making the punishment fit the crime,'" said Faith, as she stabbed the back of the coat with a big needle, and began turning over a basket to find some thread.

"I'm sorry Gilbert hasn't a better suit," said Dorothy, gravely. "He must try to get along with it this fall, any way. Mend it as carefully as you can, Faith."

"Yes, ma'am," replied Faith. "I am trying to find something besides white silk. At the same time, mother, don't you think white silk on a black back-ground would be a warning to Gilbert not to get his coat torn again?"

Mrs. Kirk laughed, and before she could answer the bell rang.

Faith put aside the work and went to the door.

"Can I see Mr. Kirk?" asked a voice that Dorothy recognized at once.

"No," said Faith, decidedly. "Father is in his study writing, and he ought not to be disturbed."

"But he told me to call to-day, and I want to see him very much."

"Did he tell you to call this morning?"

"Well—no—he said to-day. But I couldn't come at any other time."

There was silence a moment, while Faith stood hold-

ing the door uncertainly, but still resolutely blocking the entrance.

Malcom Kirk came out of his study at the top of the upper hall. "Is that Mr. Barnes, Faith? Tell him to come up."

Faith at once stepped aside, and a shabby-looking man came in. As he passed the door of the sitting-room he bowed clumsily, and said, "Good morning, Mrs. Kirk." Then he stumbled noisily up stairs and entered Malcom's study. The door closed, and Faith went back to her work.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### FAITH LEAVES THE HOME-NEST.

As she picked up the coat she was looking at her mother closely, and could see that she was troubled.

"Mother," said Faith, suddenly, "I don't think people ought to impose on father the way they do. They know he would take everything he has and give it away, if we don't prevent him, and they just impose on his great-hearted generosity. And you and the boys have to suffer for it."

"Hush, Faith! Your father does what seems to him the wise and Christian thing to do. It is true that everybody in the county comes to him for help. But that is what makes his work what it is. There is no one else they think of that way." Dorothy spoke with the pride of twenty-five years' companionship with the man of her choice. She loved him now with deeper, truer devotion than she had ever known in her younger days.

Faith was silent a moment. "But how can father afford to give money to people? I don't think he ought to."

Dorothy did not answer at once.

"If people need the help of money more than anything else, how else shall we help them? Sympathy and prayers don't seem to be enough in such cases."

"I think father might make Mr. Barnes a present of a box of soap," said Faith. "I am sure he needs that as much as the five dollars he has come to beg for."

"They are very poor," sighed Dorothy.

"So are we," replied Faith. "Or we shall be if we always give to everybody."

Dorothy did not answer this, and Faith picked up the coat and worked on in silence. She was evidently planning something serious in her mind. It was not the first time she had ventured to remonstrate about the habit her father had of helping all sorts of people. Until a few years past, Dorothy had not allowed a thought of the matter to disturb her. Malcom's salary was very small still. The most rigid economy was necsesary to keep the family expenses within the income. The annual income from his writings now amounted to about five hundred dollars, but a large part of it was given away, and Dorothy faced increasing difficulty each year in managing the household finances.

The study door opened, and Malcom and his visitor came down stairs.

"I'm going out for a little while, Dorothy. Mrs. Barnes is very sick, and I am going over there. Don't wait dinner for me, if I'm not back before half-past twelve."

He kissed his wife and went out. Faith and her mother watched the tall heavy figure go out of the yard with the unattractive Barnes shambling after him. Malcom was growing gray, but he was erect and vigorous in his prime, and to these two women watching him out of the window, he was the best man in the world.

"I'd like to see any one say anything against father!" said Faith decidedly, while an unusual tear came into her eyes. At the same time her mother and herself were wondering how Malcom ever found time to write his sermons or anything else.

Faith stole up to the study and looked at the loose leaves of the sermon on the father's desk. The last words he had written were a quotation: "Whoso giveth to the poor, lendeth unto the Lord."

"Dear old father," said Faith softly. "I'd better let the Lord rebuke him. At the same time we've got to live.

Here I am a woman grown and earning no bread, and the boys want to go to college, and mother saving every cent—"

She went off to her own room that afternoon and brooded. When Faith brooded, something happened. And it was not altogether a surprise to Dorothy when a few days afterwards Faith announced her decision :

" Mother, I have made up my mind to go away and earn something for the family. I've tried every possible place here, and you know how it is."

Dorothy looked at the girl gravely, but did not say anything.

" I have been writing to Grace Holley, who went to Chicago a year ago to learn re-touching in Keffen's studio. She is earning as high as seventeen and eighteen dollars a week. She says there will be a vacancy there soon, and if I apply at once I may get the place. You know I have learned re-touching here, all they can teach me, and I like it. Mother, I can't stand it any longer to remain here at home doing nothing. The boys will soon want to go to college. I never cared about it. I want to be a photographer, or an architect, or a paper-hanger, or something useful. If father can spare enough money to get me started, I can be in a position before the year is out to help the family. We never can break father of his habits of helping everybody, and I want to be self-supporting and help the rest, too."

This was a long speech for Faith to make, but it was the beginning of several family conferences, and the end of it all was that one day in winter of that year, Faith and her father went down to the station, and Faith took the express for Chicago. The arrangements had all been completed for her to enter the studio, where she was to receive eight dolars a week to begin with, and promise of rapid increase if the work was satisfactory.

" Good bye, father. Don't give away your overcoat

before you get home, will you?" Faith called out of the window, as the train started.

Malcom Kirk smiled and waved his hand. Then he ran along the platform and handed up an envelope to Faith. She managed to kiss his hand as she took the envelope, and then leaned back in her seat and cried.

When she opened the envelope, a check for $25 dropped out.

"This is a 'Youth's Companion,' my dear. You will find it good company on the road. Your father." This was written hastily in a note with the check. Faith understood it was the price of a story Malcom had written for the Companion that fall. She tucked the check into her purse and cried harder than ever.

But when she found herself in Chicago next morning, she set herself resolutely and with courage toward her new life.

The work in the studio was extremely interesting to her. Her letters to the people at home were very entertaining, and even funny. But after she had been in the city a few months, she was obliged to face a serious condition, one that she had not anticipated.

In the first place, it cost her nearly every cent of the eight dollars a week to live. But, economize as she would, after counting out rent, and fuel, and light, with what her clothes and car fare cost, with everything that must enter into the account of daily existence, she had very little left when Sunday came.

One day she realized with a shock that she had been obliged to draw on the $25 check. She had used all the money her father had been able to spare. The work in the studio had for several weeks been piece work, and it happened that business was dull, and several weeks she had been able to earn less than five dollars.

Then came a crisis that she had not counted on. The studio changed hands, and the new proprietor began to

cut down expenses and dismiss some of the retouchers. Faith was one of the latest arrivals, and one evening as she came down to the office from the little workshop under the roof, she was notified that her services would not be wanted after the next week.

She went out of the studio, and, instead of taking the car as she usually was obliged to do on account of the distance to her room, she walked on until she was at the corner of Madison and State streets.

She plunged through that boiling crowd of humanity, and started to walk up State street the four miles that yet lay between her and her room. And as she walked on, she was deeply thinking of what she would do. The idea of writing home for money was so distasteful that she could not bear to entertain it. Her lips closed firmly, and she said to herself, "I never will do it while I can live. I have made a failure out of it so far here, but I can't burden father and mother right now. I know how matters are going at home with all the expense there, and Hermon's illness last month. No, no. I started out to be a bread-winner. I must earn my own living."

She was suddenly brought to a stop by a crowd that filled up the sidewalk in front of a large window. There was a picture on exhibition there, and Faith, after running into one or two people, seeing what was the object of attraction, stopped herself, and gradually was pushed up to the window as the crowd went and came.

It was an oil painting, with life-size figures, representing the deck of an ocean steamer. A man was holding a baby in his arms, and the baby was looking up into the man's face and smiling. The title of the picture in gilt letters on the frame was simply, "Motherless."

It was one of those pictures that appeal to a common humanity, and the crowd on the sidewalk was irresistibly drawn to it. But the effect on Faith was electrical. As

soon as she had seen the face of the man on the canvas, she exclaimed aloud, "Why, that's father!"

Those nearest her looked at her in surprise. She checked herself and was silent. But there before her was the likeness of Malcom Kirk as she had seen him in the sketch her mother had often shown her. And the story of the baby whose mother had died in mid-ocean was familiar to all the children at home.

She looked at the corner of the canvas and saw the artist's name, Francis Raleigh. A card in the window announced the fact that the picture was sold, and that the artist's studio was in one of the new blocks on Randolph street.

Faith pushed out of the crowd and went on her way. But the picture affected her deeply. The sight of the dear father protecting that motherless baby made her cry. And it also strengthened her purpose not to appeal for financial help from home. She could not have told why that feeling accompanied her sight of the picture. But it did, and she determined that she would make every effort to support herself without help from home.

The end of the following week found her without a place, and as she came away from the studio that Saturday evening she realized, as never before in her life, what it meant to a girl without any friends or a home to face a great city without work or means. She knew that she could go home at any time, or get help from that source if she asked for it. But how about the great army of unemployed that had not even that resort? She shivered as she turned down towards the great artery of the city's human traffic, and was swept along with it.

