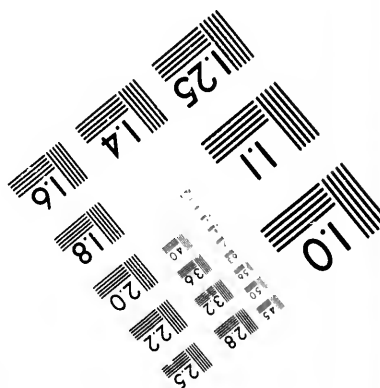
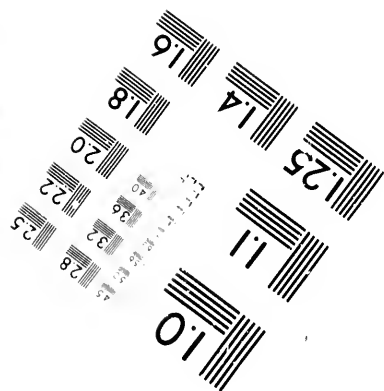
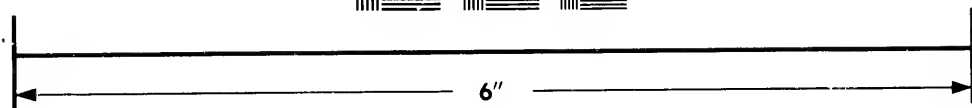
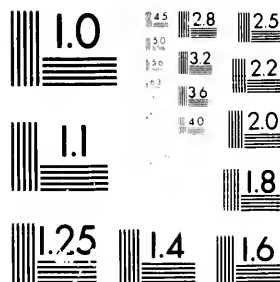


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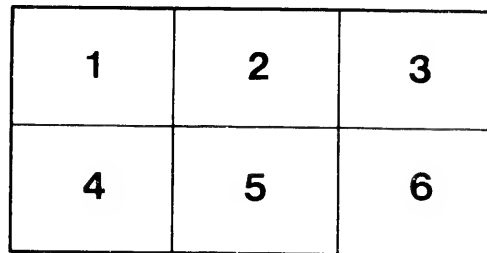
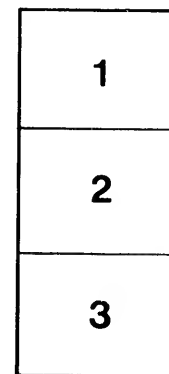
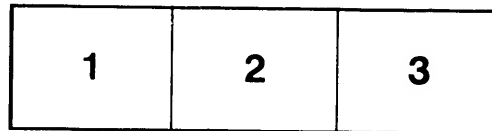
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VACATION TIME AT BLOOMINGLE.

June 6

HERBERT GARDENELL'S CHILDREN

BY
MRS S R GRAHAM CLARK

Astor of
Yessie Wilson
Yessie Wilson's W. ...
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"It is no dream,
No castle building, that we call life,
To catch the gleam
Of heaven in the strife,
Our toil must tend to reach the better life."



BOSTON
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VACATION TIME AT BLOOMINGLE.





Yensie Walton's books

HERBERT GARDENELL'S
CHILDREN

no change
BY
Yensie
MRS S R GRAHAM CLARK ✓

Author of
Yensie Walton
Yensie Walton's Womanhood
Achor
The Triple E
and others

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No castle-building time, that we call life,
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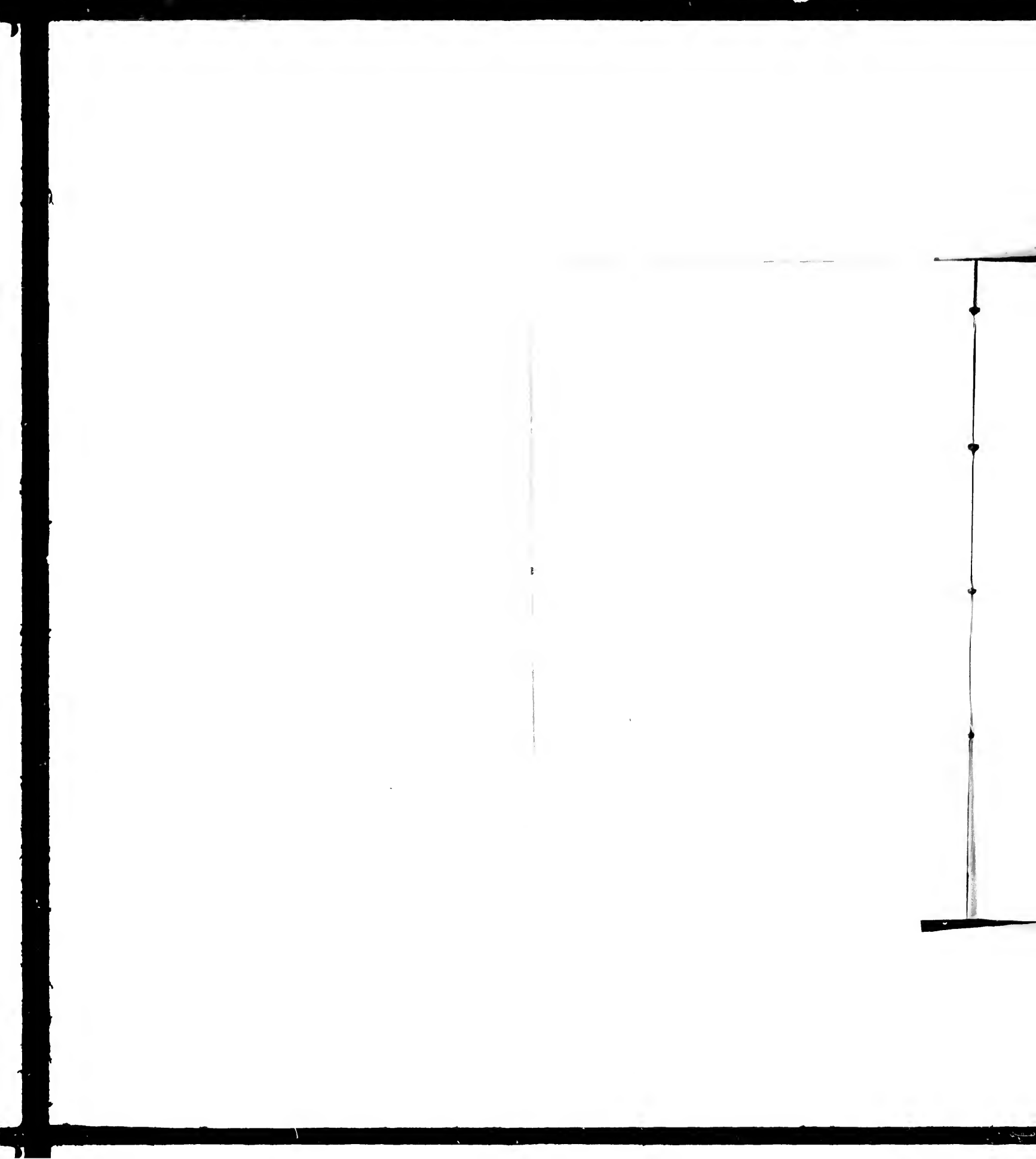
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MY "ONE CHOICE GIRLIE"

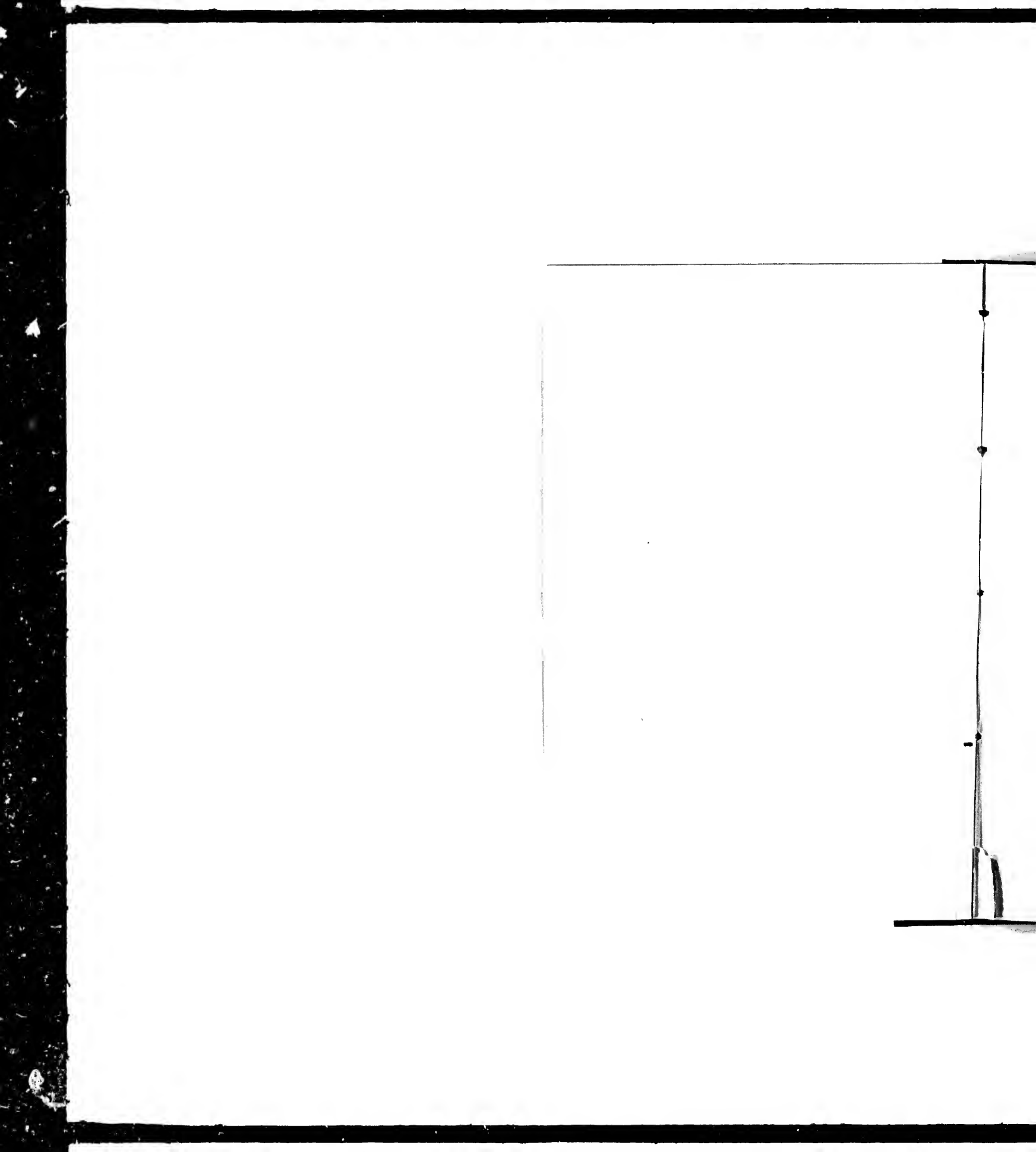
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S. R. G. C.



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HERBERT GARDENELL'S
CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

ONE CHOICE GIRLIE.

A merry little maiden fair,
With sky-blue eyes and sunlit hair,
A laughing, dancing, merry sprite
Whose funny views of wrong and right
Get tangled quite.

ETHELYN G —.

A KNOCK at the study door. Papa thought he recognized it, but he must be mistaken; it was after school time. He was not, however, for at his pleasant "Come!" there appeared the rosiest of young faces peeping out of the brownest of brown hoods, and his one choice girlie said gaily, —

"Please, papa dear, write me an excuse?"

"An excuse!" echoed papa, consulting his watch. "Why, Birdie, it is a quarter-past nine. What have you been doing?"

"Coasting." And the little lady advanced to the desk, and the chair always standing beside it. "Do hurry, papa, please."

"Coasting, and forgot all about school! Is that excusable? Ought I to put a premium on your heedlessness, Olive? Did you not hear the bell?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did not heed it!" Papa Gardenell looked very grave. "My darling, you know I cannot write you an excuse under such circumstances; it is inexcusable."

"No, papa," coaxingly, "no. Little girls ought to exercise; it is good for them. You told me yourself, papa dear, that I must take a half-hour's sliding every morning while it lasted. You said I would study better for it."

"Certainly, darling; but" —

"Papa," interrupted Olive, "I had to take fifteen minutes of school time or fall that much short of the half-hour you ordered."

A faint smile quivered about the gentleman's

lips. "I think I did not make a law about your sliding, Olive," he answered. "I could not teach you to please yourself, even in so laudable a way, by stealing fifteen minutes of school time."

"But, papa, some one stole fifteen minutes of my sliding time, and" —

"Suffering wrong gives license for wrongdoing; theft in another excuses theft in my girlie. What logic! Daughter, who cheated you out of fifteen minutes this morning?"

"Why, you did, papa," opening wide her large eyes. "Don't you 'member we waited fifteen whole minutes for prayers?"

Then he was the culprit his small daughter was arraigning for trial. The smile on Mr. Gardenell's lips deepened. "Then you think me responsible for your delinquency this morning, Olive?" he questioned.

"Why, yes, papa, don't you? You told me yourself little girls needed out-door exercise as much as boys, and you wished me to take a half-

hour every morning. Then if you cheated me out of fifteen minutes I had to make it up."

Papa's eyes were very uncomfortable; Olive's slowly dropped.

"Do you really think you have taken the spirit of my command, little daughter, or only the letter?" he asked gravely. Then proceeding: "Mr. Sheaves called to consult me on a very important question that would bear no delay. My time is not my own, but the Lord's, and he wished Mr. Sheaves to have it just then. Apply this rule to yourself. Was that fifteen minutes after nine my daughter's or not? Had she a right to do with it as she pleased?"

Olive was silent, and her father continued, "I think you have only cheated yourself, little girlie. Your body would not have suffered for the loss of that fifteen minutes of exercise."

"And I'm sure my brain won't," half-laughed the naughty child. "Papa, they don't do a thing but read the Bible and pray and sing the

first fifteen minutes of school. I sha'n't miss that ; I get lots of it at home."

Mr. Gardenell sighed, and dropped his head on his hand a minute.

"Papa," — a little impatiently — "papa, I'm being cheated out of lots more time. Please give me my note and let me go."

"You think I ought to write you this billet, Olive?" he asked, looking into her face.

"Yes, papa, I do ; I really and truly do. I meant to be honest with myself and make up the time some one took from me, and fifteen minutes of sliding seems 'zactly as good to me as fifteen minutes of school."

Mr. Gardenell took his pen and a slip of paper. As he wrote he said : "With me, Olive, this does not excuse your conduct ; I feel you were wrong. Nevertheless, as you hold me responsible, I yield in so far : you had an opportunity this morning, and lost it. Fifteen minutes for pleasure or duty, which ? I fear you have forfeited both."

"Why, no, papa, I made up the fun."

"And have it to remember," he replied gravely, passing her the note. "Now, daughter, I have pleased you; can you do as much for me? Promise me to think this matter over carefully and decide if you can ever again, under any circumstances, afford to sacrifice duty to pleasure. If you have been wrong, will you come and acknowledge it? In any case, will you tell me what decision you reach?"

"I will," replied the little girl in a tone almost as grave as her father's. She took the billet and walked to the door, then hesitated, came back to his side, stooped, and kissed the "pucker" between his eyes.

"You are just as good as gooder, papa," she said almost penitently, and very seriously, "but you're not a bit logical. God meant you for a minister and nothing else."

Then Herbert Gardenell threw himself back in his chair and laughed heartily, and his daughter ran away apparently satisfied since she had

banished from his face, for the time, the "Look of Fate," as she called that grave, keen, searching glance that always brought her to reflection and obedience.