She went up by the window where the picture was still on exhibition, and there was the usual crowd in front of it.

She stopped again and looked hungrily at it. It was like getting a glimpse into the dear home circle in the parsonage at Conrad.

It was, perhaps, a little strange that she had not entertained the idea of calling at Raleigh's studio and telling him that she was the daughter of his subject in the picture. But Faith was very shy in some ways, and she simply never thought of trying to meet the artist.

As she stood there this Saturday night, two men in the crowd were talking about the picture. They stood so near her that she could not help hearing what they said.

"It seems too bad to take the picture out of the window."

"We can leave it there another week."

"When do you start west?"

"The last of next month."

"Better leave it till then."

"I think so, too. But what a force it has, Malcom."

Faith started at the familiar name, and looked up.

The man who spoke was a middle-aged, gray-bearded gentleman, and the man whom he called "Malcom" was, perhaps, twenty-five years old, a stalwart, fine-looking fellow, with something in his face that made Faith puzzle over something foreign there. For an instant their eyes met. Then Faith blushed and moved back out of the crowd, and went on. She did not look back, but she semed to feel that the two gentlemen were looking after her.

"They are the persons who have bought the picture and will take it away," she said as she walked along. She was sad at the thought, for she had come to cherish the look at the father's face, which she had enjoyed every day since she first saw it there.

During the next few weeks Faith had an experience that tried her as she had never been tried.

She visited scores of photographers' studios to get piece work. In some of them she would find waiting a dozen girls all on the same errand. She proved the value

of her work on several occasions, for she had learned to do the retouching in a superior manner, and still, work as hard as she would, the orders she could get did not equal her expenses, which she had reduced to the lowest possible figures.

She came back to her room one day after an unsuccessful application for orders in twenty places, thoroughly tired, for she had walked a good many miles, and the streets were running over with mud and snow.

She counted over her money, and, for the first time, realized that she had reached the end. She was determined not to run in debt, although her landlady in the flat had been very kind.

She went down to a little news stand on the corner and bought an evening paper, and looked over the wilderness of "wants," and wondered how, in a city like that, any one ever found anything to do. She envied the butcher's boy, who was just coming out of a market near by, and thought of asking him how he managed to get his position, while so many boys were probably without any.

She took the paper to her room, and finally settled on one advertisement as offering a possible chance for her.

She had made up her mind for several weeks that she could not make a living by retouching.

"I'll do it," she said, with a faint flush of color in her face. "I wonder what mother would say!"

The advertisement was as follows:

"Wanted—An American girl to do cooking and general housework. Wages satisfactory. Apply, with references, to No. —, Ellis Avenue."

"If I can get four dollars a week with my board, I can save nearly every cent of it," said Faith, resolutely. "And mother taught me how to cook. I am sure it is as honorable a way to earn a living as working in a store."

There was a bit of adventure in it also that attracted her. The thought of Dorothy Gilbert's daughter working out as a "hired girl" gave Faith something of a surprise at herself, but it was a part of her love of experiments that made possible the strange experience she was now about to know.

She went to the studio early Monday morning and secured good references. For the rest she said she would frankly ask the people to try her for a week, at least, and then employ her for what she could do.

She took a Cottage Avenue car, and went directly to the number on Ellis avenue. It was a large house with a verandah on three sides. She went around to the side entrance, and, mounting the steps, rang the bell, her heart trembling a little as she did so.

## CHAPTER XV.

### FAITH BECOMES A "HIRED GIRL."

When the door opened, there stood, facing Faith, a good-looking, well-dressed woman, who was, evidently, the mistress of the house.

"I have come in answer to your advertisement, ma'am," said Faith, slowly. She was unexpectedly embarrassed by the woman's silent look.

"Will you come in?"

The woman pointed to a chair, and Faith sat down. It was the dining room, a fine large room, evidently well kept.

"My name is Faith Kirk. I have been at work as a re-toucher in Keffen's studio, and here are some references from that place."

Faith handed them out, and the woman took them and carefully read them. While she was reading, Faith looked about, shyly but observantly. She liked the appearance of the house.

"Have you ever worked out in the city?" asked the woman suddenly, as she finished the references.

"No, ma'am. I came here to work in the studio, and lost my position there owing to a reduction of hands."

"Can you cook?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Faith, modestly.

"And do the housework for a family of four? There are my husband, and my son and daughter."

"I think I can do it. I am sure I can. I am strong and well." Faith spoke with some pride, for whether she had her mother's beauty or not, she had inherited her parent's splendid physique.

The woman of the house looked at her in some hesitation.

"I don't know you at all," she finally said.

"No, ma'am. I don't know you, either." Faith said it without the least appearance of being impertinent, and after the fashion of Malcolm Kirk she looked straight in the other's eyes as she spoke.

The woman coloured at first, and then smiled a little.

"It does seem to be about an even thing, doesn't it? Well, the references are good as far as they go. Would you come for a week on trial? I have generally hired my help in that way."

"Yes, ma'am."

"I am willing to pay three and a half a week if you can do the cooking. Or even four dollars, if you can do all the work satisfactorily."

"I will come on trial, and if I don't please you, you can dismiss me," said Faith a little eagerly. There was something about the woman's manner that seemed to her cold and unnecessarily business-like, but, on the whole, it seemed like a desirable place to work.

"My name is Fulton. Yours is?"

"Kirk, Faith Kirk."

"Ah, yes. Well, Faith, I'll show you your room. Have you a trunk?"

"Yes, ma'am. At my room." Faith gave her the number.

"I'll send an expressman after it." She went to a telephone in the next room and gave the necessary order. Faith had packed up her trunk so as to have it in readiness.

Mrs. Fulton led Faith upstairs to her room, which was a comfortable place, and as they stood there, she talked about the work expected of the "help."

"I suppose you will want your Thursday afternoon and Sunday, after dinner?"

"I suppose so," said Faith, a little vaguely.

Mrs. Fulton looked at her sharply.

"I have always been in the habit of giving my girls that amount of time. Of course, you don't have to take it if you don't want to."

"I should like my Sunday. I want to be able to go to church," said Faith, boldly.

"Of course. We have late dinner, say two or half-past. After that, you are at liberty for the rest of the day."

Faith did not say anything, and Mrs. Fulton took her down to the kitchen, which was furnished in a complete manner that pleased Faith the moment she stepped into it.

"Are you ready to begin work to-day?" asked Mrs. Fulton, after explaining the range, and showing Faith where articles were.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Very well. We have lunch at one. Dinner at half-past six. Mr. Fulton does not come out from the city until night. I expect my son and daughter from school always. Can you go ahead and get lunch without any help?"

"Yes, ma'am." Faith answered simply. She had determined to let her work speak for itself. She had her father's self-possesion in such matters. Besides, she found herself laboring under a pleasant excitement that stimulated her. She knew she would be able to do her best.

Mrs. Fulton looked at her new help again with some sharpness.

"Where did you say you were from? I mean, before you came to the city?"

"My home is in Kansas."

"That is a good ways from Chicago." Mrs. Fulton spoke in some surprise.

"No farther than Chicago is from Kansas," said

Faith, again after her fashion, looking straight at Mrs. Fulton.

The woman of the house seemed amused this time. She seemed also to be on the point of asking more questions. But finally went out of the kitchen, leaving Faith in possession there.

As Mrs. Fulton sat down in the parlor, she sighed, but it was evidently a sigh of relief.

"I never did such a thing before, to hire a girl on such slender knowledge. But she looked clean and intelligent," she said to herself. "And I am so tired of the help I have been having. I expect, of course, to be disappointed in her. I always am. But I'll let her try it for a week, and see."

Mrs. Fulton sighed again, and went upstairs to look after some of the work there, for no matter how many girls she might have had, or how capable they may have been, she was a born housekeeper, and never was satisfied unless she was doing something herself.

Meanwhile, Faith, down in the kitchen, planned and prepared a lunch that was a delightful surprise to the family when it sat down at half-past twelve. She had rightly supposed that Mrs. Fulton was a generous provider, and she found an excellent supply of everything in the larder. Dorothy had taught Faith cooking, and had even gone beyond the simple, plain cooking ordinarily common to the life in the parsonage. It was a not a difficult thing, therefore, with the supply before her, for Faith to produce a dainty and appetizing lunch.

When she rang the bell a few minutes before the time, the boy, who had been in the library, came in and sat down at once. Mrs. Fulton, who had not been able to keep out of the kitchen altogether, in spite of her determination to let the new girl manage alone, sat down with a feeling of surprise as she viewed the table. The girl, who was about Faith's age, came in from the parlor,

where she had been playing exercises on the piano, and the lunch proceeded with many favorable comments, especially from the boy, who had brought home with him a school-boy's appetite.

"Say, this salad is all right," said the young gentleman, as he passed his plate for the third time. "Hope you'll keep this new girl for life."

"She certainly has done very well for the first time. I expect it will wear off soon. We never had a girl yet that kept it up very long," said Mrs. Fulton. She rang the bell for something, and Faith came in. It was the first time the boy and girl had seen her.