But papa's laugh was followed by a fervent prayer. This precious little daughter, his only girlie, was a source of almost unmixed joy to her father. Keen, quick, full of life and fun, alive to everything about her, strong in her likes and dislikes, affectionate yet willful and out-spoken, he saw in her the making of a grand woman, and in his soul he had no doubt she would be such. Her little spurts of temper, liability to "scrapes," to quote her brother, did not trouble him as they might some less hopeful man. His children were the Lord's, dedicated to him from their birth, accepted of him in the promise he believed, and an assurance akin to knowledge kept his heart continually.

Some day he would know them servants of his King; to-day he knew them as children full of foibles and faults, to be loved, hoped for,

enjoyed. He believed God : that his asking had been heard, his prayers registered ; some day he would see his children engaged actively in his Master's service. For that day he labored and waited ; not fearfully or tearfully, but gladly and with abundant expectation ; not idly, but with constant turning of the soil and diligent seed dropping. Meanwhile he enjoyed every bit of them and their sports, and kept himself young and them happy by sharing their joys and sorrows.

He had five children ; two pairs of boys, with this blue-eyed girl between them. Herbert, the eldest, fifteen when our story opens, was papa's self over again, so mamma averred. He had papa's blue eyes, light brown hair, thoughtful, not handsome face, and fine form and voice. As true and noble in character as in appearance, he was a joy to his parents, the delight of his one sister, and the pride of his three brothers, who quoted him on all occasions. This was even true of Raymond, the second born

and thirteen years of age, the mischief-maker and tease as well as beauty of the family. A perfect brunette, he was everywhere recognized by his resemblance to his mother, with the brightest and blackest of dancing eyes and the tightest of dark brown curls, the merriest laugh and quickest step of any boy in the school-yard.

Of the two younger boys Harry was, to quote Mary Ann McAloon, the nursery maid, the "dead image of Masther Harbert. Indade the two H's are as like as two paes in a pod, and no thrubble to spake ov, and Masther Eddie"—Mary Ann always stopped here to shake her head, for she firmly believed that the blue-eyed, golden-haired darling who came last to the nursery had not come to stay. He had stayed three years, however.

Olive, poor Olive, was the odd one in this flock. Like neither father nor mother, but a "combination," as Ray slyly suggested. For while inheriting mamma's brown curls, slight,

graceful form and sweet voice, she had papa's blue eyes — "enlarged edition," again to quote Raymond — broad white forehead and firm mouth and chin. She was just nine years old when our story opens, and young of her age; young and yet old in a fashion some children have: the fairest, dearest children Old Earth knows.

"What a child she is," Mr. Gardenell said to his wife that morning after Olive started for school, repeating the conversation that had taken place.

Yensie sighed and smiled. "Herbert, what shall we do with her? I think she ought not to have received that billet. I fear you were not wise."

"Perhaps not, seeing I am neither Solomon nor his brother," returned her husband with his sunny smile. "But if I mistake not, wife, she has received her medicine and will find her cure."

Medicine indeed! Her school companions

might have thought it bitter herbs from the look on the usually merry face of their play-mate.

"What ails you, Olive Gardenell? there's no fun in you to-day," said her particular friend as they walked homeward together.

"I guess papa gave me some medicine before I left home," she answered, hesitating and half-laughing at the puzzled face of her friend, unconsciously hitting her father's terminology. "Oh! you needn't look at me. It was inside medicine. My papa is just my papa, you know."

A little later there was another knock at the study door. Papa smiled as he said "Come!" He knew who stood without.

"Papa!" head bent as she advanced.

"Yes, little daughter," drawing her to his arms and folding her closely. Olive dropped her head on her father's shoulder and sobbed. He gently smoothed the curls beside his face and let her weep.

"Papa," at length.

"My girlie, I am waiting."

"I'm naughty, and I'm selfish, and—I'm sorry, but—I—don't—like—to—be—sorry, and I hate to 'fess, and I guess I'm wicked."

A half-sigh was the only answer.

"But, papa, I will say it—I will! It was wrong—it was, it was, it was—there! and I 'most thought it was all the time, only I wouldn't quite think so, and made b'lieve I was logical."

"Have you confessed to the other Father?"

"No, papa, I couldn't. He saw inside all the time, and I don't feel 'quainted with him."

"Let me introduce you, then. Kneel by me, darling." There was a fervent, simple prayer.

She clung to him as they rose, and sat down on his knee.

"I can't be good; it's my—my fate to be naughty. You and mamma ought to be 'shamed of me. But I will not let pleasure have the time of something else again, papa—I won't, truly; it is so mis-er-ya-ble. I've had a mis-er-

ya-ble day. O, papa! have you the littlest bit of a hope that I'll ever be good?"

"Which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.' That is the sort of hope I have for you, my darling, and there isn't anything little about it."

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CHAPTER II.

A MINISTER'S DAUGHTER, TOO.

Take things as they come;
Each hour will draw out some surprise.

MEREDITH.

THAT'S right ; give it to him hard, Steve. Mean fellow ! just pay him up well. Don't let him get off. My brother Ray will be here soon and he'll help you. Oh ! if I wasn't a girl."

The big flashing blue eyes and energetic shake of the head under the brown hood told what might have been — if. And the small chap, some years the junior of his antagonist, cheered on by her voice, gave his well-dressed opponent a vigorous rap on the nose.

"O, ho ! he's a coward too, is he?" cried the excited little girl. "Would you like to run

away, Warren Howard? Well, you can't; I'm here," and two very determined little arms, done up in a handsome brown cloak, were resolutely flung about the body of the flying hero, stopping him ignominiously. "Here he is, Steve; come finish him. I want him well whipped for once; perhaps you can get the mean out of him."

Steve came up at the call, and the little lady, one hand disengaged, applied her dainty handkerchief to the offender's nose, merciful even in battle.

"Loss of blood weakens," she explained to her ally; "we only want to punish him. Aren't you ashamed, Warren Howard, to strike a boy smaller than yourself, just 'cause he's poor and his mother washes clothes for a living?"

"Better be ashamed yourself, Olive Gardenell, fighting in the street like a tomboy, and your father a minister, too," answered her wriggling prisoner.

"Of course he's a min'ster, and b'lieves in equal rights, and so do I, and we'll have them,

too. Oh! there is Ray. — Ray, Ray," cried the child in evident relief at sight of her brother.

"Olive!" The little girl started and turned to meet the grave, troubled, yet curiously amused glance of a gentleman who stood on the sidewalk near.

"O, papa! you're just in time; if you only would help Steve whip this cowardly boy who has been bullying and calling him names."

But the relaxed hold of both his antagonists at once had released the culprit, who bounded away at sight of the new presence.

Herbert Gardenell straightened the hood over his daughter's curls, re-arranged her cloak and scarf and took one hand firmly in his before he said one word.

"Stevie," smiling kindly, "words never hurt manly boys if they are undeserved. You've got courage enough to meet harder things than have come to-day, if you ask help from the dear Helper. You know what was written of him, our Jesus? 'When he was reviled, he reviled

not again.' He left us an example that we should follow his steps. Don't let this little daughter of mine lead you to forget." He pressed the boy's hand and smiled again into the flushed, shamed face, then turned homeward. Ray, who had taken the situation in at a glance, sped home another road, and Olive walked alone with her papa. The clasp on her hand was very firm; as if there was danger she might slip away; his face was grave, but not vexed, and every few moments he realized the glance his little daughter gave him.

"I declare, it's a pity Mr. Gardenell's only daughter should be such a hoyden, and her mother such a lady, too," sighed the elder Miss Ralison, glancing from her window, which overlooked the affray.

"What has the child been doing now?" queried Miss Jennie, the mild-faced, fair-haired sister of the speaker, who had just entered the room.

"Been fighting right in the street here. I declare, it is disgraceful, and her father a minis-

ter, too. I'm glad it was back here close to the schoolhouse, where most folks wouldn't see it and make remarks. Mr. Gardenell just came along in time, or dear knows what it would have grown to. She actually had that Howard boy in her arms, and he couldn't get away either, and there she held him for Stevie Mellen to pound."

"Like as not the dear child was only taking the part of the small dog in the fight, Johanna. That's human nature, you know, and I've noticed that Warren Howard puts upon that poor little Steve all the time. I'd like to whip him myself sometimes."

"You! Jennie Ralison!" with a significant sniff. "Well, dear child or not, I pity her parents. Poor Mr. Gardenell!"

Poor Mr. Gardenell meanwhile was puzzling himself as to how he should properly deal with his child. Miss Johanna would have taken her to the study, lectured, whipped her, and set her to learning the catechism, no doubt. He knew

quite well, as Miss Jennie had conjectured, that all this mischief had arisen from the warm heart of his impulsive daughter. Every time he recalled her flying hair, excited face and words as he turned the corner and beheld her, Warren Howard in her arms, stanching his blood with one hand, while with the other she held him for the descending blows, he found himself longing to yield to the ludicrousness of the scene and laugh heartily. So as he perceived the continued shy glances into his face he gave the little palm in his a reassuring pressure.

"You are not angry with me, are you, papa?" came as the result of this kindness.

"No, darling; I am only puzzled and grieved. I am wondering must I get you a straight-jacket or a suit of boy's clothes—confine you altogether, or give up my hope of a dear little woman and settle down to five boys."

"O, papa!" such a doleful little voice.

"You see mamma is so beautiful, so satisfying," continued the gentleman, unheeding her

sigh, "I've been expecting such an unspeakable comfort in having her counterpart. Two such in one house is too much good; I ought to have known better."

Again that doleful little "O, papa!"

"Still I'm not easily turned from a purpose or a desire," pursued Mr. Gardenell; "I shall fight hard and pray harder for my little woman before I give her up."

"O, papa!" but it was with a sob now, and it was well they had reached their own door and papa could take the little limp bundle into his strong arms and carry it safely to his study out of the sight of any one but himself.

"I al-ways — for-get," sobbed the child, as he gently loosened her wraps and laid her on the low couch. "I'm born wrong; I was meant for a boy, I most know. I'm nothing but — but — a dis-comfort-able — un-sat-is-faction, and you'd better be rid of me."

Then papa broke out long and loud into the laugh so far restrained, and caught the bundle

up in his arms, declaring he wouldn't know how to get along without his "discomfortable unsatisfaction," and hadn't the least idea who would rid him of her if he did.

But after awhile, after the little heart had stopped grieving so sorely, they had a long talk together, when her motive received all the praise its due, and her manner of helping her little mate had all its unbeauty and inexpediency exposed.

"I will try hard to do better," she said humbly, "but please, papa, don't 'spect anything, for then you won't be disappointed; and I hate to disappoint people, and feel most sure I will."

But papa refused point-blank to be a non-expectant, declaring he was the most expectant man in New York, and his expectations were fixed on his daughter.

Meanwhile Ray had given his version of the story in the lunch-room below, and mamma was quite prepared for the crest-fallen looking little girl who presently appeared with papa.

"Really, Joan of Arc, you don't look quite as heroic as you did a half-hour ago," cried Ray.

"Stop your noise, Ray Gardenell. You're just like a hateful boy. If it wasn't for boys I could be good," she added pathetically, looking at her father, conscious she had lost her temper and broken her pretty resolves.

"If there were no boys what would you do for father to bind up your wounds, I wonder," continued Sir Tease.

"And before you are hard on girls suppose you consider the boy who doesn't know how to get on without a mother," interrupted Mrs. Gardenell, smiling, and completely vanquishing this boy, who fairly worshiped "little-mother-woman," as he called her, and who was never five minutes in the house without needing her special attention.

"Mamma," said Olive penitently, "I don't think I ought to have any of this nice dessert, though papa does nave a hope for me," she added with a long sigh.

"And mamma has another, which makes two hopes," said Mrs. Gardenell, smiling on her doleful little daughter.

"And Hervie has the biggest hope of all," chimed in Herbert, crossing the room to smooth the brown curls while he kissed her brow. "I should think you'd have lots of hope for yourself, and be very happy and" —

"Eat all the dessert you please, while we all devoutly pray that your penitent and humble mood may never end," slyly interjected Ray. "There, mamma, I couldn't help it; it said itself," as he caught his mother's reproachful eyes. "It is so uncommon to see Miss High-and-Mighty down I must exult a little; though I should have liked the fun of dressing down Warren Howard myself, if father hadn't happened along. Fact is, I don't see why a girl shouldn't whip a miserable sneak as well as a boy, if she's able. I'll say this much for O!, she's clear grit and no mistake; she'd make a splendid boy. O, mamma! if you could have

been there; such a sight!" And Ray burst into a laugh at the remembrance. "I beg your pardon, papa," as he caught that gentleman's grave eyes, "but you know you wanted to laugh yourself. There, I'd better go or I will be in disgrace again."

And Ray kissed his mother and took a gentle pinch of Olive's rosy cheek as he left the room.

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CHAPTER III.

IN DISGRACE AGAIN.

O, how full of briers is this working-day world!
As YOU LIKE IT.

"IN disgrace again," Ray might well say, for either he or Olive were continually in this condition. When she was better than usual he always met disaster, and *vice versa*. As Mary Ann McAloon once said, with raised hands and eyes, "What Masther Raymond don't think on Miss Olive is shure to inwent, and from what they don't contrive the good Lord deliver us."

They had been the delight and torment of this long-suffering maid for many a year, and between scolding and petting them her time was pretty equally divided. "Masther Harbert was never to say a thrubble though he was heady," she partially averred, "and the babbies,"

meaning Harry and Eddie, "were just angels shure; but two sich as Mather Raymond and Miss Olive were niver born to wan roof before, and their father a minister, too." Therein lay the chief horror to more than Mary Ann. Had they been born to common mortals their shortcomings might be overlooked or forgiven, but minister's children to show such depravity—terrible!

To-day Mary Ann had a headache, and the nursery was left to Mrs. Gardenell, who in turn had so many callers that Olive was pressed into service. She sat sewing a seam, while "the angels shure," amused themselves. Several times mamma looked in to find all serene and to praise her little daughter, who began to feel quite angelic herself. A number of unanswered letters lay waiting for mamma's pen; what better time could she have? A kiss apiece to the inmates of the nursery, and soon she was engrossed, forgetful of all but her correspondents.

Suddenly she was roused to peculiar sounds

issuing from the nursery. She listened: combat thick and fast must be going on; never before had she heard such sounds issue from that direction! Just then a caller was announced—Mrs. Ivers; one of their wealthiest, most exacting parishioners; a late-comer to the church.

The poor tired mother stopped a moment at the nursery door before descending to her guest. "Olive, my darling, what does this mean?" she exclaimed as two angry little heated faces confronted her. "Harry, Eddie, stop, my boys; let sister talk to you till mother returns to settle this matter. Olive, keep them still, my dear; there is company awaiting me below."

But Olive felt quite equal to the settlement of this quarrel. "Harry, you are selfish and a coward," she said warmly, "and if Eddie don't whip you I will. Papa wouldn't allow you to 'buse Eddie as you do. Now look out for yourself while Eddie shows you how he can manage you. Thrash him, Eddie, that's a sweet angel, and sister will buy you that pretty little horse

we saw down street. Wait till I count three; one, two, three. Quick, Eddie, quick! I know you can whip him."

Unhappy mamma! She heard the noise in spite of closed doors, wondered, prayed, grew uneasy, and poorly entertained her visitor, who criticised her afterwards as a very nervous woman, not at all what she should expect in Mr. Gardenell's wife, and she feared she did not have good government over her children either, for very suspicious sounds reached her ears from above.