She was somewhat embarassed, but she served something on the table quietly and gracefully. Something in her manner seemed to attract the girl, who, after a moment of awkward silence said:

"Mother, you have forgotten to introduce Roy and me."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Fulton, with a shade of annoyance. "Yes, this is my daughter, Alice, and my son, Roy—Faith—what did you say your other name was?"

"Kirk, Faith Kirk."

"Yes, Kirk. You can bring in the desert now, Faith, if you have any. Have you?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Faith. She could not help looking at the other girl with interest. She was pale, and did not seem to be very well. She was the extreme opposite of her mother, evidently. There was a pleasant smile on her face as she nodded to Faith, and Faith would have been a very stupid girl if she had not noticed the look and been warmed at the heart by it.

"Wish you would leave that salad here," said Roy, as Faith was about to take it off the table.

"Roy," said his mother, sharply. "You have had all the salad that is good for you to-day. Faith, take it out."

Faith removed the dish, and Roy made a face, and said, "What have you got for dessert? Apple pie?"

Mrs. Fulton rebuked him again, and Faith went out with the dishes. She cleared the cloth deftly, and then brought in the desert, which to Master Roy's great satisfaction happened to be a delicious apple pie, made from one of Dorothy's own recipes.

"This is what I call a pie," said Roy, as he attacked a segment which represented about a quarter of the circle.

"It won't be a pie very long, at the rate you are eating now," said his sister.

"There's another, I hope, isn't there?" he asked Faith, anxiously. "I like it cold for dinner."

Faith nodded, and Mrs. Fulton looked sternly at her boy. But she was pleased with the new girl so far. When the lunch was over, and Faith was clearing everything away, Mrs. Fulton and the children were talking about her in the parlor.

"Mother, I'm sure she's not just an ordinary hired girl. She seemed to me like a lady," said Alice.

"You needn't try to spoil her," Mrs. Fulton spoke with a near approach at irritation. "She is apparently a capable girl as far as cooking goes. She may be a failure in other ways."

"The cooking is the main thing," said Master Roy, as he strapped his books together and started off to school. "That last girl we had didn't know how to boil eggs. I vote for the new girl every time."

That afternoon Faith continued with her work, conscious that so far she had pleased the family. When Mr. Fulton came home and sat down to the dinner, he was agreeably surprised and joined with the rest in praises of the new girl.

"I think you have fond a treasure," said Mr. Fulton. "And if so, we ought to pay her four dollars a week. She is a superior cook."

"By all means, my dear," said Mrs. Fulton. "We can afford to give that to keep her."

When Faith came in to serve that evening, she was startled as she recognized in Mr. Fulton the gray-haired man who had stood in front of the picture with the young gentleman he had called "Malcom." Evidently, Mr. Fulton did not recognize her, or remember that he had seen her before. He seemed like a man who was completely engrossed in his business. He was generous, and wanted the best of everything, especially for his table. Like the others in his family, he welcomed, with a feeling of relief, the domestic service, which meant comfort and pleasure in the affairs of the kitchen and the table.

At the close of the week Mrs. Fulton felt so well satisfied that she told Faith she would give her four dollars a week to remain. Faith accepted the offer, and in her room that Saturday night, she took account of her surroundings with considerable satisfaction.

"I am really making more money than I was in the studio," she said to herself. "Nearly all I make now is clear gain. I get my board, room and washing, and that saves a large bit of expense. If I went into a store at five or six dollars a week, and had to pay my board, I couldn't save anything."

She was right about that, for she had come away from home well provided with clothes, and her expenses, outside of board, and room, and car fare, had been almost nothing.

There was one thing that troubled her now, however. She had not written home of her present place of work. She said to herself that she ought to tell her mother frankly how it all came about, and that resolve seemed to give her peace of mind. She would write home to-morrow, Sunday afternoon.

But when Sunday came, several things happened through the day to disturb her.

In the first place Mrs. Fulton informed her that they were to have company for half-past two dinner, and Faith knew that meant a hard forenoon's work.

"It doesn't seem right for people to have company dinner on Sunday," she said to herself, as she cleared away the breakfast dishes and proceeded to wash them while the family went into the parlor for Sunday morning prayers.

The kitchen door had been left a little ajar, and presently Faith could hear the piano. Mr. Fulton never had family worship during the week. He was too busy to stop for it in the morning. But Sunday he held to the custom which his own father had strictly observed back in New England, not only in the morning of every day, but at night as well.

Alice was playing. The family had read a passage from the Bible in turn, and now, before the prayer, they were singing.

"Welcome, Sweet Day of Rest," floated out through the dining-room into the kitchen, and Faith paused as she wiped a dish, and, to tell the truth, a very hot tear dropped down into the dish water. She had not been asked to unite with these Christian people in worship, and for a moment an angry, hard, rebellious spirit stirred in the girl as she listened to the familiar hymn. It was one the family at home often sung at prayers on Sunday.

Mr. Fulton kneeled to pray. He was a trustee in a large and fashionable church, had a class in the Sunday School, and was considered to be a strictly honorable, exemplary Christian man. It never crossed his mind that the servant in his kitchen could possibly need or want a little worship with other Christian pepole. As for Mrs. Fulton, she had never invited her help into the parlor for such services. It was her theory and practice that is was best not to encourage familiarity with the "domestic." Alice was troubled over the matter, and

had, in fact, once or twice timidly said something, but Mrs. Fulton silenced her objections always by saying, "The girls never want to come into prayers. So what is the use of asking them?"

In the kitchen of the Fulton mansion that Sunday morning, while the family was all away at church, a struggle was going on that would possibly have startled the complacent doctor at Mr. Fulton's church as he preached beautifully from the text, "There is no respecter of persons with God."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### FAITH FIGHTS A BATTLE AND "OVERCOMES."

Faith Kirk was having one of her great battles as she worked over that Sunday dinner. And she had not fought it out when the family returned, bringing with them four friends of Mr. Fulton, business acquaintances from other cities, whose good will it was necessary to keep.

The dinner was served promptly, and Faith had no reason to feel afraid of her success. Mrs. Fulton even came out into the kitchen when it was over and complimented her on the dinner.

The guests lighted cigars and retired to the library with Mr. Fulton. It was now nearly four o'clock. By the time everything was cleared away in the kitchen it was half-past four, and in the short winter day dark already.

Faith went up to her room tired and rebellious. She sat down, and at first said she would not go to church. Then she thought of the dear home circle, and for almost the first time since she came away she grew dreadfully homesick.

She threw herself down on her bed in the dark and had a good, hard cry.

When it was over she felt somewhat ashamed, and lay still awhile thinking. Then she rose and suddenly turned on her electric light.

"Faith Kirk, you are ashamed of yourself. Is this Malcom Kirk's daughter?" She asked the question as she put on her cloak and hat and resolutely determined to go to church and be a good Christian in spite of her troubles.

"To him that overcometh," the verse happened to be

the subject of the Endeavor meeting that very night, and as she took up her Bible and went out of the house she was feeling better as she started down the avenue and then turned towards one of the churches of the same denomination as the one at home. For she was homesick enough to feel that she would enjoy the worship better in such a church.

Faith's Sundays in Chicago since she had been there were not at all like the Sundays at home. She had at first tried to attend a church near her boarding place. But at the end of her studio experience she had found some Sunday work to do in connection with one of the Social Settlements. That work was now too far away, and she was compelled to give it up.

To-night she said she would go to the Endeavor meeting in the large church only a few blocks from Mrs. Fulton's. She had seen the notice on the outside of the building, giving 6 o'clock as the hour of service.

The young people held their meeting in the chapel or prayer meeting room adjoining the main room. It was beautifully lighted and furnished, and as Faith went in she was greeted at the door by a young woman, who gave her a topic card and a hymn book, and then showed her to a seat.

The meeting began promptly, and Faith could not help wondering a little as she looked around at the very well dressed young men and women, how much any of them knew about the struggle of overcoming. The next moment she rebuked herself for judging others.

"They all have their trials, no doubt," she said. "It won't do to judge from appearances. Rich folks are not the happiest ones."

She enjoyed the singing, and some of the most familiar Endeavor songs brought tears to her eyes.

When the hour was about half gone, Faith had an impulse to give her testimony. She kept saying to herself

that what she had been through that day was something that might help others. In her father's church at home the young people had always been encouraged to help one another by relating their experiences, and Faith had no other thought in mind when she rose during a pause and told very frankly something of her struggle that very day.

The young people all turned and looked at her in surprise. Faith knew how to express herself very well. Her father had helped her very much. She did not mean to exaggerate her difficulties, but she spoke more frankly than she might if she had not been overflowing from the day's experience. Besides, her heart warmed to find herself in the society once more, and she longed for the Christian fellowship.

When she sat down she had time to think if she had said anything she ought not. She had simply confessed her struggles as the Bible said Christians ought, and she had only incidentally mentioned the fact that she was working out. At home they had girls in the society who worked out at service and they did not think much about it.

But before the meeting was over she grew hot and cold by turns as she thought of having told all those young people that she was a "hired girl." She was almost tempted to get up again and tell them that she was the daughter of a minister and a high school graduate, and that her father had more than one letter from the pastor of the very church where she now was, commending the work done in Conrad and asking for counsel as to similar work in the great city. Then she glowed with shame for her lack of courage. "If I did tell them what I am doing, it is no disgrace! It is an honest thing to do. I am not ashamed of it."

In spite of all that, when the meeting was over, Faith fancied that the girl who had been sitting next to her

turned away very hurriedly without trying to speak to her. The one who had ushered her to her seat, however, came to her and introduced her to a girl standing near by. The girl shook hands rather stiffly, and then excused herself, saying she had some commttee work to do. Faith was left standing alone, and no one else spoke to her. She tried to believe that there was no intention in the neglect. But her face burned, and she finally resolved to go out, to shake the dust of that church from her feet, and never return to it.

She had reached the door, when the face of her father came up before her, the patient, loving, long-suffering father at home, who had, to Faith's own knowledge, endured for years numberless privations and slights without losing his Christian manhood or courage. With the face of her father also came another, the Master's, as Faith remembered it from one of the pictures she had at home of Christ in Gethsemane.

"This is not overcoming," she said to herself, and at the door of the chapel she stopped, walked back to the church door entrance and went into the main room.

An usher showed her to a good seat, and she sat there with her head bowed for fifteen minutes before the service began. When she raised her head, her eyes were wet with tears, and the people near her looked surprised. But Faith had overcome. She had fought another battle on that eventful Lord's Day, and had won the victory.

When the service began she enjoyed it. The singing was by a quartet, and to Faith in her present condition the music came with refreshing. The sermon helped her too. It was on the subject of Christ's sufferings, and she felt ashamed as she listened and compared her own troubles with those of the great Sufferer for the sins of a whole world.

At the close of the service she hesitated, but finally

went up to the front of the church and introduced herself to the minister.

He was one of the Chicago pastors who had known her father when he was in the seminary. They were not in the same class, but had corresponded a little of late years.

"What!" he exclaimed, as Faith spoke her name. "Miss Kirk, of Conrad! My dear," he called to his wife, who was near by, "this is Malcom Kirk's daughter. You remember his stories in the Companion. Our boys think there are no stories just like his. We are so glad to see you!"

The minister's wife greeted her very kindly, and Faith almost cried, she was so touched by their cordial reception.

"Where are you stopping in the city?" the minister asked.

Faith hesitated, and then frankly told him where she was and what she was doing. There was a moment's look of surprise on the face of the minister and his wife, but they were genuine Christians, and without asking any more questions, the minister's wife said, as she laid a loving hand on Faith's arm:

"My dear, come and take tea with us next Sunday evening at five. Don't fail, will you?"

She gave Faith her house number, and Faith walked out of the church feeling as if some Christianity were left in that great sinful city after all.

That night she wrote home a long letter to her mother, telling her all about her work, and especially the experience of that day. When she finished it, she prayed for blessing on all the dear home circle, and in greater peace of soul than she had known in a long time she committed herself to the care of the All-Father.

As the week's work begun again, the Fultons found themselves wondering how long the new girl's capabilities would hold out. Faith combined her father's physical

endurance and her mother's New England thrift and neatness. Her meals were delightful surprises to every member of the family. Her good nature seemed unfailing.

"We've got a real treasure," even Mrs. Fulton confessed Wednesday evening to her husband. "The only thing I dread is that she may not hold out. I have never been satisfied with any girl I ever had."

"Perhaps you expected too much," Mr. Fulton suggested, absently, as he continued to read his paper.

"I'm sure we pay enough to get satisfactory help," she replied. "If the capable American girls would only work out more, we housekeepers would not have so many trials." Mrs. Fulton sighed, but it is possible if she had changed places with Faith that Sunday she might have understood better why more American girls do not work out at service.

Thursday morning Mrs. Fulton went down to the city on some shopping, and Faith was alone in the house. She started her kitchen work early, and then went into the parlor to sweep and dust.

The piano was open, and one of Sousa's new marches was on the rack where Alice had left it. She had been practicing it that morning before she went away to school.

Faith had received a good musical education from her mother. The piano at home had been one of the few expensive things that Dorothy had kept and taken with her when she left her home in the east. Faith was like her mother in having a real passion for music, and she had a more than ordinarily good ear, and her technic was almost professional.

She had not an opportunity to touch a piano since leaving home. The sight of the open keyboard and the new music fascinated her. Gradually she neared the piano as she was dusting off the furniture, and finally she sat down on the stool and began dusting the keys.

The sound of the notes as her cloth pressed on the ivory seemed to make her forget her surroundings.

She changed the dusting cloth to her left hand and struck a few chords with her right. The instrument was in fine tune, and before she knew what she was doing she had dropped her cloth on the floor and began the opening measures of the march before her.

After a few attempts the music began to come to her. The march was not difficult, and she was fairly caught by its popular swing and rythm. She forgot where she was, and what she was, a "hired girl," who was not supposed to know anything about pianos and marches. Her fingers seemed to regain their old nimbleness, and she was swept on into the piece with an enthusiasm and pleasure she had not known in a long time.

But just as she had finished the music with a splendid close, and felt the glow of the effort, she was conscious of someone in the room.

She turned around with a face that burned and saw, standing at the entrance of the hall into the parlor, three persons.

They were Mrs. Fulton, who stood staring at her with a cold, stern look; Alice, who seemed astonished at the performance, and the young man whom Mr. Fulton had addressed in front of the picture on State street as "Malcom." They had come in unexpectedly, and all three had evidently been standing there for some little time. There was an expressive silence in the parlor as Mrs. Fulton came a few steps into the room and confronted Faith, who still sat on the piano stool looking at her.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### FRANCIS RALEIGH AND DOROTHY GILBERT'S DAUGHTER BECOME ACQUAINTED.

Mrs. Fulton was first to speak.

"When you are through playing the piano you can go on with your work," she said, coldly.

Faith stooped and picked up the dusting cloth and then rose to her feet.

"I didn't hurt your piano," the words were on her lips and her heart was hot within her. But she choked the words down, and without replying to Mrs. Fulton, she started to go out. Even in her excited condition of mind she could not help noticing that the young man was gazing at her with great attention.

"It is not your place to touch the piano," continued Mrs. Fulton, who was angry. "You can leave it alone after this."

"Mother!" Alice spoke up in a tone of timid remonstrance. "There has been no harm done, has there? She plays better than I do. I never knew before how that march ought to sound."

"You're right about that," said the young man, in a big, hearty voice. "It was finely done, and I've heard it played by Sousa's band, too."

Faith colored to her hair at the unexpected praise, while Mrs. Fulton shut the piano with a bang and looked extremely annoyed.

"You can finish your work here some other time," she said to Faith, sharply.

Faith went out of the parlor without having said a word. She was glad when she reached the kitchen that

she had controlled herself, but the effort not to say something in defence, to excuse her action, cost her a tremendous struggle. As she prepared the mid-day meal she choked several times with a dry sob as she realized that she must not try to be anything but a hired girl while employed in that capacity.

"This isn't the work I ought to do," she said to herself again and again. "But I am doing the best I can. I wouldn't have touched the piano if I hadn't forgotten myself at the sight of the music. If I can get anything else to do, I won't stay here. But what can I do, unless I give up everything and go home? I won't do that until I have to."

Then she quieted her excitement by recalling the home circle. Her father's face came up before her and she said: "I am selfish to mind such a thing. For dear father's sake!"

When she appeared at the table in answer to Mrs. Fulton's ring of the bell the first time she showed no signs of temper, and served quietly and cheerfully. Mrs. Fulton looked at her sharply several times, but apparently found nothing in the girl's face to annoy her. The only embarrassing feature of the meal to Faith was the fact that the young man, Malcom, was looking at her very directly. It was not a stare, but it embarrassed Faith somewhat. His face was honest and manly, but the look he often turned towards her was very searching.

She was relieved when the meal was over and she could clear things away. It was Thursday afternoon, and she very quickly put her kitchen to rights and, running up to her room, she put on hat and cloak and went out. She determined to have another look at the picture on State street if it were still there. And if it was gone, a plan had suddenly come to her mind which she had resolved to try before going back to the Fulton's.

She had been gone out of the house only a few min-

utes, when a conversation occurred in the parlor which would have interested her intensely if she could have heard it.

The young man, Malcom, had been ill at ease all through the lunch time. When it was over he had gone into the library, where he had asked leave to write a letter. He was evidently a business acqaintance of Mr. Fulton's, but the conversation at the table revealed the fact that he had not been in the Fulton home before.

He finished his letter and went into the parlor. Mrs. Fulton and Alice were there. The girl had not gone to school on account of not feeling well.

"I'm sorry that Mr. Fulton did not come out this noon, Mr. Stanley," said Mrs. Fulton, who seemed anxious to please him. "I am sure he must have been unavoidably detained in the city. He telephoned out in the early part of the forenoon that he would try to meet you here. I know he wanted to see you before you go West."

"Yes, madam," replied Malcom Stanley. He spoke respectfully, but one who knew him well would have said his tone lacked heartiness. He was evidently very much disturbed about something.