Meanwhile Olive had dropped her work, forgotten mamma's caution, and given herself freely to the excitement of the battle. Eddie, pushed on and praised, was victor. Harry, discomforted and vanquished, rubbed his eyes with his little handkerchief and cried, while his sister expressed her contempt of him in various ways, winding up at last at the top of her voice, through her nose, in doleful tone, an exact imitation of old Brother Andrews, who occasionally

cheered on the prayer meeting with the melody
"Hark from the tomb a doleful sound."

Just then the door opened and mamma's
troubled face and sorrowful eyes took in the
scene.

"Daughter, how often must I remind you that
you are not to trifle with sacred things?"

"Why, mamma, how can that be sacred? it
always kills the prayer meeting. Papa always
puts on his Look of Fate when Mr. Andrews
starts it."

"Olive!"

"Mamma, Harry has been selfish and 'busing
Eddie, and needed punishing, or I'd pity him;
I was only helping him groan."

"Olive, put up your work and go to the other
room and think a half-hour; I will see you alone
before bedtime," and slowly Miss Olive arose
and obeyed.

Then two little faces were washed, tumbled
curls were smoothed, and one little boy on either
knee, mamma unravelled the mystery.

"My poor little Harry has been selfish and overbearing," she said sadly, and the little boy's lip quivered, for he loved his mother too well to grieve her. "It is better to yield our rights, Eddie, than to grieve Jesus by fighting; let us tell him about it."

That was the cure-all; both little boys felt better when, shortly after, some one knocked at the door. It was Rosy McAloon looking for her daughter Mary Ann.

"Sick, is it, poor girrl? sorry I am for her, for mesilf is narely so, what wid the rheumatiz and the b'y. There's the b'y drhunk agen, and that afther signing the pledge for the Cardinal. It's the Cardinal I'm afther this moment, mum."

Mrs. Gardenell smiled. After all these years Rosy still persisted in using her first title for Mr. Gardenell. It was ten years now since Rosy's husband had died, and she had followed May'ran to America.

"Mr. Gardenell is out just now," said the

lady kindly ; "but if you will take off your bonnet and stay to tea, you can see him and your daughter, too. I think she will be better after her nap."

"Indade I'll sthay; you look ready to dhrop yourself; go take a bit ov rest, and I'll sthay wid the childer. Shall I tell yez a sthory now shure; shall it be the little rid hin?"

"Yes, yes," shouted the boys, climbing her stout knees.

Yensie smiled and sighed. She was thinking of the first time she heard that story told to another pair. The woman read her thought. "Indade," she said, looking into Eddie's eyes, "how like the child is to Violet, me lady." (Rosy would never get over addressing her olden friend thus.) "Yer mind how iver the two ov thim liked the little rid hin? Ah, but they were bonny, bonny childer!"

Yensie's eyes filled. "They are safe, Rosy," she said. "What could we ask for them more than they have?"

"To be sure, dear heart," responded the Irish woman tenderly, and Yensie went out of one door just as her naughty daughter crept in the other. "My time is up," she said, as if expecting contradiction. "It is such a long time to think, and I hate thinking. O, Rosy! if you will tell us a story I will be good, gooder, and sew up my seam." And with three bright faces upturned to hers Rosy began, "There was wanst a little rid hin."

The talk with mamma Olive did not dread. It was customary at twilight for all the children to spend at least one half-hour in her room. Ray called it "cream time," because it came between the day and the night, and was the sweetest thing either inclosed. "Just as a fellow eats cream pie to get the insides," he added by way of illustration. There was always a little comparing of notes, talks over school, its fun and troubles, and the repeating of any Bible verse that had been helpful during the day. Mamma and Herbert always had a verse; Ray and Olive

occasionally. Even Harry and Eddie sometimes had theirs. Mamma always played some favorite piece for them on the organ, and they sang a hymn or two, according to the time at disposal, then there was a precious prayer, when every child was mentioned by name.

After this the younger ones went to bed, the boys to the study-room, and to-night Olive remained with her mother. She was all ready for confession, and so full of resolves to do better that mamma's work was easy. "Try me once more, mamma dear. Just watch me the rest of the week and see how good I'll be. I mean to be an angel."

And then papa opened the door with a little laugh as he caught his daughter's closing words.

"Come here, darling," he said, seating himself; and when she came he turned her around and examined her shoulders curiously.

"Why, papa, what are you hunting for?"

"Wings," he answered gravely. "I thought

they might be sprouting." And then such a merry time as they had, for papa had to make up for his lost feast, for he quite as much enjoyed "cream time" as the children did, and always added to its merriment and helpfulness.

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CHAPTER IV.

UNDER THE WHITE FLAG.

In to-day already walks to-morrow.

COLERIDGE.

Earthly power doth then shew likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice.

SHAKESPEARE.

"IS this a safe haven for an evil doer?" asked a voice that tried to be very subdued and decorous, but was utterly scandalized by the merry eyes peeping in at Mr. Gardenell's study door.

"It is," answered papa promptly, lifting his eyes from a half-written sheet.

"The most luckless and disconsolate of youths may approach to-day unmolested?" pursued the investigator, quoting Ray freely, and stumbling over the big words.

Papa pushed his paper back, and held out his ruler for a wand, while he pursed up his lips for

a kiss. One tossed from rosy fingers was all he received, however, as his daughter proceeded to open wide the door held ajar, and in a highly dramatic tone cried, "Advance, Sir Knight, my person has won you favor, and you will be treated by his Lordship with all the fluency possible."

A laugh on both sides of the door greeted this speech, and then the handsome face and curly head of Raymond appeared in the door as, with another kiss of her hand, Olive retired, having first informed her brother in a stage whisper that if he needed help he would find her in the nursery.

The door closed. Raymond advanced with a half-comical, half-abashed face, eyes rather avoiding his father's, though he said jauntily, "In disgrace again, papa."

"So I see," said the gentleman kindly. "I hope it isn't anything serious. Take a seat, and tell me all about it," drawing a chair towards the table.

"Thank you, sir, I believe I'd rather stand where I can't see your eyes."

Papa smiled. Years ago it had come to him as a revelation that any of his children, from youngest to oldest, preferred any punishment for wrong doing rather than meet the continued glance of his sorrowful eyes.

"It just makes my heart ache down to my toes," Olive had said once pathetically. "Won't you please whip me, papa, so I can ache somewhere else?"

"It isn't much to tell; it won't take long," continued Ray with a little sigh. And papa said kindly, sympathizing with his boy even in his naughtiness, "Sit down, my son; I will not look at you if it troubles you."

That was just like Herbert Gardenell, and it was just like Ray to stoop impulsively and kiss his father's mouth, then drop into a chair and cover his face with his hands.

"It's the old story, papa," he said, dashing into it. "I've got into another scrape, and need

money. I'd like a dollar on my next month's allowance."

Mr. Gardenell looked very, very grave.

"This is the sixth time you have drawn on your next allowance. Do you think this a wise way to go on, my boy?"

"No, sir, but," hesitating, "I don't see how I can help it this month."

"But it was so last month, and the month before. If it was only once, my son, I might overlook it, but this continued extravagance. If I grant you your request, how much do you think will be left of your next month's allowance to be paid at the proper time?"

"I don't know, sir; not a great deal."

"Then you have kept no account! You would make a poor business man, Ray."

"I knew you'd keep account, sir. I knew you would not cheat me."

"Were you ever afraid any one would cheat you? I fear your bump of caution is not developed. Ray, if I pay you this dollar, you

will have just ten cents left for next month's expenses. That will not pay your tithe to the church."

"No, sir."

"What will you do?"

"I fear I shall have to borrow a little ahead," answered the lad slowly, and in evident distress.

"And so live continually beyond your income. I would stop, Ray — stop short. Many a life has been ruined by just such a course. You think it will make no difference now, but habit is strong, and you will find yourself speedily bound in chains of iron."

"But, sir — but it is really mine, and I must be honorable. I'm in for this dollar; I promised to pay and I must."

"Tell me how it happened, Ray?"

"Oh!" stopping and flushing, while his fingers toyed with his jacket buttons, "to tell the truth, papa, I'm awfully ashamed to let you know."

"Yet not ashamed to know yourself, or have Heaven know," said Mr. Gardenell sadly.

"Papa, I'm here under the white flag."

"I know it, my son. I am not going to preach to you, but I wish you would preach to yourself occasionally, or listen to that little preacher within when he takes the pulpit."

"I listen oftener than you think, papa."

"Yet don't improve! But this 'scrape,' as you call it, was" —

"Was just a little fun out of old Johnson — I beg your pardon," flushing painfully as he caught his father's eye, "old Mr. Johnson. I didn't really mean any harm, I wasn't in for it, but the other fellows were and I hated to say No, and spoil their sport, for they refused to go without me."

"What an opportunity," began papa, but Ray innocently lifted the ruler on the desk and extended it. His father smiled; he knew it was a gentle reminder of his promised clemency.

"You know I can't bear to have you preach specially for me, papa. Then, too, 'my own little preacher,' as you call it, reminded me of all that

and Olive gave me a fearful drubbing before I came in here. She offered me all her money afterwards to make up, but she hadn't a cent when she came to look; a little girl crying in the streets yesterday got her last quarter, so I had to apply to you. The fact is, papa, we only meant to give the old gentleman a little scare, but he nearly lost his wits. Jonas Cowles and I promised to pay for the broken glass and all that, if he'd let us off. He's a pretty good old fel — gentleman, I mean. I begged his pardon on the spot, and told him I'd never be found in so mean a scrape again, and I will not, see if I do!"

"And I understand you and Jonas Cowles to be the only persons concerned?"

"No-o, but — the others were kind of hard up, and we — we" —

"We are so well off we shouldered the whole of it," finished Mr. Gardenell, smiling; it was so like his generous, heedless boy.

"Ray," he said seriously, "the time is come

for a change. You jeopardize all your future. A new leaf must be turned — turned now."

Ray put out his hand for the ruler, but his father laid his own quietly but firmly over both. "No, my son, I did not promise not to reason with you, I only promised to be merciful."

"There is no mercy in preaching to a fellow when he is miserable," said the boy, kicking the carpet.

"I am not preaching, my son; I am only reasoning with you as one business man might with another."

"Papa, I'm afraid I was never cut out for a business man."

"What were you cut out for?" asked the gentleman gravely.

"Oh! I don't know," despairingly. "I guess I wasn't cut out at all, I just happened."

"'What haps God directs.' Is it possible one poor little boy has come into this big world cut out for no particular place, and no place cut out for him?" The voice and face were very

grave. Ray easily encouraged was as easily depressed; he was more wont to despair of himself than any child his father owned; less given to thought naturally, and less self-appreciative.

"I'm not like you, papa; I wish I was — I do, indeed. I am easily led. I hate to say No."

"Easily led to do wrong, my son, but are you easily led to do right? If so, how is it mamma and I have failed when we love you so truly and long so to do you good?"

"I'm born crooked. I don't believe I'm responsible."

"Not when there is grace ready to help you for the asking?"

The boy was silenced for a moment, then, —

"Father, don't you know it is harder for some people to be good than for others? Herbert never gets into scrapes."

"I know, my son, that every one has his own particular foes to fight, his own sins to overcome, but there is One who never fails to overcome when He is called in to aid. I had as

many and as strong foes in myself as you have, my son, and I had defeat until my Helper was welcomed. You know, do you not, that Herbert had his foes to conquer; do you remember when and how he got the victory?"

Indeed he did. Ray's mind went back to other days when he had waited, weeping, outside that very study door, while the strong will of his brother held out against authority, and his father patiently, but resolutely, battled it. His Herbert, his big brother, the idol of Olive and himself! How often in those days had mamma picked up and carried to her room her second born, his heart well-nigh broken over his brother's woes, while hers ached sadly. Herbert was naturally a self-willed child, and it was in his day that this tribunal before which Ray now stood, was instituted.

He would never forget how often Herbert stood prisoner behind two chairs in that room, while mamma, with her beautiful troubled face was the jury, Mary Ann the witness, and Olive

special pleader for the prisoner, whose part she invariably took. He remembered now how very grave the judge always was, and that his face seldom relaxed into a smile, even over Olive's childish pleas, some of which he now recalled.

"Hervie didn't do it, she knew he didn't, 'cause he was good, always good, and loved her better than any one else in the world. And if he did so it 'twas 'cause Mary Ann was horrid and he ought to pay her off, and he was just the nicest brother in the world," stopping to pat him and place a kiss on the end of his nose; a baby habit she was just outgrowing. He never could forget one occasion when this self-constituted little advocate declared warmly that Irish folks ought not to be allowed in court, "'cause they disremembered everything and mixed up all the rest." Which made the prisoner laugh outright, and brought the judge and jury's handkerchiefs to their mouths, though their eyes grew sad as this eloquent lawyer went on to state that she was the real culprit and ought to

be the prisoner, for she threw the pillow at Mary Ann's head, and imitated Herbert's voice and called her "Ould Ireland."

At which Mary Ann rolled up her eyes, and clasped her hands in horror, while the prisoner being released, Miss Olive was given his place, for she had told an untruth in hopes of shielding her brother. In vain both boys plead for her. She was kept in close confinement until she repented, and confessed, and then was sent to bed in disgrace. She was not supperless; but her meal had been very plain, and Ray, in the compassion of his heart, smuggled her a tart and a slice of frosted cake from the supper table. For a long time after that Herbert called her nothing but his little "Irish attorney," declaring she had perpetrated a bull worthy of the best Paddy that ever lived.

It was over two years now since Herbert had been in disgrace. It was only occasionally he had ever been, but it ended altogether the night he rose for prayers in the small vestry, and

father and mother came home with such shining faces. He had been different since. Still Ray and Olive carried to him difficult problems and troubles of every kind. He was their hero, their comforter, counsellor, the dear big brother, but they never expected him to get into a "scrape" now; they would as soon expect it of their father. Once in a while Ray had seen him enter papa's study, with a troubled face, and come out with red eyes. But there was always such a smile on the lips under the eyes, Ray envied him.

All this flashed through Raymond Gardenell's mind in answer to his father's question. "Papa," he said, putting out his hands, and clasping the neck bowed towards him. Then papa drew his great boy to his knee — it was the only natural way for any of them to sit — and the curly head fell on the broad shoulder meant to support it, while a broken little voice said, "Papa, you're right, and I am wrong. I'd give lots to be like you and Herbert. I do try. I

pray sometimes, but I fail. I ask for help, and it doesn't come."

And papa whispered: "Isn't it because you do not open your door wide enough to let your Helper in? It is He that overcomes; we can only let Him."

And just then the study door flew open, and a very merry little voice said, as its owner stopped in apparent dismay, "Why, if the judge and jury and all the court hasn't the prisoner right on its knee! That isn't dignified, but it's nice, isn't it, Ray? It's a quarter of two."

Ray jumped up. "I didn't suppose it was half that time; my whole noon gone."

"Angy Baron brought in her be-au-ti-ful bracelet for me to see, and I forgot everything, even you, you poor prisoner. But what has the court decided?" proceeded Miss Busybody, holding the judge by the ears, while she kissed his nose.

Then the judge arose with great dignity, and declared that the court had decided that the

money be paid immediately, producing a silver dollar and passing it to Ray. "It had also decided," with great emphasis on the verb, "that henceforth the sum of five cents be deducted from Ray Gardenell's monthly allowance every time a penny was called for before it was due."

"My!" commented Olive, "what'll become of you now, Ray?"

"My!" echoed Ray, "I'll have to turn over a new leaf sure, whether I want to or not."

CHAPTER V.

TOMMY.

"How underneath wintry snows,
The invisible hearts of flowers
Grow ripe for blossoming,
And the lives that seem so cold,
May be cast in gentlest mould,
May be full of love and spring."

WHY, if it isn't little Tommy Gardenell!" and Miss Johanna Ralison, answering the knock at her back door, looked down in feigned surprise at a very neatly-dressed little figure, with the brightest of eyes, and the rosiest of cheeks, peeping out from under a new spring hat.