He walked to the window and looked out. Alice went over to the piano and opened it. She sat down and played a few bars of the march. Often when she was feeling miserable a little music would relieve her.

The sound of the piano roused Malcom Stanley. He came back to the middle of the room, and taking a seat near Mrs. Fulton, he said, with some emphasis, as if he had been making up his mind to a course:

"Mrs. Fulton, where does your—girl—the girl who waited on the table, who was playing the piano—where did she come from? What is her name?"

Mrs. Fulton looked surprised, and also embarrassed.

"She is from Kansas, I believe she told me. Her

name is Faith. What is the girl's last name, Alice, I never can remember it?" she called to Alice.

Alice stopped playing and turned around on the piano stool.

"Kirk, Faith Kirk."

"Oh, yes; she's a peculiar girl in some ways, Mr. Stanley, as no doubt you noticed. It is not often that we housekeepers can furnish superior musicians to entertain guests," she added with a short laugh, which showed that she still thought of the incident of Faith at the piano with great annoyance.

But Malcom Stanley had risen, his whole expression betraying great excitement.

"If this girl's name is Kirk, Mrs. Fulton, and she is from Kansas, it is almost certain that she is the daughter of the man who was with my mother when she died in mid-ocean; the man who held me in his arms. The man who has always been in my thoughts as one of the heroes of the world."

Mrs. Fulton rose, looking bewildered. She was familiar with Francis Raleigh's painting, but she had never thought of associating Faith with it.

"I must see her," said Malcom Stanley. He spoke like one who has the right to command.

"I think she has gone out," said Mrs. Fulton. "Alice, will you go and see?"

Alice went out and soon came back saying that Faith had gone. Malcom Stanley paced the parlor in unusual agitation of manner.

"If this is the daughter of Malcom Kirk," he said to himself. Then he turned to Mrs. Kirk and bowed formally.

"You will excuse me, madam, if I take my leave now. I am obliged to make some arrangements about the picture at Mr. Raleigh's this afternoon."

"When do you leave for the west?" Mrs. Fulton asked. She was annoyed at the events of the day.

"I had planned to go to-morrow. I expect to visit Mr. Kirk on my way to Denver. But I feel anxious to see Miss Kirk before I go. She certainly must be his daughter. A 'hired girl,' as you call them, would not be likely to have such a musical education, and besides, she has the look in her face of the portrait. It must be she."

"Yes," cried Alice, her pale showing some colour under the excitement of such a discovery in real life. "She certainly played the piano like one who has had the best of teachers. And, besides, you can see from her manner that she is refined and lady-like." Alice spoke with a glow of unselfish feeling, and Malcom Stanley looked gratefully at her.

"I may come out with Mr. Fulton this evening," he said.

He bowed and went out, leaving Mrs. Fulton and Alice to talk over the matter, while he went down to Francis Raleigh's studio, determined every moment with increasing resolve to return and see Faith before the day was over.

Meanwhile, Faith had gone directly to the familiar window on State street, where the picture had been.

She knew before she reached the place that the picture was gone, because the usual crowd of people was not there. She stopped in front of the window, however, and read the address of the artist which was attached to a small scene of a foreign seaport. She hesitated a moment, and then resolutely went on to Randolph street, to the block where Raleigh's studio was.

His room was at the top of the building, and when she reached it she hesitated again before going in. When she finally opened the door, she drew back at the entrance, for the room appeared to be empty, except for a large canvas and a few decorations. There was another room

opening from the first, and after waiting a moment, Faith went on to the door of that room.

A man was sitting there with his back to the entrance, so absorbed in his work that he evidently had not heard her come in. But Faith was at once attracted by the sight of the familiar picture of the father which was on a great easel in front of the artist.

She came a few steps farther into the room, and still the artist did not look up; and it was only when Faith had advanced as far as the frame of the picture of her father that he turned his face and looked at her.

"I am Faith Kirk and that is my father," said Faith, speaking directly, after Malcom's own manner, and pointing at the portrait. "I've come on a rather peculiar errand, Mr. Raleigh, but you won't blame me for it, I'm sure."

"Blame the daughter of Dorothy Gilbert!" cried Francis Raleigh. His once heavy, black hair was streaked with gray, and he had grown noticeably old in many ways, but he was a handsome and well-preserved gentleman, and the old Raleigh manner sat on him with even more grace than when he was young.

He rose and bowed with an elegant politeness that brought the color to Faith's cheek, and for a moment they stood facing each other in silence. Then Raleigh brought a chair and Faith sat down, while the artist looked at her with great and increasing interest.

"I suppose you have come to take me to task for painting this picture," he said. "It was in one sense a very bold thing for me to do. I think, however, your father will forgive me. I am sure he will when he knows all about my reasons for doing it." He spoke in a tone that made Faith feel somehow that the picture had had a real influence on the life of the artist, as, indeed, it had, and the telling of it at another time revealed the fact that Francis

Raleigh had gone through an experience of moral struggle that had left him also victor in overcoming.

"I'm sure father would be pleased," said Faith, slowly. Then she paused, for suddenly one of her shy spells came over her, and she did not know how to go on. For the first time she seemed to feel as if perhaps her errand would be considered unusual.

"What can I do for you?" said Raleigh. He spoke in a way that removed Faith's shyness at once. If it had not been for that she would have gone away without telling him what she had come for.

"Of course," he continued, "I am wondering every minute how you happened to come in here. For your home is in Kansas, isn't it, and I—"

"Will you let me tell how I happened to be here?" said Faith, feeling more confident in her errand. "I shall have to tell it before you will understand why I have come."

"Yes, tell me your story," said Raleigh, smiling encouragingly. So Faith related her experience in the photographer's studio and her present place of work at the Fulton's, whereat Francis Raleigh opened his eyes a little, but he continued to listen in sympathetic silence.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A HAPPY MEETING IN THE STUDIO.

His love for Dorothy Gilbert had long ago passed into a memory. He was married now, and had a wife and children whom he dearly loved. But as Faith went on and made her errand to him clear, he thought back in silent wonder at that time when Malcom Kirk had crossed the ocean with him and he had thoughtlessly made the sketch which meant so much now to more than one person.

"And I've come here now," continued Faith, as she concluded the story of her experiences, "to see if you would give me a letter of introduction or recommendation to some place where I could do the work that I feel that I ought to be doing. I'm very proud. I don't mean that I am in any way ashamed of the housework," Faith's cheeks glowed with sudden color, "but I am sure I can do something different, something that the world needs more. Sometimes when I look at a picture like that, I feel as if I could, in time, paint something almost as good."

Francis Raleigh bowed and a pleased smile came over his face. Not all the praise from the art critics of his picture had gratified him so much.

"If I could get a permanent position somewhere, I know I could work up into a place of usefulness. I can do the retouching, and I like to do it. And in time I might have a studio of my own. There are several successful women photographers here."

"That's true, and I know one or two of them," said Raleigh, thoughtfully. He never knew how much it had

cost Faith to ask him what she did. She had no foolish pride that some girls have, and Malcom Kirk had always taught his own children, as well as others, that sometimes the most manly or womanly thing one can do was to receive help to help oneself, but Faith would never have come to Raleigh for such assistance if she had not somehow felt certain that she must have some friendly aid in the great city before she could do what she felt she must do in order to help the dear ones at home as well as herself.

There was silence in the studio for a moment. Then Raleigh said, while the smile on his handsome face lighted up like sunshine:

"How would you like to work in Miss Varney's studio at Kenwood?"

"It would be a beautiful place!" cried Faith with enthusiasm. She knew the famous studio which the richest people in the city patronized, and she had even been out to it twice to solicit orders, but each time had failed to get anything. It was an ideal place, and she could not help wondering if Raleigh knew anything of her experience there.

"Miss Varney is a niece of my wife," said Raleigh, smiling at Faith again. "Suppose, instead of writing you a letter of introduction, I go out there with you and introduce you in person?"

"That would be beautiful!" cried Faith. Then she grew suddenly shy again, and gazed at the artist half fearfully, as if she felt she might have trespassed somewhat on her knowledge of his old-time affection for her mother.

Raleigh seemed to read her thought.

"My dear girl," he said, with a smile that set Faith's mind forever at rest. "Perhaps you know that once I thought very much of your mother, but she gave her heart to a better man, for which I have never reproached her. How the years have gone since then!"

He was silent suddenly, and his face grew thoughtful. "Let us see. We shall have time to get out there this afternoon. I am at your service. Good-bye to the kitchen, and welcome the vocation you are fitted for. At the same time, I envy the people you are working for, if you are anything like the cook your mother used to be." He laughed so delightfully that Faith joined him, and neither of them heard a step in the other room, and did not know anyone had come in, until Malcom Stanley stood at the entrance gazing at them.

Raleigh had risen and had laid his palette and brushes down. At sight of Stanley he exclaimed, "Come in, young giant, and let me introduce someone you ought to know!"

Malcom came slowly forward, looking at Faith, who had risen. Each of them was evidently excited at what what was now evident to them both.

"Miss Kirk," said Raleigh with an emotion he did not try to conceal, "this is Mr. Stanley, Malcom Stanley, whose likeness I have so faithfully reproduced on the canvas there!"

Malcom and Faith faced each other in silence, and then Faith put out her hand.

"'Will you shake hands with a hired girl, Mr. Stanley, for father's sake?" she said, half shyly, half in the manner she had inherited from Malcom Kirk.

"Will I?" cried Malcom Stanley. The way he shook Faith's hand assured everybody that he had no hesitation on the score of Faith's position. They had all three been suddenly smitten with unusual solemnity, and Malcom's energetic handshake made Raleigh laugh. Faith followed and Malcom joined in, and the excitement of that sudden meeting passed into question and answer.

"It's a long ways from the deck of that steamer to this studio," said Malcom Stanley. "But truth is stranger than fiction, at least any fiction I ever read."

And then he went on to give Faith some account of his life since the time when Malcom Kirk had left him with his aunt in London.

The aunt had died when he was two years old, and he had been adopted into the family of a distant relative, taking the name of Malcom at his aunt's request, in loving memory of his queer nurse. The money that Kirk had raised on board the steamer had been fortunately invested. On coming of age this fund enabled the young man to fit himself for an engineer. He had risen steadily, and had at last been promoted to a place of great responsibility. The company for which he worked had interests in the United States and Malcom had come over to superintend the opening of some mines in Colorado and New Mexico. His business interests had made him acquainted with Mr. Fulton, and it was through him that he had made the acquaintanec of Mr. Raleigh, and finally purchased the picture with the intention of giving it to Malcom Kirk. The artist had insisted on practically giving a large share of the value of the picture to Stanley, and the latter had planned a surprise for Kirk on his way west.

All this, and more, did Faith hear, wonderingly. The short winter day was going by, and Raleigh suddenly interrupted the conversation.

"We shall have to give up our trip to Kenwood today, Faith."

"And I must be getting back to my work!" cried Faith, rising. She was like one who has been in a dream of the day. It all seemed so strange, the studio, the artist, the picture, the big, hearty, honest young Englishman. She found it hard to realize that she was actually in the heart of the great, rushing, prosaic, selfish city. All this was so like a story, like things one reads about, but so seldom knows in the real life.

"If your father were only here now," said Raleigh, whose romantic temperament was moved deeply by the

events of the day, "this room would contain all the elements of a genuine story."

As they spoke, they all three turned instinctively towards the entrance of the other room. There stood Malcom Kirk, his tall, heavy figure filling up the opening, and his homely, loving face showing unusual emotion.

"Father!" cried Faith, and the next minute she was in his arms, sobbing and exclaiming.

Then she stepped back, a little ashamed of her sudden outburst as she remembered the presence of the two men behind her, but she kept hold of Malcom's hand and drew him into the studio.

"How did you come here, father? We had no idea—"

"It's not a long story, my dear," said Malcom.

"Mr. Raleigh, how do you do? It's a long time since I saw you on the deck of that steamer." Malcom pointed to the picture, and still his great brown eyes rested on Malcom Stanley, who was standing there pale and excited.

Raleigh took Kirk's hand and shook it heartily. He then turned quickly to Stanley:

"You ought to know this gentleman, Mr. Kirk. You met him before I did."

Kirk stepped towards Stanley. Both men were deeply moved.

"You were with my mother when she died, Mr. Kirk," said Stanley in a voice that trembled a little.

"If we were Russians we would embrace each other now," cried Malcom Kirk, "but as you are an Englishman and I am an American, I suppose a hand-shake is the nearest we can get to it."

As he said it he grasped Stanley's big palm which went out to meet his, and Raleigh said afterwards he was sure he heard the bones snap, but neither man winced.

"The heart goes with it," said Malcom Stanley, admiring Kirk out of his honest face with a loving look.

Kirk drew back a little and gazed at the stalwart young figure. Then he glanced at the painting.

"I would not like to take the contract of holding you in my arms as I did then. But, as I remember, you were a very good baby."

"So he is now," said Raleigh, who had turned his face towards the easel to hide his emotion.

That made Faith laugh, and the rest joined her, and the tension of feeling broke, and they all grew more at ease. For several minutes questions and answers flew fast in the now darkening studio.

"Father, you must give an account of yourself. The rest of us know how we came to be here. But your presence is a mystery!" said Faith, drawing up closer to him.

"Well, my dear, it was your letter that brought me."

"My letter?"

"Yes, the one you wrote Sunday. Your mother was very anxious about you. You did not mean to tell us, but we read between the lines that you were having 'experiences,' as you call them. Besides, a check came from the Companion that morning, and I felt the need of a little vacation and came on to Chicago to study the 'hired girl problem' and other sociological experiments."

Faith laughed. Then she passed her hand over her father's sleeve.

"I do believe you have gone and bought a new overcoat! You aren't going to be sick, are you, father? Are you feeling all right in your mind?"

"Your mother made me promise that I would get one as soon as I reached the city," said Malcom, a little sheepishly. "It only cost eight dollars and a half. That was one reason I was late getting around to the Fulton's. The train was delayed by an accident, too."

"Eight dollars and a half," muttered Faith with some indignation. But the thought of the father and his love

for her that had brought him to the city softened her indignation. She clung to him closer, and the other men looked at father and daughter with great interest.

"How did you happen to know I was here?" asked Faith, suddenly.

"I didn't, but when I called at the Fulton's Mr. Stanley had just gone. Mrs. Fulton told me who he was, and confessed that she had no idea that you were in any way connected with the story of Stanley's life. She said he told her he expected to be at the studio this afternoon. No one knew where you had gone, and so I came down here to find him, intending to go back to the Fulton's by the time you returned."

"It's all simple enough, isn't it?" said Malcom Stanley, thoughtfully.

"Yes," said Faith. Then she suddenly remembered that she was a "hired girl," having a Thursday afternoon out.

"Father, I must be getting back to the Fulton's. They cannot live without me. Put that down in your sociological notes on the 'hired girl problem' that no matter how low in the scale the 'hired girl' may be, she is really of the first importance for the comfort and happiness of thousands of the best families in the land."

"That's true. Why isn't there some way, then, to elevate and dignify the service?" asked Malcom Kirk, who seemed ready to discuss the problem seriously.

"No, no, father! We can't stop to reform the world right here. It is too late. Do your want your daughter to be scolded for not getting dinner in time?"

"I am going back with you," said her father, rising.

Then he turned towards Stanley, who was looking a little anxiously at father and daughter.

"Come, Stanley, I'll take the liberty of asking you to come with us. Mrs. Fulton said you might return this evening, anyway. We haven't had our talk out, and I

will be responsible for the consequences of taking you out with us."

"I was planning to go," said Stanley, looking relieved. "I want to see Mr. Fulton again on business." He did not say that he wanted to see Faith.

"Come to think of it," said Raleigh, suddenly, "I have an invitation myself to take dinner with the Fultons to-night. Mrs. Raleigh is out of town, and Fulton asked me to come out and talk over a new art design he has received for the cover of his Mining Journal."

"But," cried Faith, in sore dismay. "Do you three big men realize that I am the 'hired girl' at the Fulton's? Do you think I can possibly get a dinner ready at this time of the day for such appetites as I am sure you all have?"

There was a look of embarrassment on the faces of Raleigh and Stanley, but Malcom Kirk settled the matter by saying, as he took Faith's arm and led her out of the studio:

"Don't be alarmed, gentlemen! I will speak for the dinner. Faith can make a palatable dinner out of bread and water in some mysterious way, and if anything else is wanted, we can feast on the remarkable events of this afternoon."

So they went out, laughing and talking, and as they took a carriage for Ellis avenue, the driver engaging to get them there before five o'clock, there was no more happy, light-hearted girl in the great city than Faith Kirk.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### FAITH FINDS A MORE CONGENIAL POSITION.

That was the most remarkable company dinner that Mrs. Fulton ever knew in her house. Faith insisted on going to work as if nothing unusual had happened. By seven o'clock everything was ready, and the company sat down. Malcom Stanley rubbed his eyes several times as Faith came in and removed the several courses and served with a quiet dignity that made its impression on every one. Mrs. Fulton was visibly embarrassed by the fact that the girl who was in her kitchen, her "help," was the daughter of Malcom Kirk, who was the author of such stories in The Companion. Roy had discovered his authorship at once by asking him a leading question, and Malcom had not been able to conceal his identity. There was an unusual respect in the young gentleman's attitude towards the Kansas preacher, a respect which, however, did not prevent him from eating the larger part of a dish of preserves, unobserved, during the general excitement of conversation. Malcom Kirk looked proudly at Faith every time she came into the room, and the fact that she was there serving in household work did not disturb him or give him any false feeling of shame. Even Mrs. Fulton had a vague dawning of the fact of nobility in service that had been an unknown thing to her, although she could not help feeling astonished whenever she looked around the table and realized who her guests were.

After dinner was over, Alice insisted on going out to help Faith. Her mother did not rebuke her, and Faith gratefully accepted her aid. When the work was all done, Mrs. Fulton came into the kitchen.

She was struggling with an unsal emotion, and it was not easy for her to say what she had prepared.