The face clouded perceptibly, and the eyes flashed ominously at this greeting. There was a little flush of shame, too. Olive quite knew Miss Ralison was thinking of that fortnight-old affray in the street. Had she not seen her

old friend's face at the window that day? Miss Johanna had raised it once with a suggestive "Olive Gardenell!" and rapped on it several times, until the excited child shook her fist at her, and cried out, "Stop your noise, you horrid old Jo!"

She had quite forgotten that day's mishaps — it seemed so long ago — and now this unacknowledged and unforgiven part of it confronted her with fresh humiliation. It had taken place the last day of school, before the spring vacation, and so much had happened since! The warm weather had come, and papa had made so many delightful little trips with his merry brood since — only yesterday taking them to the country — that all disagreeables had been driven out of Miss Olive's curly head, and she had started on her errand to her "dear J's," as she called the two Miss Ralisons, with a very light heart.

Johanna and Jennie Ralison were the last of a respected and once wealthy family. Misfortune had reached them. On a part of what

had once been their father's estate stood the substantial brick schoolhouse, where Mr. Gardenell's children spent so many happy hours. The front lot had been sold to a stranger; all that remained to them was this yellow house. It was a good-sized, substantial building, with an ell and a very small back yard, where the sisters raised a few posies, and which they designated as "our garden."

This house stood on the right-hand side of the narrow walk that led to the schoolhouse, and both stood back from the street. The larger part of the house the sisters rented, and this was their only income. The ell with its tiny sitting-room, kitchen and pantry below, and two chambers above was their domicile, their chief excitement and entertainment being furnished by the school children.

Both the sisters found interest in these: Miss Johanna noting all their battles, shortcomings, unnecessary noises, Miss Jennie, by some means or other, becoming their ally, counsellor, de-

fender and surgeon. How this came to pass Miss Jennie herself would have been puzzled to say, or if Miss Johanna was as blind to the proceedings about her as appeared, was never fully ascertained. But certain it is that bloody noses, wounded fingers, and even torn pants found their way to that back door, and were severally attended to, with sundry gentle pats, and not a few kisses, administered surreptitiously without the supposed knowledge of Miss Jo.

Miss Jennie often wondered at the fortune that kept her sister engaged in some other part of the house on these occasions. She was thankful, however, for hers was a gentle, timid nature, unused and unfit to battle with the strong will of her only relative, and she was sure these children were a sore trial to Johanna.

Olive loved both the sisters after a fashion. "My dear Miss Jo is a splendid old hateful," she confessed to Ray, "but precious Miss Je is honey and down."

Now she stood quite conscious she owed an

apology to Miss Jo for past rudeness, and sure she would have to give it some day, to ease her conscience; but how could she do it now, with those gray, gray eyes looking down on her, as with dainty basket on one arm, the other hand behind her, she flashed defiance from the blue eyes under her new hat. If only Miss Jo wouldn't be so horrid! But Miss Jo was just Miss Jo, and repeated in her peculiar tone:—

“Little Tommy Gardenell, how is your ma and pa? Hadn't you better come in? I suppose you have an errand?”

“Not to you, Miss Vinegar and Gall. I wish to see the lady of the house,” replied the little girl, with much dignity and great emphasis.

“Oh, oh! Jennie, Jennie,” looking over her shoulder, and addressing the lady in the sitting-room beyond, “do you know Tommy Gardenell?”

“No. I am not acquainted with Tommy,” chirped back Miss Jennie in her weak soprano, “but I know Miss Olly well, and I'm sure I'm

not mistaken in her sweet voice. Let her come in, Sister." And without ceremony, Olive dashed past Miss Jo, crossed the kitchen with a bound, laid her basket at her friend's feet, and dropping beside it kissed her hand, while she cried:—

"Such nice cream pie, and delicious tarts, and—and something better than both of them together; and it's all for you, you darling. Don't you let cross old Jo have one thing 'cept—'cept just the littlest tart that's there."

Then Miss Johanna closed the door between them and the kitchen, and went about her work, a smile twitching the corners of her mouth.

"She's 'game,' as the boys say; but I'd like to know how it happens father and mother are both left out of her make-up. But then, it was so with me. Mother was handsome, and father a gentleman, and"—the rest was lost as she went up-stairs to make the beds.

"There, did you ever see anything so lovely! Oh! don't they bring the little birds, and the

grass, and everything else beautiful into your heart, just to look in their daring eyes?" cried Olive, with what Ray would have called a poetic "streak," as she lifted a bunch of delicious violets to Miss Jennie's nose.

"They came this morning from — ever so far, done up in moss, in a box to keep them fresh. Isn't it nice to be like my mamma, and have everybody love you, and isn't it nice to be me, and have mamma? I kept them behind my back ever minute, for fear the thunder in Miss Jo's face would blight them in their beauty," falling into another streak. "There," fastening part of them on her friend's bosom, and walking away, head this side and that, to note the effect, "you are just lovely, like them. They are yours; you shall have every one of them. I did intend to give Miss Jo some of them, but she is so — so peculiar — I really don't want to say anything naughty, and have to repent and 'fess again. I hate repenting, don't you, Miss Jennie? A person can't repent without 'fess-

ing; if they only could it would be such a blessing," sighing, and not noticing the smile on her friend's lips.

"Please, Miss Jennie, may I comb your hair? I won't disturb you the leastest bit; you can go on with your sewing. I comb mamma's sometimes, and yours would look so nice done up her way. You don't begin to know how funny you look, your hair dragged back so straight and set; not a bit like yourself."

"I felt sick this morning, and sister combed my hair."

"I knew it, and it will never do. You're not a bit like her, you know. You were made for soft laces and loose coils, and — and — violets," tripping back and forth, with comb and brush.

"Miss Jo was meant — was meant — well, she's quite good, only — only — dear Je do you believe it is wicked to think some folks are mistakes, and were meant — meant for men instead of women? Not that I think God ever made a mistake; that would be dreadful; but —

but — some one did, and I shouldn't wonder," slowly, "but it was Satan. He does mix things dreadfully sometimes, you know. Why, he made Eve believe that p'raps God didn't tell the truth, and I guess he made Miss Jo kind of mannish; not much, you know, but a little. O, Jennie! how soft and nice your hair is. It is silky, like mamma's, only mamma's is dark and — and — numerous, and yours is light and kind of thin; but they're both feathery; puffy, you know. Why, all that hair of mamma's is as light as — light as — I don't know what. Oh! how sweet you do look with those violets in your hair. You darling, you are as pretty and young with that pink in your cheeks! Miss Jo, Miss Jo," springing to the door, and hopping up and down with delight, forgetful of her late dudgeon, "Miss Jo, come here, quick!"

In the pantry mixing bread, Jo's thoughts had been wandering as she sifted and stirred. That call roused her. Had Jennie, the only one she had left, taken another ill turn? The spoon

dropped from her fingers ; she forgot to wipe her careful hands as she sprang in answer to the cry.

"Oh! look, look! Isn't she lovely?" The open door revealed, not what she feared, but such a fair, sweet face, it seemed a part of her late dream — a phantom from the past. The sunny locks caught here and there with violets, the tiny bunch beside her throat, the flickering color in the cheeks all seemed parts of her vanished youth. Olive was satisfied as she looked in Johanna's eyes.

"You old darling!" she said generously. "I have two violets left and you shall have them. Stoop down, and let me put them in your hair."

"Go away, child! I don't want your violets; keep them out of my sight," pushing the little girl one side. "Ennie dear," using the pet name her sister had not heard in years, "Ennie dear, you look as you did thirty years ago. It's about the same time of year, too." Stooping,

she kissed her sister's check and went out, and Olive stood looking at her two violets with indignant tears in her eyes.

"You mustn't mind her, dear," said Jennie gently. "She did not mean to grieve you; the flowers were more than she could bear. You did not know we had a brother once—an adopted brother—but dearer than life to us both? Yes, it was more than thirty years ago, just such a morning as this, he decked me out with violets like these—great purple beauties, the first of the season, and fit to crown his queen, he said. He kissed me when he left me, as she did just now. He never came back to us. They brought him back dead. Johanna covered his coffin with violets and planted them on his grave, and she never has wanted to touch one since. Poor Johanna! she loved Robert so much."

So much! How much she never guessed and never could. In the kitchen, with set lips and drawn brows, a woman fought her heart. She must live for the one of whom he said to her

that fatal morning, "You and I will spread her path with violets. You will not be sorry, will you, dear old Jo, when I become your true brother?"

"Oh! how sad; and you loved him too, Miss Jennie?" asked Olive, a great lump in her throat and a heavy feeling in her heart.

"O, yes!" replied Miss Ralison. "I loved him better than everything else in all the world. I suffered at first, and I wept so much I was very sick and a burden to Johanna. But she was brave and patient with me. Now I think of him with Jesus, and there is no pain in the thought. I expect to meet him by and by. I never speak of him now. I should like to sometimes, but I find Johanna cannot bear it. I tried it once or twice, but she looked so terribly that I did not try it again. She is different from me."

"So would I be," cried Olive, with sudden consciousness of affinity with Miss Jo, "so would I be if Hervie died. I could not, could

not get over it," with a little sob. "I could never forgive God; I could never be happy with him way off in Heaven, and me here. You are good, Miss Jennie, and so is my papa and mamma. Good people love all God's ways, but — but — I'm sorry I called her Vinegar and Gall, and you may give her half of the pie and the biggest tart, and — and — poor dear old Jo," and down went Olive's head in Miss Ralison's lap and she cried heartily.

Miss Jo was picking over beans by the kitchen window when Olive was ready to go. Her face was very stern; sorrow makes some faces stern. She was so preoccupied she did not see the little figure all ready to depart looking at her out of wistful eyes much resembling two great violets heavy with dew.

A long, deep sigh attracted the woman's attention, and she started a little.

"Why, child, how queer you act. What are you sighing about?" she asked sharply.

"My sins," replied Olive solemnly.

A smile flickered over Miss Ralison's face.

"I'm so sorry," continued the child humbly.

"Sorry for what?" still sharply.

"'Cause, — 'cause you don't like violets."

"Who told you I didn't like violets? I love them better than any other flower in the world."

"But — but you wouldn't take them."

"They stifle me, they stifle me; I can't breathe where they are," said Miss Johanna, catching her breath as if they were oppressing her then. But she looked more kindly at the little girl, recalling that long ago when at that very door a tall, lithe figure stood in drab overcoat, with violets at its button-hole, while the sun that glinted on this child's curls turned his to threads of gold as he kissed his hand to her and laughed his happy "good-by!" Yes, she loved violets.

"I — I'm sorry I called you old Jo, and you ain't Miss Vinegar and Gall, and I do love you some when you let me, and I want you to eat the pie and tarts, and I'm sorry you've got an ache, and I wish I could comfort you; but

"I'm glad you won't let me or anybody else— and I love you best 'cause—'cause you don't forget Robert. It's just hateful to forget, and I couldn't."

Johanna Ralison laid down her pan of beans and looked at the little one, who had drawn nearer and nearer to her during this speech.

"Well, if ever I saw such a child," she exclaimed.

"No; I guess you never did. I'm not good," said Olive meekly. "I never could be good enough to forget, and—and I've always got to repent and 'fess something, but—but I want to be good some, and I'm sorry I got cross, and you can call me Tommy if you want to, and"—

"Hoity, toity," broke in Miss Ralison. "You're not quite a little heathen, I guess, though you act much like it at times. Why, when you're quiet and lady-like your voice is quite like your mother's; and never were two pairs of eyes in two heads as like as yours and your father's. Don't get discouraged; there's

hopes for you, child, while there's anything like your parents about you. We'll rub out the old score, shake hands and begin over again."

Olive took the extended hand, but she looked unsatisfied.

"Well, what else?" questioned Miss Jo, with a half-smile.

"If you'd let me kiss you."

Down went the stiff neck. How the little warm arms hugged it! "P'r'aps he used to hug you so," she whispered, "your dear, dear brother. There's a kiss from me to make up, and there's one for comfort, and" — lingeringly — "there, that is for Robert," putting a kiss right on the tip of Miss Jo's nose. Then Olive darted out of the door as if she surmised what would follow, and saw Miss Johanna's head fall on the table while she sobbed with all her might. "God bless that baby!" she said amid her tears, for, true as strange, no human sympathy since Robert died had been as real to her as this.

"I'm a fool," she said presently; "but to

think that child has such a heart. There's a good deal of flash to her, but it's the flash of the diamond. Poor little Tommy!" with something like a real laugh as she recalled that kiss on the nose.

Perhaps her heart was lighter for her tears, for when, a little after, she heard her sister repeating softly, "Into each life some rain must fall," she replied cheerily: —

"And it's well 'tis so. Think of a world without a bit of rain to sweeten it, or a day of glare and no twilight to soften it. I guess God knows best," and Jennie looked her astonishment out of her mild eyes.

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CHAPTER VI.

HARDLY GOOD ENOUGH TO DIE YOUNG.

So wise, so young they say, do ne'er live long.
KING RICHARD III.

O MAMMA!" cried Olive, a little later that day, bursting into her mother's room with all the pent-up feelings of her soul rushing to her lips at once, "O, mamma! those violets were dreadful and lovely, and Miss Jennie looked like an angel, and Miss Jo loves them, but she can't bear them 'cause they stifle her, and—and she's got an ache, and I wish I could comfort her, but I wouldn't never, never, never forget Herbert, and I'd never forgive God for taking him, and I'm most sure he will 'cause he's so good and I'm so uncodiciled."

And mamma, laughing, took the poor little dolcful face, with its quivering lips, between her

hands, and kissed brow, eyes, cheek, chin and nose-tip before removing the pretty hat with its blue ribbons.

"Mamma, I kissed her right on the tip of her nose."

"Who, darling?"

"Miss Jo," replied the child gravely.

"O, my girlie!" laughed mamma, at thought of dear straight-backed Miss Johanna submitting to such an indignity. "How in the world did you manage it? And what did she say?"

"Oh! it was for Robert, you see. I didn't really want to, you know, 'cause those kisses are Herby's, and papa's, and yours, and Ray's once in a while when he don't tease. But—but, O, mamma! Miss Jo has such an ache; and I couldn't help think if it had been Hervie, and so—and so I did give her a nosy kiss."

Mamma was mystified with "Robert" and the "ache," but she knew time and patience would get at the bottom of things. Just now her daughter needed diversion and sympathy.

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"Just like my generous little Olive," she said,
"but how did Miss Ralison take it, darling?"

"I s'pose I oughtn't to know, mamma, for she
gave a little sniff and I ran off quick; but I
looked back and her head wasn't up at the win-
dow, and I know she didn't move, so I s'pect it
was on the table and she was crying. I thought
she would; that's why I ran. It was all the
violets, mamma, the violets and — and Robert.
He went and died, and they covered him with
violets, and now they stifle Miss Jo and she
can't bear them."

"And Robert was?" questioningly.

"Her brother. O, mamma! let me tell you
all about it, only you'll be sorry, for I was
naughty, and when Miss Jo called me Tommy
Gardenell I" — lowering her head and speaking
slowly — "I called her Miss Vinegar and Gall
and asked for the lady of the house, as if she
wasn't one. But, mamma, I asked her forgive-
ness and repented all right, and I'm willing you
should think me very naughty or anything, if

you'll only help me to comfort Miss Jo and ask God not to take Hervie, 'cause I want to be good some, only I couldn't never forget him."

Perhaps Mrs. Gardenell read between the lines of her little daughter's story; perhaps she understood more of the silent life of sorrow hidden in that back ell than the sister who shared it. Certain it is from that hour a new respect for this tall, gaunt woman had possession of that gentle heart, which showed itself in numberless delicate acts of love.