"Faith, Miss Kirk—of course—you must come into the parlor with us this evening. You ought to have told me who you were. I—I—perhaps I have not treated you just right. I don't know—"

"Don't say anything about that, ma'am," said Faith. "This experience has been worth a good deal to me. I'm afraid I've had some unchristian thoughts about you.

"You do not need to say anything about that," said Mrs. Fulton, hastily. Then she added in a tone that made Faith feel that she had been thinking a good deal of Faith's efficient service; "we shall not know how to get along without you. You have quite spoiled us for the average help."

"I'm glad if you've been pleased," replied Faith, and that was all that was said then, but the atmosphere between her and Mrs. Fulton cleared up wonderfully.

That evening was not soon forgotten by the Fultons. The three guests had a good deal to say. All of them had seen a good deal of the world, and each from his own point of view was a fascinating talker. Mr. and Mrs. Fulton sat silent and intensely interested. Mr. Fulton quite forgot his business interests for awhile. Alice and Faith sat near together and listened breathlessly to one or two stories Malcom Stanley told very modestly about some genuine adventures in the mining districts of the African Transvaal. Roy, who was just beginning to devour books in much the same manner as he devoured pie, leaned his chin on his hands and his elbows on his knees, looking up at the three men who represented so much that was heroic to him.

But perhaps the one person who impressed the whole company most deeply was Malcom Kirk.

There was something so modest, yet so manly, so winsome in its genuine Christian sympathy in his whole man-

ner that even Mrs. Fulton was profoundly moved by it.

"I like that Mr. Kirk," she said to her husband that evening. And that meant a good deal for her.

Malcom and Stanley remained that night at the Fulton's, at their urgent request, and in the morning after breakfast, while Mr. Fulton and Stanley were talking business in the library, Faith and her father held a conference in the parlor.

"I had planned to take you back home with me, my dear," said Malcom. "But Raleigh told me last night of his niece, Miss Varney, and said there was no doubt of your being able to secure a good position there. We want to do what is best in every way. Your mother is homesick for you, too."

"Well, father, I feel as if I ought to stay in the city if I can really become a bread-winner. Let me try it a while at the studio, and if I fail, then I'll come home and spend the rest of my days cooking for you and the boys."

"How about your work here, Faith? Are you under promise to Mrs. Fulton to stay any length of time?"

"No, father. But I think it would be no more than fair for me to stay three or four weeks until Mrs. Fulton has time to work in someone else."

"I think so, too," replied Malcom, who in all his relations to others was always guided by the strictest sense of fairness and honor. "Do what is right in the matter. Better talk frankly with Mrs. Fulton about your plans, and let her feel that you are willing to stay as long as it is right."

When Mrs. Fulton came in, Malcom and Faith had a talk with her. The result of it was that Faith promised to remain with Mrs. Fulton another month. Meanwhile, she was to see Miss Varney, and if arrangements could be made, she was to enter the studio at the end of the time of her service at the Fulton's. Mrs. Fulton was considerably surprised and a good deal pleased with the ar-

rangement. It was a good deal more than she had supposed Malcom Kirk or his daughter would agree to do, but she did not know either of them as well as she did afterwards.

Malcom Kirk spent a Sunday in Chicago, and Faith had the great delight of hearing him preach in the church where she had gone to the evening service that eventful Sunday before. They took tea with the pastor that evening, and the next day Malcom started back to Conrad.

Malcom Stanley went with him. There was, if the truth must be told, a secret disappointment in the heart of the young Englishman that Faith was not going home, too. But the two men said good-bye cheerily to Faith, and were whirled out into the west, while Faith went back to her work with a brave heart, in spite of a little feeling of homesickness that crept over her at the sight of the two stalwart figures on the platform of the receding train.

Her relations with the Fultons were decidedly different now. She was careful not to presume in the least on the change in their thought of her, and when Mrs. Fulton asked her that day if she would not sit down at the table with them, she said she preferred not to, which was entirely true, for Faith believed that if she was to serve the family as she ought at meal times, she must be ready to do so in the most effective manner. And she knew she could not do so if she ate with the rest.

Mrs. Fulton was much relieved at Faith's action in that particular. It seemed to Faith, however, that when Sunday morning came, and Alice asked her to come into the family circle to prayers, that she ought to go, and she did so quietly, and enjoyed it.

When evening came, Alice wanted to go to church with her, and Mrs. Fulton did not say anything. The new order of things was unheard of, but a girl whose family friends included men like Francis Raleigh and

Malcom Stanley, was not an ordinary hired girl, and Mrs. Fulton reasoned with herself accordingly.

But before that Sunday came, Faith and the artist had gone to see the famous lady photographer, who had taken a liking to Faith at the beginning. She readily agreed to take Faith on trial at the end of the month, and Faith went back to her kitchen quite exultant at the prospect.

"If I could only send ten or even five dollars a week home, I'd be the proudest girl in this city," she said, as she prepared the dinner that evening. "And then, in time, perhaps I can have a studio of my own like Miss Varney's. I know I have plenty of artistic ideas, and maybe one or two of them are original."

So she sang, light-hearted as she worked, overcoming the world of her selfishness and her trials, for it was not all heaven on earth always even in that well-appointed kitchen, and there were many things to fight without and within.

But when the time of her stay with the Fultons was out, she parted from them with genuine regret. It is very certain that Mrs. Fulton dreaded exceedingly to "break in" the new girl, and at the last she even urged Faith to remain another month.

"We will give you five dollars a week if you will only stay," she said, anxiously. "And you can play the piano if you want to," she added with a short laugh and a little embarrassment.

"I'm sorry, really sorry, to leave you, Mrs. Fulton. You have been very good to me. But I feel as if the Lord meant me to do something else. Perhaps" (Faith said it a little vaguely, but she had brooded over it a good deal while at work in the kitchen), "perhaps I may be able to do something to make American girls willing to go out to service."

"I wish you could. Really, you have no idea what I have suffered from my help in the last twenty years,"

Roy was inconsolable. He wanted Faith to bake up one or two hundred apple pies and leave them in a cold storage plant near by, so he could have something to eat between meals.

"Tell you what I'll do," he said, a week before Faith's time was up. "If you will bake a pie every day and send it over from the studio, I'll give you my kodak. It's new, but I'm tired of it, anyhow."

Faith laughed, but declined the offer.

"Then, I'll give you the kodak anyway," said Roy, and he insisted on Faith taking it, and his offer was so pressing that she had not the strength to refuse. At the earliest opportunity she sent him a photograph of a street urchin eating a pie, holding it in both hands, and Roy delightedly framed it and hung it up in his own room after his mother had refused to let it adorn the top of the sideboard in the dining-room.

But Faith experienced the sincerest regret in parting from Alice. The two girls entered into what proved to be a really genuine friendship. There was not a particle of pride or jealousy in Alice's nature, and not the least feeling of social caste. She wanted Faith to show her how a certain finger exercise on the piano was best done, and more than once expressed the greatest admiration for Faith's accomplishments. When the girls parted, they kissed each other, and Alice afterwards cried heartily. The friendship thus begun has lasted to the present moment. Then there began a new life for Faith. She seemed at last to have found her place in the world. Miss Varney was more than delighted with her.

"That girl," she said to Francis Raleigh, who called at her studio a month after Faith had been there, "has brought more new ideas into my work than all my other assistants. She will make her mark in the profession."

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY AT CONRAD.

So the winter quickly passed, and spring melted into summer, and then a growing plan developed in Faith's mind. She had not been able to crowd it out of her "heart-thoughts," as she called any ideas that kept making her think of other people. Even her rapidly developing artistic power could not prevent the silent, increasing, powerful pressure of an idea that she had also a mission to perform for the good of people in a certain peculiar way.

"I shall have to go home and talk it over with father before I can settle it right," she kept saying to herself all summer, and when fall was ushered in, and she could see the frosty mornings on the prairie, and call up in memory the sound of the prairie chickens out in the corn-fields, and see the great stretch of sky that was never possible in the smoky city, with its ugly piles of buildings, that shut out sun and air, then Faith grew really lonesome and homesick, and one day she resolutely told Miss Varney that she must go home for a little visit.

"I don't blame you, my dear. Go out home and breathe some fresh prairie air and photograph some Kansas ideas, and come back with them, and we will make our fortune."

"I don't know about getting photographs of Kansas ideas," replied Faith. "But I do know about the prairie air. And I'm going to get some."

So Faith ran out to the Fulton's, said good-bye to them, and Francis Raleigh at the same time, and started for home that day.

She had written home, telling of her coming, and when she reached Conrad, there were father and mother and the boys at the station, and a little back of that eager group a stalwart, manly figure, Malcom Stanley, who had come in quite suddenly the day before from New Mexico. It is not exactly certain how he knew that Faith was coming home, or, indeed, if he knew anything about it, but it is very certain that he was there at that time, and that Malcom and Dorothy had given him a hearty welcome.

"You're just in time to help our church celebrate our twenty-fifth anniversary," Malcom had said to him. His church was planning, in a quiet way, for such an anniversary, and it pleased him much to think that Faith was to be at home in time, and also that Stanley could be with them.