"Poor Miss Johanna," she said in tones sympathetic enough even to satisfy her small daughter. "We will ask God to comfort her and show us how to help her."

"And Herbert, mamma, my Herbert?"

"Your Herbert is the dear Lord's own precious child, and I think He has work for him to do here before He takes him to Heaven. My Olly needs to love and trust Jesus."

They prayed together, and Olive felt lighter-hearted. She watched her favorite brother

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HARDLY GOOD ENOUGH TO DIE YOUNG. 77

sedulously, however, for the next few days, greatly to his amusement; noted what he ate, commented on his color, and teased him into an hour of frolic when he ought to have been studying his Latin lesson. She concluded, as she informed Ray, that "Hervie was hardly good enough to die yet, for it was kind of naughty to play in study-hour, and it was only good boys who died young."

But Olive did not forget her desire to comfort Miss Ralison; it was with her continually, and at last showed itself to the amusement of all.

"Are you boys very busy?" she asked one study-hour, peeping into the room where Herbert and Ray sat "pegging away" at their Latin, according to Ray's terminology.

"About so, so," laughed Number One; but Number Two said jokingly, "What next, pray? how long since our convenience was consulted when Miss Flyaway had business on hand? Don't stand on ceremony, Princess; if you get too good you'll die young."

"There, Ray Gardenell, if I'd quote a person's words right before another person. If I'm not good, there are some things I'm above doing."

"As for instance, cajoling a fellow into playing away his study-hour for the express purpose of proving him not good enough to die," laughed Sir Tease. "To beguile a fellow mortal into sin with the selfish desire of relieving one's own heart, and then rejoicing, yea, exulting, that the victim has reached the level of his betrayer, that is — that is," cried Ray, striking an attitude and running his hand through his hair, "that is degradation indeed."

"I didn't; oh! I didn't. Hervie, you darling, you are just as good, and clean, and white, and I didn't 'zult over you, did I?" cried Olive, flying to her brother's side, her sensitive conscience alarmed at once.

"If I am deregration you are gooder than ever, and I'll teil God so, 'cause 'twas my fault you played and 'glected your theology lesson."

Both boys were laughing.

"O, Princess, Princess!" cried Ray, with dewy eyes, "you will be the death of me yet. Your 'deregation' has reached your brain while Herv's 'theology' is still all in his heart. Now here's a specimen of zoölogy for you; how will you classify her, Herv?"

"Love species," laughed Herbert, pushing the curls from the sweet face and drawing her to his knee. "Precious, Ray is suffering from a 'streak'; you ought not to let his rhapsody alarm you. What does brother's darling want?"

Olive was easily diverted. "Are there any shorter cat'kisms alive now?" she asked soberly.

"No," struck in Ray solemnly; "they're all dead. Nothing but longer catechisms in vogue now."

"O dear!" sighed Olive. "Miss Jo is so old she forgot there wouldn't be any these days."

"But there are, darling, lots of them." Herbert still caressed the head on his shoulder.

"O, you wicked boy!" cried Olive, lifting her head to shake it at Ray.

"All a matter of opinion, sir, I assure you," answered the incorrigible. "You wished to know if they were alive. Herbert takes the affirmative and I the negative. I've had some experience in the matter, having got acquainted with the article in question while at Aunt Sally's. I give you my word as a gentleman, they are dead; as dead as any dead language in existence, if anything can be said to be dead which exists. That the books are still to be found argues nothing whatever as, alas, we schoolboys know to our sorrow," lifting his *Cæsar* with his toe and sending it spinning across the room.

"To thy grave, thou dead and long since worthy of burial! Take rest beside thy coldier-author. I'd gladly sing thy requiem," he cried theatrically.

"Streaks!" cried Olive, clapping her hands. "Streaks! Hervie, couldn't you get me a shorter cat'kism?"

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"What do you want it for, darling?"

"To study; I want to learn it all by heart!"

"And die young?" put in Ray sepulchrally.

"I knew you were approaching the goal when you inquired if we were busy. Look out, Princess; if you cheat Herbert and I out of another hour of study you will have to seek a solitary tomb. We shall not be good enough to accompany you thither."

"Nobody ever thought you'd die young. Herbie, will it hurt me to study the cat'kism?"

"I don't know; ask papa. I should think it might be strong meat for babes," was the reply.

"O, no! it is milk. I was of very tender age when Aunt Sally applied it to me at Valley Farm. But my stomach was weak; it soured, and I threw it up as fast as I took it, so she concluded it was not suited to my constitution," said Ray.

"My Miss J's studied it, and I guess they're good enough," cried the little girl. "It didn't sour Miss Je and Miss Jo isn't sour, she's only stifled."

"Stified!" echoed Ray. "What stified her, Princess?"

"Violets," was the sententious reply, and no entreaties availed to make her explain further.

"I'll just go see papa," she said. "He likes me to comfort folks, I know; and p'raps he'll get me a cat'kism when I tell him about Miss Jo."

"That's right," seconded Herbert. "It is likely papa has the book in his study; he has most everything." And Ray broke in coaxingly, "Tell me about Miss Jo, Olive; that's a darling. If there's any comfort on foot I'd like to be in it; and as to the catechism, I can recite two or three pages without a break."

Olive turned on him admiring eyes. "Then you'd suit Miss Jo. I'll tell her next time I go there, and she'll never call you a nuisance again. But—well, I'll think of it, and p'raps I'll let you comfort her a little," which was the very best the young lady would promise then.

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CHAPTER VII.

MISS OLIVE'S REQUEST.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise;
And as we're merry, may we still be wise.

ROBERT BURNS.

PAPA GARDENELL sat in his study quite busy with his papers, yet when his little daughter put her shining head through the door, asking demurely, —

"Can the busiest and bestest man in New York spare half a minute to a poor little beggar girl?" he answered joyfully, "Not only a half-minute, but a half-hour if it will satisfy or comfort the weeniest corner of her precious heart." Then there was a merry scamper across the floor, and presently the little beggar had her shining head on a broad shoulder.

"Papa, have you a shorter cat'kism?"

Papa was astonished. "What can my little beggar-girl want of a shorter catechism?"

"Oh! for comfort, papa."

"Comfort?" questioningly.

"Yes, you darling, comfort. Let me kiss that puzzle-wrinkle out of your forehead 'fore you grow old. Mrs Walker says it makes people old to wrinkle. Mamma never wrinkles; she only opens her eyes when she doesn't understand. That keeps her from growing old, and makes her quite lovely. When her eyes open so, I love her to death. Now, that will do. Yes, papa, I want to comfort poor Miss Jo, she has such an ache, and violets stife her."

Very lucid. Papa tried to keep the puzzle-wrinkle out of his forehead, and opened his eyes instead, for which he was repaid with a dainty kiss on the tip of his nose.

"You see, I didn't know and I offered her violets, and she looked — looked like Fate; like a judge; and I kissed the tip of her nose for Robert, and she cried." — Here Miss Olive's lis-

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tener came near laughing, but restrained him-
self. — "So I want a cat'kism."

"I understand; you hope the gift of that will
comfort Miss Ralison? What made you think
of such medicine, my dear? I fear my copy is
too old to be presentable."

"But, you see, I don't want to give it to her;
I want it for myself."

"No, I didn't see, and now I fear my sight is
slightly blurred. You wish to comfort Miss
Johanna by presenting yourself with a cate-
chism?"

"You are the smartest papa! That's just it;
and I know it will please her better than any-
thing I can do."

The "smartest" papa, afraid of losing his
reputation, opened his eyes wide again, but
wisely kept his mouth shut.

"You don't understand? Oh! what a funny
man. Now, listen! I really did pray about it,
and I know it's just the thing. Papa, if you
knew a little girl who got cross when you called

her 'Tommy' and called you back Mr. Vinegar"—

"Tit for tat," interjected papa.

—"And who shook her fist at you when you tried to keep her from fighting, and called you old J——, no, old G——; 'cause you're not Miss Jo; and who said you mustn't have any nice pie or tarts, and stifled you with violets"—Here papa's form shivered a little with repressed merriment, though his face looked preternaturally solemn—"And then repented and 'fessed, but couldn't get any better, and you had to keep forgiving her, why, p'raps you'd like her to study the cat'kism if you knew it would make her good."

"P'raps I would," assented papa with great gravity.

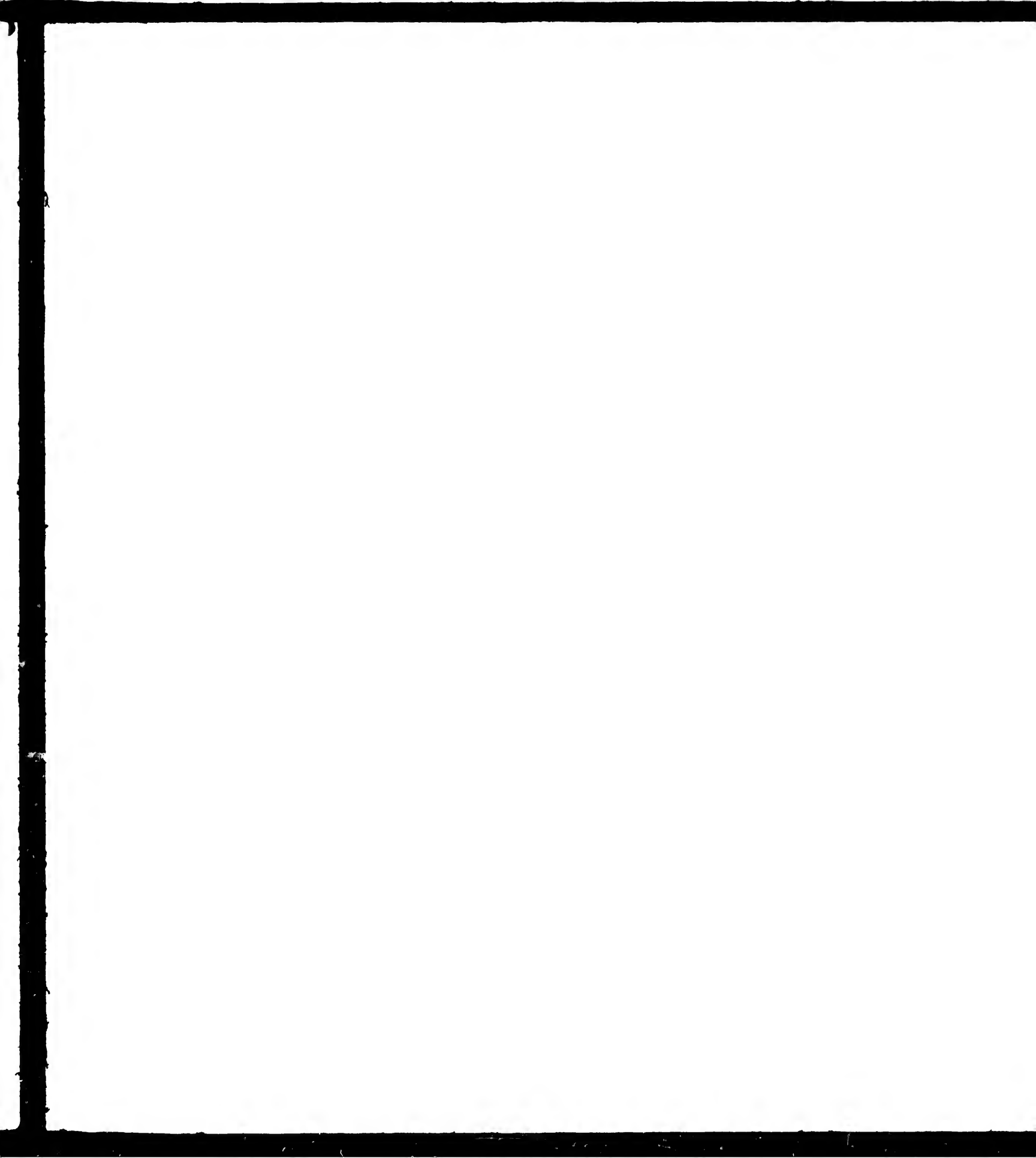
"Of course you would," responded his daughter, kissing him.

"And the comfort," suggested papa; "I suppose the comfort would be in having such a bad child reform?"

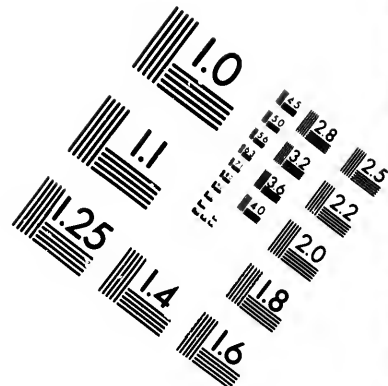
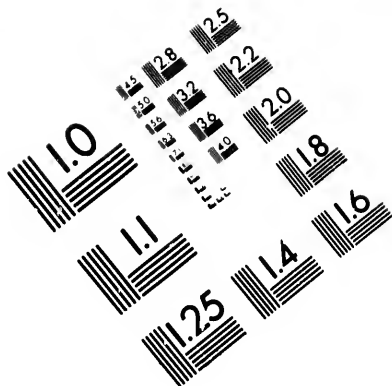
"Yes, 'course. You see, if your brother Robert died and gave all his violets to Miss Jennie—no, to mamma, I mean—and you didn't have anybody else but him and her in the world. and he never came back, but was brought back dead, and you covered him with violets, and planted them on his grave, and they always stifled you, and somebody gave you two, and didn't know 'bout it, and stifled you again, they'd be sorry, papa."

"Yes," assented papa.

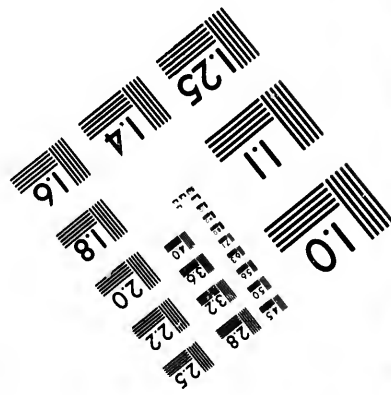
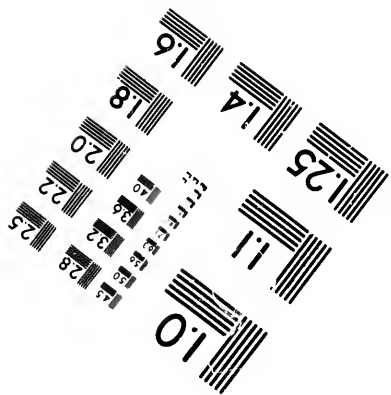
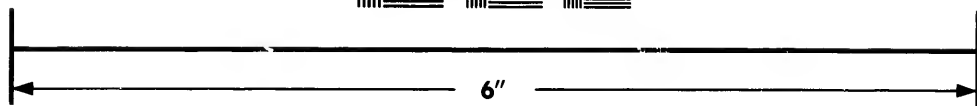
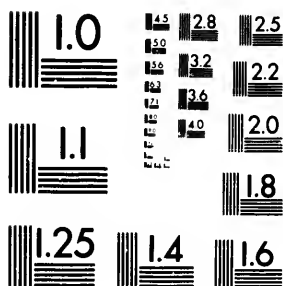
"Well, that's me, papa," in a very doleful voice. "And you see if I could comfort her now I'd be glad. And she says lots of times girls were better in her day 'cause they studied the shorter cat'kism and learned their duty to God and man. And if I could s'prise her by saying it right off like she did when she was little, I think it'd be the best thing she'd like, and she'd know I was trying to be good. Papa, is it 'strong meat for babes' and 'too much for a weak stomach'?"