That was a wonderful home-coming for Faith. The experiences she had were rehearsed in the family circle, and there never had been so much hearty, pure laughter in the parsonage since it was built. In the frosty evenings they sat around the one open fire in the parlor, and even Malcom shut up his study and joined the group early, talking over matters with Faith, and entering into all her new plans with the enthusiasm of a boy. Dorothy smiled often through her happy tears, as she looked at her children and saw them growing up into sturdy, useful lives, and in her heart she thanked the Great Father continually for such treasures, worth more to her and her husband than all the gold and silver in the world.

"I want the boys to go to Phillips Academy next fall," Faith said with an air of one possessed of untold riches. "That's where father graduated, and it will be a fine thing for them to follow him there."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Malcom. "I've always dreamed it would be so."

"'Art is long,'" continued Faith, "but I'm sure I can win some of the prizes for best photographic ideas offered by the eastern papers. If the boys had a hundred dollars apiece, they could enter the school and earn their own way for the most part, couldn't they, father?"

"Of course they could," replied Malcom, and he told of some of his own experiences as a boy in academy and college life.

"It seems to me, Mr. Kirk, that you have done a little of everything in your lifetime," said Malcom Stanley, who sat in the family circle, and, somehow, seemed quite like one of them.

"Everything except looking out for himself," said Faith, quietly.

"The Lord has blessed us very much," said Malcom, looking at Faith, tenderly. "I'm afraid your poor old father has had to fight a good many hard battles against selfishness that he hasn't told you about. Your mother might tell you how bad I am if she wanted to."

"I don't feel like it now," replied Dorothy, as her eyes rested on Malcom's plain, loving face, and her love for him was stronger than ever.

"But about my plan, father," said Faith, after they had all been silent before the fire. "What do you think of it? Can I do anything that way?"

"It will take a good deal of wisdom. Do you think you can do it and carry on your art studies, too?"

"It is worth trying," said Malcom, very thoughfully.

"I don't know," Faith said, softly. "But now just think of it. Here is the fact. Thousands of families all over the world are dependent for their physical and mental and moral support upon the kind of service they have in their kitchens and homes. Now, if this is the case, why isn't it possible to dignify and elevate such service

to a point where a girl who goes out to work may feel that she is doing a really noble thing in helping to keep a whole family in the comfort of body and peace of mind that will make the family more happy and more useful in the world? That is 'the hired girl' problem in one sentence. My plan is to start with Christian families and with Christian girls, and get each side to realize what household service can be made to do. I believe a circle of such people can be formed in such a way that gradually the homes and the girls will be organized into a mutual helpfulness, and it will be more honorable and better, financially and morally, for a girl to go out to service than to go into a store or an office, even. At least for a time. For it really takes more brains to be an efficient cook and housekeeper than to stand behind a counter and sell notions."

Faith paused, as if she suddenly felt that Malcom Stanley was looking at her with the greatest interest, as, indeed, he was. And if he really began to love Faith right then and there more truly than he yet had done, it was owing to the sudden glimpse he had caught of a young soul on fire to be and do for the good of others.

But Faith's plan led to a discussion that was long, and continued through so many days, that we cannot follow it in detail here. It is enough to say that when Faith went back to Chicago, she carried with her a definite plan, which she was able sooner than she expected to put into working practice.

Conrad will never forget the anniversary week held in honor of Malcom Kirk and his church. It was a week of surprises to him and Dorothy. The town waked up in sudden, hearty, western fashion, and before he knew it, Malcom was the recipient of a whole town's honor.

Sunday the church had appropriate exercises to celebrate their twenty-five years' existence. There was a great sermon in the morning by Malcom, and papers by

old settlers and charter members in the afternoon. In the evening, the young people crowded the church with their meeting, and when they adjourned, they went out in front of the parsonage and sang a hymn that one of their own members had composed in praise of the church.

The only sad feature of the day to Malcom was the presence of Mrs. Barton at the morning service. It was a sadness relieved by one great burst of joy.

"Oh, Mr. Kirk," said the old woman, bowed now with years and sorrow. "If Phil had only been saved! Thank God, I owe my other son to you." She went on to speak of Malcom's efforts which had made the saloon outlaw in Conrad these many years, and pointed with pride to her remaining son, who was a member of the church and one of Malcom's great friends. "He'd gone the way of Phil and his father if the saloon was here," she said, and wrung Malcom's hand and went out, but Malcom knew her heart was still hungry for her first-born.

Next day the citizens held a meeting in the court-house, at which the mayor presided. Malcom was present as the guest of honor. He had tried to prevent any such expression towards himself. But when he found himself powerless, he seized the occasion to glorify the cause of God's kingdom. His speech was a splendid tribute to the power of righteousness. Throughout it all his modesty and unselfishness had never been more forcibly or beautifully illustrated to his townspeople. The citizens of Conrad remembered that address long years after countless political speeches had faded out of their memories.

It was, perhaps, significant of the peculiar esteem in which Malcom Kirk and Dorothy were held in Conrad that no attempt was made that week to present them with a gold watch or a tea set, or any physical token. The church at a business session voted to increase Malcom's salary, and there were very many flowers sent to the parsonage, but the people seemed to know that what would

be most acceptable to Malcom Kirk and his wife on that anniversary would be the love of the parish, and they did feel that, and never, in all their lives, had it meant so much to them.

One incident of that anniversary week illustrated Malcom's character better than any other.

The picture that Stanley had brought to Kirk had been placed in the parsonage, but it was almost ridiculously large for the small rooms.

Dorothy and Malcom both felt it was out of place, but the gift meant so much that they were in doubt what was best to do with it.

The day after Malcom's address in the court-house, one of the managers of the Orphan's Home, that Malcom had been largely instrumental in organizing, was calling on Dorothy.

She saw the picture, and instantly said:

"If we only had that in the hall of the Home!"

"Just the place for it, too," said Malcom, when Dorothy told him of it.

Without delay, and with Stanley's assistance, the picture was taken to the Home and hung up in a conspicuous place in a large hall-way. It had a remarkable effect on visitors. One ranchman, who was never known to give anything to any cause, visited the place shortly afterwards, and the sight of the picture moved him to give twenty-five dollars to the Home.

"The sight of that baby in Mr. Kirk's arms just hypnotized the money out of my pocket," he said afterwards.

"That is the sort of hypnotism we believe in," said the matron of the Home, and Conrad echoed the sentiment.

When the eventful week was gone, Faith made her preparations to return. Malcom Stanley also announced his return to the New Mexico mines. The night before he departed, he went into Malcom's study, and with some

embarrassment told him what Malcom had seen already. For he and Dorothy had not been able to conceal from each other the fact that the young Englishman had grown to have a great liking for Faith's company.

"It seems like a short time, Mr. Kirk, but I love Faith, and I want your consent to be her suitor."

"I should think her consent would be worth more to you," said Malcom Kirk, with a flash of his old wit, which had not the slightest approach to levity. But he had grown to love Malcom Stanley, and felt sure, from indications, that Faith was not far from the same feeling.

"Then I may write to her?" said Malcom Stanley. "I don't want to call her away from her plans or her profession. Indeed, if I win her heart, we will accomplish more together than separately."

"I believe it," said Malcom, gravely. And, he added with a smile, "My dear fellow, I hope you realize what it means to have a 'hired girl problem' to take care of."

"I will gladly assume that," said Stanley, and he went back to his solitary work in New Mexico with great enthusiasm. It seems entirely possible that he even found courage to say something to Faith before he went, for Faith and Dorothy had a confidence talk that evening, and Dorothy had tears on her face when it was ended, and Faith's face glows when a certain letter with a queer post-mark comes into the studio at Kenwood, where she is making her mark as an artist and brooding over her plans for the good of the world, into which she now includes a tall, manly figure out west.

When Stanley and Faith had gone, at the close of that week, Malcom went over to the church one evening to get his Bible, which he had left on the pulpit. The new church was lighted with electricity, and Malcom turned on the light near the desk, and, after finding the Bible, he stood there on the platform a moment.

While he was there, Dorothy came in to get a pot of

flowers which had been taken into the church during the anniversary exercises.

She came up to the platform and stood there with her husband.

They were both reminded of that first night when they had gone into the little church and had made their promise.

"It is not like the old room, Malcom, is it?"

Dorothy said it with a feeling as if a Presence was in the church that was not human or earthly.

"No, my dear. God has been very good to us all these years."

Dorothy crept up nearer to him and Malcom put his arm about her, and they looked out into the dimly-lighted church together. The battle in Conrad was still going on. There was still the rum power to meet in one form and another. There were still ugly forms of evil, selfishness in many shapes to face, but God had gloriously used these two disciples for the building of His kingdom on the earth. Their children, also, were going out to fight the same good fight of faith, to battle for the right, to relieve distress and overcome the world. It seemed almost certain that as they stood there an Angel of Light noted their lives, and breathed over the town a benediction of peace, and Malcom and Dorothy passed out of the church and into their home with God's blessing on their hearts. It was not by any chance that Malcom chose for his text as he took his Bible and went up into his study that night the words in the Book of Revelation:

"*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*"

THE END.