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Then papa had a chance to laugh and relieve himself. He carried her to the bookcase and held her up while she took the pamphlet from a top shelf. "I think you may study it without danger," he said, still smiling. "It is a wonderful strengthener of the spinal column, and my girlie can tell brother Ray that papa will not object to his taking small doses of it daily, in the study, with you."

Neither father nor mother expected Olive would adhere long to her purpose of committing the catechism to memory, and they were astonished as day after day she took her prescribed lesson without a demur. In this they saw fresh proof of the strength of her affections. It was a happy day to the child when her dancing feet carried her to the "Yellow Nest," as she called the abode of her maiden friends, catechism in hand, hair flying and eyes radiant with delight.

Miss Jennie met her in the kitchen with a kiss, and she caught a glimpse of Miss Jo in the

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sitting-room beyond, dusting the ornaments on the corner bracket.

"Oh! dear Miss Jo," she cried, dashing in, "I've learned it! I've learned it! And you must be so glad, 'cause now you know truly I want to be good."

"What has Miss Rattlebrain got in her little noddle now?" asked the spinster, not unkindly, turning a moment to her before she finished her dusting.

"The cat'kism," replied the child. "I can say all the pages."

Miss Jo gave a half-grunt. "In my day we had to repeat it without the turn or loss of a word," sighing. "They don't teach children such things these times."

"Oh! but I can say it and not miss a single word," passing the book into the lady's hand. "Shall I make believe I'm Tommy and go stand in a corner with my hands behind me, and recite it?"

Miss Jo smiled grimly.

"You can stand where you like. I needn't stop my work ; I know every word of it by heart. There, begin : 'What is the chief end of man?'"

There was a queer glint in the gray eyes as the child answered the last question.

"And you did that to please me, Diamond?" she said almost tenderly.

"Yes ; does it comfort you, Miss Jo?" asked the child naively.

"It makes me hope for you. You're a real Gardenell child. Jennie, get Tommy a cookie."

A cookie! Olive received the great, funny-shaped gingerbread horse, with a stubby tail and one staring eye, with joy. It was made for her—made before she came. She danced all the way home.

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CHAPTER VIII.

A STARTLING DEVELOPMENT.

It would be argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest forever.

KING HENRY IV.

GOOD-MORNING, you dear people all!" A cyclone of sunshine and cheer seemed to enter the breakfast-room with the handsome boy who smiled and bowed at the assembled company.

"Papa, I beg your pardon! I am sorry to be tardy."

"I am sorry, too," said Mr. Gardenell gravely. The one thing he would not tolerate in his children was dilatoriness.

"I was up early enough, but sat down to study before completing my toilet, in hopes to make up for last night's fun. It is six months I transgressed before; I trust you won't

be hard on a" — "fellow," Ray came near saying, for he was the culprit, but instead wound up with the words of an old Scotch woman whose darling he was in babyhood: "A wee, weak laddie."

"Wee, weak laddie." Ray was the very opposite of that now, as papa looked up into his brilliant face with its comical mixture of fun and penitence. How full he was of rich exuberant life! Herbert Gardenell was proud of his children, and who could find fault with one so ready to confess his shortcomings?

"You are excused this morning, but don't repeat the experiment," said the gentleman, with something like a twinkle in his eye. "It is not often we have delinquents in this direction; strange that we should be favored with two this morning."

Ray cast a hasty glance over the company. To be sure; where was Olive? She was never late. "May I see what detains Princess h
I sit down?" he asked, turning to his f

"I think you may. I forbade Mary Ann's doing so. You are too old now to trouble the servants."

Ray bounded over the stairs and into his sister's room without ceremony. She, poor child, had forgotten everything as she wrestled with the poetic muse, bound to obtain substantial comfort for Miss Jo. Hair uncombed, face unwashed, she sat, pencil in hand, elbows on the table, paper spread out before her, despair written on every lineament of her face.

"Late for breakfast, and in disgrace! Papa has sent me for you. For shame! when it is the only thing over which he's very particular," shouted Ray, then stopped suddenly as his eye took in the picture.

"My! if it isn't streaks." The door flew to, and the boy descended the stairs again, two at a time, stopping to take breath before entering the dining-room.

"Streaks!" he cried dramatically. "A clear and beautifully developed case of the streaks."

The ecstatic Muse has evidently descended, and, to judge from the Princess' appearance, has pulled her hair, slapped her face and taken every other liberty with her imaginable. A most decided case of poetry struck or stuck in. Only one thing can save the patient now, to bring it out. Mamma, don't you think you can help her? I fear the result."

"O, Ray!" deplored mamma, putting her hands to her ears.

"You had better calm yourself and eat your breakfast, my son, or the result may be far from satisfactory in your own case," said papa, and Herbert begged to go to his sister.

"No; you can remain where you are, and our foolish little girl must take the consequences of her folly. If the law of compensation holds good, she will not much mind cold beefsteak and muffins."

As the party were about to adjourn to the back parlor for prayers, a doleful little face surmounted by a halo of combed, but uncurled

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hair, thrust itself through the door. The toilet had been hastily executed, and when the face was lifted to papa's for a kiss, he shook his head.

"I've lost a warm breakfast and not found my rhyme, and now papa won't kiss me," cried the child. "O, Herbert!" catching a glimpse of his sympathetic face, "you are all the friend I have in the world."

"Streaky yet," commented Ray, with a well-simulated look of commiseration. "I'm afraid it will strike in," with solicitude. "Olive, I will stand by you to the end."

"You needn't," snapped the child. "Papa, may I have my breakfast?"

"Not now, my daughter; papa cannot wait."

Herbert found the chapter and verse for his sister, and seated her next to himself. Ray, at his father's right, and a little in the background, glanced at her occasionally, out of owl eyes, with a preternaturally grave expression, now and then stroking his face with his spread fingers, to denote that she still looked streaky.

It was exasperating in the extreme. If Herbert had not been beside her with a loving touch now and then, she was sure she would have done something dreadful. She was glad when the hymn was selected and she was summoned to her mamma's side at the piano. Even then she clung to Herbert, and, with her back to Ray, quite lost his look of genuine admiration as she sang. He was proud of his sister, especially of her singing, it was so like mamma's, and made him long to be good. He had need of something to make him good this morning. Mamma, and papa, and Herbert each prayed, and he got very uneasy, and turning in hopes to catch his sister's eye, he saw she had her arms tightly twined about his brother's neck.

"'Sympathies are healing,'" quoted Raymond a few minutes later, when, sauntering into the dining-room, he found Olive eating her cold breakfast. "'Sympathies are healing, and in the worst is ample hope, if only thou hast charity and faith.' What, streaky yet, poor lit-

tle Ol! What were you writing? Tell brother, and perhaps he can help you out."

"You don't help," said the child. "You just unhelped my best line, banging my door when it was just ready to come — the beautiful little angel thought. You scared it with your great rough ways, and it flew away" —

"On the wings of the wind, like a wounded dove," interjected Ray dramatically. "My! you've got it bad this time, Ol. You look streaky; anybody'd know you were a poet, just to see your melancholy eyes and sensitive mouth. Cheer up, Sis; 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them though we may,' and you are tending fast towards poesy, and may be sure some day the Muse will take up her abode within your breast and never more depart."

Ray looked so serious, in spite of his high-flown language, that Olive half-believed him to be in earnest.

"Ray, do be good for once," she said, "and

tell me if you really, truly think I will ever be a great writer?"

"Undoubtedly," answered her brother, with a sober face. "I am something of a poet myself, and can tell. Come, Princess, do let me examine your verses; perhaps I can give you the missing links."

"P'raps; if you promise never, never, never to tell."

"Never, never, never," repeated Ray. "May I be thumped if I do, or drowned in a wash-basin."

"Now you're funning."

"I was never farther from it, Princess."

"Ray, if papa would let you take the horse, and you'd drive me to the old graveyard to see the grave covered with violets, I think I could do better."

"To be sure," assented her brother, beginning to get a rational conception of the present poetic visitation. "I see; it is Robert you are bewailing."

"Yes; it is Robert. It will be such a comfort to Miss Jo if I could only write him an epithet. I think these lines — they are the ending ones, Ray — are beautiful: —

" And violets blue
We'll strew, we'll strew
Forever above his dust.

How does that sound?"

"Sound! why, that's poetry," cried Ray, with emphasis. "Go on, Princess!"

"I can't. You see the middle's left out. I've got the first verse and last, but — O, dear! p'raps you can help me just the tiniest bit."

"All right; I'll try, though I could never come up to you, Princess. We'll ride out this very evening and see 'The violets blue, above his dust.'"

What Ray did for the epitaph will never be known. So artfully did he suggest words and rhymes that Olive herself believed them her own production. She dedicated the poem to

her dear Miss Jo, with many thanks for the "darling gingerbread horse with one eye, and a stubby tail," with hopes that its "feeble utterances" — Ray's suggestion — might comfort her stricken heart, and make up for the time she stifled her with violets. It was signed "Tommy," and decorated with a pencil drawing of the violet-covered grave beneath a weeping willow.

There was a postscript added, saying the flowers were meant for violets, though she couldn't draw them very well.

Olive was delighted with her work when done, and exhibited it to Ray with no small pride. His evident admiration and desire for a copy flattered the child into a second edition, which was safely concealed in Ray's pocket. As reward for this kindness he sealed and directed the envelope, and left it under Miss Ralison's door; to reward himself he stepped to the window and peeped under the curtain to note its reception.

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Well, it was funny. The boy outside enjoyed every bit of it. Miss Jo's amazement, her labor in deciphering it, her amusement at its dedication, her oscillation between laughter and tears when she read it aloud to Miss Jennie.

"Bless that dear child!" said Jennie, and then suddenly down went Miss Jo's head, and she was really crying.

There was a soft whistle under the window just then; Ray was unprepared for showers. He would have run, only flight would have revealed his position, and in creeping off he was arrested by the elder woman's voice.

"Tommy, Tommy," she was saying, as if gently calling some petted cat, "dear little Tommy." Then, in a sprightlier tone, to reassure her sister, distracted at the sight of her tears, "We must make Diamond another horse, Jennie."

Another horse was waiting when Olive called again, and it was carried to the nursery, where it delighted Eddie for a good part of one day,

until Ray coming in bit off its tail to see if it was made of sawdust as he asserted, when the one-eyed wonder lost all its desirableness.

Ray was very uncomfortable with that epitaph in his pocket ; it gave him untold-of agony. He longed to share it with some one. But he had promised not to tell, so he could not speak of it ; but after resisting temptation for a week he finally slyed it into the Bible on his father's study-table, and immediately felt better.

Papa Gardenell came home that afternoon, weary and dispirited. Trouble between two of his church members weighed on his heart. He walked the floor, prayed, then reaching out his hand for his constant source of help and comfort, opened it to Olive's "epithet." The handwriting, the inscription to Miss Jo, betrayed "Tommy," and, smiling, he sought his wife.

"Oil for the squeaks," he laughed as he put it in her hand. "I expect this is the outcome of that neglected breakfast. Read it aloud, my dear. Really, what a child!"

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Mrs. Gardenell read the following : —

EPITHET TO ROBERT.

Here lies a darling as ever could be,
 He was all the world to Jo and some to Je.
 Most the best brother (Hervie is nicest) ever seen,
 But when the violets were so bright
 He went and faded — no, was killed — out of their sight,
 And all the world looked green.

O, Robert darling, they suffered when they put on your face and
 feet

The violets you loved so pretty and sweet,
 And they cried and cried 'cause they must —
 'Cause their poor, dear hearts broke right in two,
 And violets blue we'll strew, we'll strew
 Forever above your dust.

After Je cried she went and forgot
 And Jo didn't 'cause she could not,
 'Cause she is 'zactly like me,
 And I never could my Hervie forget.
 And Miss Jo violets always stifle, they stifle her yet,
 And I'm as glad as I can be.

O loved of the heart and dear to the soul,
 Robert, who can thy mourners console?
 You were always as sweet as sugar,
 But now you are an angel without any wings,
 'Cause angels ain't birds and don't wear feathers and things,
 And I know you are good and gooder.

There was much conjecture as to how this effusion found its way into Mr. Gardenell's Bible. Perhaps Olive wished, in this way, to bring it to her father's notice; but that was not like her: far more probable Ray was at the bottom of the affair. Very carefully papa probed his little daughter that evening as she sat on his knee.

"Was my girlie in papa's study this afternoon?"

"Not all day; I've had company, and been so busy."

"And hasn't my birdie anything to tell her papa?"

Olive turned her head on one side, like a wise little robin. "Not a thing, if you please," she said brightly. "I have a secret, papa, but it's good, and about comforting folks, and I know you won't care, so I'd rather not tell if you won't feel bad," running her fingers through his hair.

"Poor papa," said Mr. Gardenell, commiserating

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ting himself. "Who ever had a girlie before who kept secrets from her onty donty papa?"

"Oh! I'll tell you if you feel very bad. But — I'd — rather — not," slowly, "'cause you'll laugh, and you ought to trust your daughter."

"I wouldn't know for the world now," cried papa; then, putting his hands to his ears, "please don't tell me; I love so to trust my little daughter." So they had their frolic, and the epitaph was locked up, and never a word said.

Papa and mamma exchanged significant glances when Ray picked up his father's Bible carelessly, and ran its pages through his fingers. Something had miscarried, and Ray was disconsolate.

He was glad he knew it by heart, and found relief that night by reciting it, dedication and all, to Herbert, having first put his hair in a frenzy, pulled down his face to a melancholy length, removed his vest, unbuttoned his coat, sent his collar to a corner of the room, and rumpled his shirt bcsom. Then, striking an

attitude and a tone, he took his "revenge on Fate." His audience, seated on the bed-foot, laughed till the tears ran down his face, and encored until it was repeated, and ended by saying, "We must never let dear little Olive know, but really, Ray, you are the smartest fellow I ever saw."

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CHAPTER IX.

A LITTLE ADVOCATE.

Then nature said : " A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown ;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own."

WORDSWORTH.

IT did seem shameful for school to keep in such bright spring weather, when Nature was wooing its children into the light. Ray called it "mean," and Olive "horrid," but the Misses Ralison brightened when the bell rang out its familiar summons, and Jennie, who was in the chamber, opened her window to its full extent, and waved her handkerchief in greeting to the merry groups gathering fast.

"Look at that old witch ! is she crazy?" asked a new-comer.

"She isn't a witch, and she isn't crazy," said

Ray Gardenell emphatically. "If you want to hold your own in this school, be careful how you speak of our dear Miss Dr. J," lifting his hat and waving back to the window. Every boy in the crowd followed Ray's example in this as in most matters, and Miss Jennie responded to the compliment with a "Welcome back to school, my dears! the sight of your faces does me good."

"Three cheers for Miss Ralison," shouted Ray, and they were given lustily, while the girls waved their handkerchiefs.

Olive looked with unfeigned admiration at her handsome brother as he stood with shining face and bare head among his fellows. "You are a darling," she whispered, pressing close to him as the bell sounded, "I am proud of you, and you are very handsome when you're good."

"Just so," he replied; "glad you begin to appreciate my virtues. You don't look bad yourself when you're jolly."

What good did it do to compliment Ray? Herbert would have kissed her for that warm

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little speech. Nevertheless, she was just as ready to admire again when Ray came to her after school to enlist her sympathies.

"I was there and I didn't suspect, but you are so smart," she said, "and I do believe you are right, too; I've seen a sad look in Miss Jo's eyes lately."

"Oh! that's from poring over your epithet," said Ray, succumbing to his propensity to tease even in the midst of such serious business. "Now, Ollie, you really have a chance to give substantial comfort; suppose you try."

"I'll try," replied his sister. Which conversation simply means that Ray suspected the Misses Ralison were in trouble, their home in danger of being lost, and wished Olive to find out the facts in the case.

A very small thing aroused his suspicions, but he felt very sure of his ground. When before had Miss Jo ever opened the garden gate to the boys? indeed, when had she ever been known to sanction its opening? Yet she had

done it that day, and when he advanced, bowing, and asked for a pair of scissors to fit a piece of court-plaster to a scratch on his hand, had she not invited the other boys in, saying she was sure they were welcome and always would be, while she owned the place. And when they said politely, they hoped that would be as long as the old schoolhouse stood, she glanced at Jennie, and Miss Jennie sighed, and said she would be content if sure it would be as long as the present scholars remained there. but added, as if to allay suspicion, "Everything in this world is precarious, you know, my dears; we are not sure of even our own lives."

Tender-hearted Ray had pondered the words all day. They must not be turned out of their home, the dear old ladies! there was some way to prevent it if they were only sure; and then Olive's happy faculty of getting at the bottom of things suggested itself. "Either Miss Jo's going to die or they have lost their home," Ray asserted.

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It was indeed true, and not many words were needed to draw the whole story from Miss Jennie, who loved to talk over things and had no companionship in her reticent sister; she feared, too, that she was at the bottom of this whole disastrous affair.

"The house has been mortgaged for years, but we always managed to keep the interest paid until lately. I've been so poorly I couldn't sew, and some of the ladies we depended on have left the city, and so we've had to use the house-rent for every-day expenses. Mr. Hubbard threatens to foreclose, and it seems to be all my fault," sobbed Miss Jennie.

"Oh! but it isn't; and if it is, you can't help it," said Olive comfortingly. "Couldn't you tell Jesus, as my mamma does? he can stop Mr. Hubbard."

But that night Olive asked her father to explain all about mortgages to her, and when he had made her comprehend, sat for a long time with a very preoccupied face.

"Papa, are you rich?" she asked at length.

"No, dear."

"Why not? Don't you earn a good deal of money?"

"Yes," admitted Mr. Gardenell; "and I spend a good deal. Will you understand if I tell you all about the various charities and missions and individuals who call upon papa for help?"

"Do you s'pose you could raise a hundred dollars, papa? Are we very poor?"

"O, no, dear! we are not poor at all. There is a great difference between poverty and wealth. I could raise a hundred dollars very easily. Why do you ask, my dear?"

"It's a secret," answered his daughter. But the next day she found opportunity to ask Miss Je if a hundred dollars would pay the mortgage; she was most sure she could get so much.

"No;" Miss Jennie shook her head. "It was fully fifteen hundred dollars, and she must not trouble her dear little head about it. She must kiss her and never mention it to any one."

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Olive kissed her, but was careful not to pledge herself to silence. How could she help her if she could not speak of it?

"Papa," she broke out that evening, "is Judge Wilde rich?"

"Yes, dear, he is counted so, though I think his reputation for wealth exceeds the facts. He gives all his income above his expenses to the Lord's work. Do you understand that?" and then papa explained his words and noticed that the color grew in his little girl's face and her eyes brightened as he proceeded.

The next day was Saturday. In the afternoon Olive obtained permission to go to the city. She did not divulge her errand, however. If mamma would please to trust her, 'cause it was something good and she would know some day. So mamma kissed her "Good-by!" and Herbert, who was also going to the city, took her in charge. He was to leave her at a certain street corner where she would meet him again at five o'clock. It was very hard not to tell him all

about it, but she kept it close by shutting her lips hard, and being unusually silent. He might not approve of her errand, but if he did not know it, how could he object?

She knew her way very well indeed, and had the wisest of plans in her wise little head. So when Judge Wilde said "Come!" in answer to a rather timid knock at his office door, he was surprised and delighted at the bright sweet face that peeped in on him.

"Are you all alone, dear judge, and can you spare me a half-hour as well as not?" she asked politely.

"Better than not. Alone, and at your disposal for the whole afternoon, Birdie. I am so tired I was about to put up work.

"I guess you were sent to rest me. What a blessed bit of sunshine you are, lighting up this old musty office." In a moment more our little woman was cuddled in the judge's arms, her hat on the table, while his hand smoothed her brown curls.

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"I wonder what has bought me this privilege. Want to consult uncle on papa's last court to see if Ray was tried properly; is that it?" for the judge had been called in as authority more than once by this small lady.

"No, Judge Wilde, this is a truly case, and you will please not laugh to-day," replied Olive gravely. So the judge lengthened his face and declared himself ready to hear a clear statement of her business.

"Uncle Judge, you have lots of money, haven't you?" she began.

"Let me see," replied her friend, commencing to rummage his pockets. "Enough to get you a ribbon or two, or a new doll-baby, I guess."

"Now, you are laughing at me," she said indignantly. "Do be a good, nice Christian, please, and tell me if you are rich."

"I'm a child of the King," said the gentleman. "I have all I want, and plenty to use in the King's business. Suppose you tell me what money is needed."

"It's the King's business, really and truly, Uncle. Oh! I'm so glad He gives you plenty to use, for this will take a lot more than a thousand dollars," speaking slowly, and looking into the gentleman's face to note the effect of this announcement.

Judge Wilde opened his eyes, but his lips smiled reassuringly, and she reached up to kiss him and call him a darling, and with many diversions proceeded to tell her story, much to the amusement and interest of her listener.

"You dear little chicken! and your soft little heart is aching for your dear Miss J's. You are mamma's daughter, I see."

"Dear Uncle Judge, if you were a poor woman — no, two women — 'cause it's a truly case — and had only one brother and he died — you mustn't kiss my hair, but listen — and was covered with violets; and if your land had to go to build schoolhouses for children, and houses for folks, and you hadn't anything left to s'port both of you but one yellow house, and people living in

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the biggest part of it; and if one of you got sick and couldn't sew any more, and it took all the rent for the doctor and things, and you couldn't pay interest on the mortgage, don't you s'pose it 'ud be the King's business to pay it all up 'fore the hateful old man could sell it off to some one else?"

"It looks like it," assented the gentleman.

"And—and if I was rich and a judge, and had lots of the King's money to use and a little girl, who had prayed about it, came and told me, 'cause Miss Je—she's one of you, the littlest part—cried, and Miss Jo—she's the biggest part of you—looked solemn, and the boys never could go in there again to get drinks or have their hands tied up when they cut them, and this little girl who came to me couldn't ever have any more gingerbread horses with an eye and a tail—don't you think I ought to take a good lot of money and pay the mortgage, and comfort you, specially when Robert's dead and violets stifle you?"

Judge Wilde tried hard not to laugh as his little friend reached this climax, and turned on him her wide-open, solemn blue eyes. He put his lips to her forehead and hid his face in her curls, but the voice shook a little that replied decorously:—

“Yes; it looks so, I must say. But you know one must be very careful and look into matters before using another’s money. I shall want the word of the King.”

“‘All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.’ That’s His word, and it was my verse this morning,” said the child triumphantly. “Miss Je will die, and Miss Jo’s heart will break, I just know, if they have to go away from the yellow nest. They were born there, and had a nice lawn where the large house stands now, and our schoolyard was their garden. They were rich, and now it’s all gone but just that little yellow house and—and—their make-b’lieve garden not as big as this office, and they haven’t any papa

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or mamma or any Robert, and I know I'd die too if it was me." And down went the curly head on Judge Wilde's bosom, while the childish form shook with sobs.

"Why, my darling, crying after making such a plea as that! Why, what a lawyer! Kiss uncle, and let us look it all over. Now tell me the amount due, and who holds the mortgage, or do you know, dear baby?"

"Yes; I know everything," sobbed Olive. Then she sat up and answered questions as any brave little advocate might. Her friend leaned his face on his hands, watching her the while he mused.

"What are you thinking of, Uncle Judge?" at length she questioned.

"You are very like your mother, darling, and it does my old heart good to know it. The world will have another brave, true woman, please God."

"Do you think so? I'm so glad, only — only you know I don't always like to be good; only some, when it's easy and nice."

He smiled and kissed her, caressing the beautiful head.

"What will you do, Uncle Judge? Do you think p'raps tha King sent me?"

"I feel pretty sure He did."

She clapped her hands. "Then you will save the little yellow house, you darling man," she cried. "I knew you would, and you are too good for anything, and I love you — heaps," throwing her arms about his neck and hugging him to strangulation. "You're just an angel."

"Minus the wings," laughed the judge.

"They never have any, papa says; he don't think so; and I believe like papa. O, dear Judge Wilde, when will you pay it all up? May I tell my dear J's to-night?"

"No, no, my dear! you must be very good, and say never a word to anybody. There may be difficulties to overcome. There, don't look distressed, Birdie; uncle can't bear that; it's sure to come out right if it's the King's business,

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and I'll be as speedy as possible." Then he submitted to another hugging.

It was well, perhaps, that a rap at the door disturbed the two just then, or Herbert might have got tired of his street-corner. The judge rose hastily to greet his visitor, and Olive reached for her hat.

"When shall I see you again?" she asked gravely, submitting to have her hat put on, and the elastic placed under her chin.

"Pretty soon; in the course of a week, I trust. Good-by, Posie!" kissing her fondly. Then as the door closed he said, turning to his visitor, "That's the sweetest bit of flesh and blood in the world, sir."

"Ah! a baby-daughter or grand-daughter, I suppose?"

"Neither;" something like a cloud for a moment touching the fine old face. Then the sun broke through. "Her mother brought me to Christ, sir. I am one of a legion who rise up to call her blessed. How can I serve you?"

Meanwhile the little lady in the hall stopped a moment to readjust her hat placing the elastic where it belonged ; under the curls instead of the chin.

"He didn't know any better, and I'd hate to hurt his feelings," she said to herself. "P'r'ps little girls wore it that way when he was a boy. He is old-fashioned, but just as sweet—as sweet as mamma's old-time flowers that papa likes so well. I'm like papa ; I love old-fashioned things."

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CHAPTER X.

PERHAPS.

In the childish heart below
All the sweetness seemed to grow and grow,
And shine out in happy overflow,
From her blue, bright eyes.

T. WESTWOOD.

A WEEK was a long time for a little girl's patience, but it lasted "by patching," as Ray said, for he cheered her through its length wonderfully.

It seemed strange to have a secret with Number Two unshared by Number One. She felt almost guilty when she opened the study-room door and beckoned Ray away. What would Herbert think?

"You see I'm coming into favor. Aren't you terribly jealous?" asked the tease of his brother as he turned to obey the summons.

"You won't feel bad, you darling, will you?" cried Olive, coming in to kiss the neglected one on his nose. "You are best, best" —

"Bester, bestest! go it, Ol," said Ray, finishing the comparison.

"No, I mean good" —

"Gooder, goodest; that's pure Saxon," persisted the naughty boy.

"You know what I mean, don't you, Hervie? and you're never a tease. But I have to tell Ray 'cause it was his secret at first, and he can be nice when he tries."

The week ended with a summons to the parlor. "Judge Wilde would like to see Miss Olive alone."

Papa looked up from his paper in astonishment; mamma opened her eyes; Ray whistled, and the young lady herself glided out of the room with great dignity, and a very knowing glance cast at her brother.

"It's business, papa. I'll 'splain some other time," she said loftily.

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Business, yes, and so delightful! All the decorum was shaken out of the young lady speedily when the judge caught her up in his arms, covering her with kisses, and put the mortgage in her hands, telling her he was convinced it was the King's business, and she had been greatly honored as his royal advocate. Then he pledged her to secrecy as to his part in the transaction, and promised to tell the story to papa.

So while the little girl wiled away Ray to examine the precious documents, Judge Wilde told Mr. and Mrs. Gardenell and Herbert the story of the child's visit to his office, and its outcome. It was a very pathetic yet amusing story as related by the judge, and his listeners laughed with tears in their eyes.

Papa said Yes, when his girlie came to ask permission to go at once to Miss Jo's.

"And you know all about it now, papa. Isn't it be-au-ti-ful?" she cried. "And you're not the tintiest bit jealous now, are you, Hervie?"

'Cause you see I couldn't tell, though I wanted to awfully. You can go with Raymond and me if you want to."

Herbert declined the invitation, assuring her he had not had a particle of jealousy, and with a sealed envelope, placed in her hand by papa, who whispered a message that set her dancing all about the room, she at last departed with Ray for company.

"Here it is, Miss Jo," cried the little girl, dashing into the little house and thrusting the mortgage and release into the lady's hand. "Here it is, all paid off. You must read every word of it before you look up, and you needn't thank nobody, 'cause I didn't do it. Oh! you'd never guess who did; and he doesn't want you to know. He's one of the best of men—as good, as good as my papa, only it isn't papa, 'cause he's not rich enough, and I'm so glad," all in a breath.

Miss Jo had been trying to listen and read, too, as she stooped above the lamp; now a look

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of bewilderment came to her face as she scanned the familiar document. "Paid!" she could not believe her eyes. What was that child saying, and who had done this?

"Oh! you needn't ask," cried Olive, reading the question in her eyes. "Isn't it fun? And you'll never know; it's a forever secret: and now you can stay here and be happy."

"What is it, sister?" asked Jennie, looking mildly upon the two excited people.

"Why, the mortgage, and it's paid, Jennie — all paid. God bless that baby!" with a quiver in her voice; "I don't see how we can thank her enough."

"I didn't do it; I don't 'serve thanks, only a little for asking him to, you know."

"Somebody must be thanked," said Miss Ralison huskily. This unexpected blessing that would spare the dear old home to Jennie — it was only of Jennie she thought — was too much for her self-possession. "Somebody must be thanked," echoed Miss Jennie.

"Then it's God, I s'pect; it's his money. Judge—oh! I most told—said so, and—and I guess he must have told Ray to put me to work. But it's all right, and you won't have to go now, and the school children can come into the yard as much as they like, forever and ever."

"Amen," said Miss Jo solemnly.

"Ain't everybody happy?" cried the delighted child. "This is a truly comfort, isn't it, Miss Jo?"

"You're a blessed child," returned Miss Jo fervently.

"I know it. Papa said so when I asked him to let me come here, and papa always tells the truth. I guess I'm getting good some—oh! I most forgot," searching her pocket. "Papa says Miss Jennie is too feeble to spend this summer in New York, and you are to take her to the mountains," putting the envelope in Miss Ralison's hand. "It's money to go with, and you oughtn't to cry," much distressed as Miss Johanna gave a little sob, "'cause papa says

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she'll come back all right after her trip, and my papa always tells the truth."

"Did any one ever see such a baby?" asked Miss Jo through her tears.

"You're not a baby," began Olive soothingly, "but you're tired, and I know you have been worrying about Je. You don't care for yourself, and you're just splendid, and I love you" — But she got no farther with her speech, for Miss Jo darted for her and caught her in her arms.

"You won't take thanks, and you won't let me call you baby, so, Tommy, I don't see as I can do anything for you but give you a kiss; but you are a comfort, sure; though how you ever found out about it I don't see."

"Oh! Ray found out, and he guessed it. Ray's very smart, and good, too, sometimes, and he's waiting for me," she cried, suddenly reminded that all this time Ray stood without. "He wouldn't come in, 'cause he don't like 'scenes,' and papa told me not to stay long, so I must go."

Two women kissed the bright little face "Good-by" to-night, and one said, so distinctly that Ray caught every word as the door opened, "Jennie, we must make Tommy another horse."

He laughed as he tucked his sister's arm under his own.

"You'd soon have a stable full if you saved them, Princess. What did they say?"

"Oh! everything," sighed the little maiden. "You ought to have gone in if you wanted to know; I couldn't begin to tell."

"Try; that's a duck," coaxed Ray.

"Ray Gardenell, some things won't let you tell them. I'd like to, but I can't. It was just too lovely for anything. I guess p'r'aps Miss Jo is the biggest woman, after all — biggest inside, you know. Ray Gardenell, let's be good."

"When?" startled at her abruptness.

"Now — always; it's nice to be good. You are a darling when you try; you've been just be-au-ti-ful in this! S'pose we turn real good like mamma and Hervie?"

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"Suppose we do," replied Ray. "I expect to some day. I'm not quite ready yet; but you go ahead; don't wait for me. You'd make a fine Christian, I know; mother's kind. When you're good you always remind me of her."

"Do I? Am I like her to-night, Ray dear? It's comfortable to have people think you're nice. I do like to be good some."

Ray laughed. "I guess it is some."

"Now, Ray Gardenell, what are you laughing at? and you are so tall you are pulling my arms out. I don't like tall boys. Let's begin, and be good, do."

"When?"

"To-night."

"Too soon! I've some fun on foot this week."

"Well, next week, then. Ray, will you?"

"Perhaps," assented Ray as he bounded up the front steps and pulled the bell.

"Perhaps." Mr. Gardenell heard the word as he opened the door, but did not catch its meaning.

CHAPTER XI.

TRYING TO BE GOOD.

'Tis strange when babies will do wrong
They always take to sinning,
Amid a choice of naughty things,
The way which is most winning;
And make our capture more complete,
By always adding sweet to sweet.

S. R. G. C.

GUESS," said Mamma Gardenell, holding up a letter as papa scated himself at the supper-table.

Papa looked very wise. "From Jessie," he ventured.

"Oh! you peeped."

"Ray left it on the hall table, and as I passed I noted the post-mark and handwriting," confessed the gentleman.

"But there's news."

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"Very. Jessie is coming with her two girls to spend the summer with us at Bloomingdale."

Mr. Gardenell looked at his little daughter. "What will my girlie do then, I wonder? her papa has only two knees."

"Oh! I'll have, I'll have Hervie, won't I, darling?" turning to her brother. "You'll never let any one but me sit on your knee, and never love anybody else in all the world so well as you do me, will you, Herbert?"

"Never," replied her brother fondly.

"Be careful, my son," said papa warningly.

"Never while you love me best, sister," modified Herbert.

"A bargain; and I shall never break it as long as I live," cried Olive warmly. "As if I ever could love anybody as well as my Hervie! Oh! you needn't look jealous, papa, 'cause you 'tend to lend your two knees to Aunt Jessie's girls, and they're both mine, you know. But I'll love you some."

"And mamma?" inquired the gentleman

dubiously, "must mamma be punished for my sins?"

"No; I always love her just like Hervie, and —and you're nice some."

Aunt Jessie was coming — was on the way indeed; but this part of the news the parents kept to themselves, intending to surprise their brood.

"Olive, you haven't been in a scrape for a week. I'm getting anxious about you. What is the matter?"

"Why, I'm being good."

"I thought so. Olive, I'm afraid you'll die young." The sepulchral tone startled the wee girl not a little, yet she said bravely, —

"Ray Gardenell, do you s'pose God would take papa's only little daughter from him just 'cause she's trying to be good? 'Sides, I'm only good some."

"That's it," said Ray, changing his tactics, "and some good don't amount to much, especially when molasses candy is in the wind."

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"Where?" inquired Olive, interested.

"Kitchen; Jane out; coast clear; smells delicious."

"Well, I'll just go and peck." So Ray went off contented with his stratagem.

"It isn't wicked," he said, to soothe his conscience. "She is deceiving herself; it's not genuine. Good some is no good; might as well be out-and-out naughty and have that candy. My! how nice it smells."

Olive soon made her appearance.

"Where's your apron, Ol?"

"Oh! I've only come to peck. I won't take more than a tiny taste."

"You know mamma won't like it if you soil that new dress."

"And you know she don't allow you to make candy without Jane's permission."

"Tit for tat," laughed Ray, somewhat uncomfortably, however. "Take your own way, Princess. Jane needn't be so cross; I'm sure there's no sin in making molasses candy."

"Not in making it," said Olive significantly.

"What authority has an old servant girl, I'd like to know? What sin is there in disobeying her? I'm not going to be bossed."

"O, Ray Gardenell! you know it's disobeying mamma when you disobey Jane in her own 'realm,'" said Miss Olive loftily. "Mamma 'splained it all to me. Jane is queen in the kitchen, mamma said, and must be obeyed."

"Nonsense," said Ray tartly. "It was never explained to me. 'Not a bit of cany shall you make to-day,' she said when I asked her, and it's no use to appeal to mamma. Why need Jane be so cross?"

"She isn't always; not when she bakes us tarts and things."

"Well, I didn't really mean to disobey," continued the boy, as much to reassure himself as to enlighten his sister. "Fact is, I gave it up; but I came in after a string and found this molasses all turned out just on purpose to tempt a fellow."

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"You must 'sist temptation, Ray Gardenell, if you want to be good."

Ray shook with laughter. "We shall see what we shall see presently," he prophesied. "Perhaps, good little girl, we shall be all through before Jane gets back. She generally takes the afternoon when she goes out."

What a delightful time they had! How the molasses boiled up and over; how they mixed and stirred and tasted! Olive forgot her dress, Ray his compunctions, and Harry coming in for a moment forgot his play and remained to share the spoil. When the fun was fairly at its height who should appear but Jane.

"Now, Master Ray, this is how you obey," she cried, "and you the son of a minister. Shame on you, Miss Olive! look at your pretty dress."

But Olive had no time for reflection. She was pulling the lovely yellow stuff, and offered a piece to Jane to mollify her.

"I don't want it; 'twould 'choke me. What

with working like I did to get the kitchen straight before the company came—though to be sure they'll see little of it, one does like things nice. What is the use of scrubbing the floor and the chairs? See the marks of your feet, Master Harry, all over that seat," and out bounced Jane in high dudgeon.

"O, dear!" sighed Olive, "why can't every body be good? It's so selfish to spoil folks's fun." And Ray laughed slyly.

"P'r'aps Jane thinks we's spoiling her fun," said Harry, with a rueful look at the chair he had muddied. "P'r'aps she likes things nice."

"P'r'aps," assented Olive, "but she oughter be willing to suffer some, 'cause she's a Christian, and there's always things to bear. How do you s'pose she thinks we bear her scolding?" in an abused tone.

"Let's make her taste our candy," suggested Ray.

"Oh! let's, let's," cried Olive and Harry in a breath.

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Out to the back room they rushed, candy in hands, filling Jane's heart with dismay as she saw the door-knobs in their sticky fingers.

"Please take a taste," they petitioned. "Dear Jane, for my sake, 'cause I'm sorry I'm naughty," plead Olive.

"Go away, naughty children! I won't touch your stuff," declared Jane, motioning them off, and continuing to sprinkle the clothes for tomorrow's ironing. "Get through with your mess and be off, so I can clear up before your aunt comes, and tea's to get."

"Aunt," said Olive, "what aunt?" Just then Ray ran for Jane, holding his candy threateningly.

"Get away! get away from my clean clothes," cried the maid.

"Then taste it," he laughed. "If you don't do it willingly we will have to make you."

"Yes, yes, we will," cried Olive, alive to the fun in a moment. Harry joined them and speedily the victim was surrounded. Fearful of

her washing Jane moved away from the basket of clothes, the trio dancing around her, brandishing their weapons, laughing and yelling like lunatics.

"Taste it," cried Ray.

"Taste it," cried Olive, and Harry echoed the refrain, and Jane, laughing and scolding, the ludicrousness of the scene mollifying her anger, assented to a single taste. This would not do now; she must take a bite from each; and suddenly upon the stage appeared Herbert, thrusting his head through the door with, —

"Ray, Olive, Aunt Jessie and our cousins are come." And still brandishing her candy his sister dashed out after him to greet the new comers. Wiser Ray dragged Harry to the kitchen sink and doused him mercilessly, then hurried up the back stairs to repair his own toilet.

"Aunt Jessie, dear Aunt Jessie," cried the sticky little girl, all unmindful of her plight. Her cousins started back in horror from this

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wretched apparition, but auntie sprang forward and took the sorry little girl in her arms.

"O, you blessed child, how sweet you are!" she cried, laughing and kissing the sticky face as she held the morsel away for inspection. "I believe you are a child after my own heart. Do give me a bite."

Then Olive caught a glimpse of mamma's face and blushed. For the first time she remembered the new dress and the injunction to see how nice she could keep it. Had mamma expected Aunt Jessie and meant to surprise her. The little heart sank, and seizing an early opportunity she crept away to her own room to have a hearty cry. If only she ever could be good.

Herbert was hurrying through the upper hall when a sob caught his ear. It came through the partly-closed door of his sister's chamber. He peeped in and saw such a disconsolate little bunch on the floor, all molasses and tears. He smiled as he advanced, and kneeling beside it, inquired into the cause of her trouble.

"I'm always naughty, and Aunt Jessie will think I'm truly bad; and, O, Hervie! can you love me any more? Mamma is grieved, and — and I did try to be good for a whole week."

"I know it, darling; and you've been beautiful until to-day. How did this happen?"

"It's all Ray's fault. He coaxed me to help him," she sobbed.

"And made your dear little feet go downstairs, and your dear little hands pull candy, and your dear little mouth eat it."

"O, Hervie! you know he didn't."

"I thought not. Then Olive is the naughty one, after all, is she?"

"Yes; some," reluctantly; "but it smelled awful nice, and — and" —

"And you took your poor little nose where it could smell it. Abused little nose, I ought to kiss it."

Then Olive laughed, as he intended she should.

"Suppose now," he proposed, "I turn lady's maid and help you on with another dress.

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Auntie will miss you. Let's wash the face and hands first."

It was so funny to have Hervie washing her face she grew quite merry, and especially when he tried to brush her hair.

"You don't know how," she laughed.

"No; but it does not need much. Just a little brushing and a fresh ribbon will make it presentable. Now, what dress shall we wear?"

"Any you please, Herbert; you pick it out."

"Then we'll have this pretty blue, and a white apron. There, you are as sweet as a violet, only we must take off that ribbon and put a blue one on these darling curls," kissing them as he spoke. "Now, precious, you will try to be good for Hervie?"

"It's no use, the wicked's inside," said the child dolefully.

"Yes; but God is great and can make us good inside. That is what Jesus came for; if you ask him he will make you 'beautiful within.' Kneel down by brother just a little minute."

Two little dimpled hands in two larger, boyish palms, one little flushed cheek pressed into a warm neck:—

“Please forgive little sister, dear Jesus. Teach her to believe in your love. Make her as beautiful inside as she is outside, and keep her little heart and hands and feet all for your own use. In thy dear name we ask it.”

“Now, Precious, just one kiss. Mamma and auntie are in the back parlor.”

“What is it about that Herbert of yours that makes him so uncommon?” Mrs. Rogers was asking Mrs. Gardenell as Olive entered the room.

“Why, he’s never in a hurry, Aunt Jessie,” answered the little girl, advancing to the lady’s side.

“He seemed in a great hurry a few minutes ago when he ran off with Tom’s letter,” laughed auntie.

“O, Auntie! did he have a letter, and—and he never read it. He came into my room and

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washed my face and combed my hair, and — and prayed.”

“Is it possible!” ejaculated the lady, tears springing to her eyes. “What a boy!”

“That’s what I meant, Aunt Jessie. He seems in a hurry, and I guess he is, but he always makes time to listen and comfort and love people. He’s just the darlinest darling.”

“I guess you all are, my cherub,” laughed Mrs. Rogers, taking the little blue bundle in her arms and kissing it enthusiastically, “if you do occasionally get too sweet. I always could endure any amount of sugar, but not a drop of vinegar. She loves her brother, it seems, and ’tis very becoming to her, and so is this blue dress and white apron. Turn around, Posey-bud, and let auntie tie your ribbons. You haven’t learned to make a good bow yet.”

“You mustn’t,” replied Olive gravely, gently releasing herself from her aunt’s hands. “My own Hervie tied it, and I like it just so. It’s nice if it isn’t, you know; ’cause he loved me

while he was tying it, and put a kiss right under the bow."

"We never object to a sash or bow
When Little Blue Ribbons prefers it so.

Loyal Chick, I don't wonder Ray calls you Princess. Yensie, where did you get her?"

"From Heaven," answered mamma, smiling.

"O, mamma! did you?" Olive came to her mother's side and lifted astonished eyes. "How could you bring me down here to get wicked, and lose all my pretty angel-ways? I never knew before I was so good. I guess p'raps that's why I like to be good some" —

There Olive stopped because she must, for Aunt Jessie was smothering her with kisses.

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CHAPTER XII.

TRYING TO FLY.

Two little feet braced well apart,
Two arms like bird-poised wings,
A joyous rain-washed, upturned face,
Lost to all carnal things.

CORNELLA SHERMAN.

MRS. ROGERS loved little people, and early the very morning after her arrival, invaded the nursery and was having a romp with Harry and Eddie when their mother appeared.

"It's just like you and Herbert Gardenell to have such children," she said in greeting, looking at little Eddie with covetous eyes. Mine are all of the prosaic sort. There's Elsie, now, if only she can get her head in a book, she's in clover. She will want to study theology with Herbert, I have not a doubt; pity she isn't a boy. Come here, my cherub, and tell your auntie what you are made of."

"Dirt," said Eddie promptly; and was wondrously astonished when Mrs. Rogers went off into convulsions of laughter.

"Dirt, indeed, you precious. Uncle George has whole acres of it that he would give for just one darling baby boy like you."

Eddie was looking at her out of very wide-open eyes. "God makes 'em," he said gravely. "only p'r'aps sometimes he 'ets de 'ittle andels help him."

Then auntie knelt down before him and put her arms about his neck.

"Wise little baby. I've not a doubt God made you. He made your papa and mamma before you. Now, catch me if you can," and off she went on a race, bound to "dispel the dismals," as she said, and keep that baby from growing wings too soon.

In the uproar of fun that followed the fond aunt proved speedily that Herbert Gardenell's children were substantial flesh and blood, if they were "angels."

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That afternoon Mr. Gardenell drove Mrs. Rogers and her daughter Elsie to their cousin Germaine's, and Olive sat with her mother in the back parlor, learning to knit.

"Mamma," she began, "I don't think it's right to allow Mary Ann to talk to Eddie and Harry about angels and Heaven and all that."

"Why not right, daughter?" questioned Mrs. Gardenell, looking up from a garment she was mending.

"Oh! why, for lots of reasons. They're too young, and" — hesitating.

— "And what?" continued mamma. "Will my little daughter try to make herself understood?"

"Why, it's this," cried the child impetuously, "I b'lieve it makes them die. Eddie isn't natural."

"How long since? Less than an hour ago I thought him the merriest baby that ever shook sunny curls as he scampered with Harry and Tiger over the lawn."

"O yes!" admitted Olive. "He is a funny little fellow. But — but he talks unearthly sometimes, mamma, and His eyes look so big, and I b'lieve he loves Heaven and Jesus more than he does us. It just isn't right to teach babies so much; they die young; it weans them from earth."

Mrs. Gardenell's beautiful mouth parted to a smile. She knew her little daughter was quoting some authority.

"Strange," she said, "that all the teaching you had in that direction failed of such results."

"Not a wing has come out,
Not the weeniest sprout,"

rhymed Ray maliciously from behind the curtain, where he was pretending to be reading, and had been undiscovered until now.

Mamma placed both hands to her ears to shut out the shocking rhyme, at which her boy laughed. But Olive said shari'y, "You needn't make any 'comets,' Ray Gardenelli; not a pin feather of your wirgs has been seen yet."

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"Truth, my shining 'comet,'" retorted her brother. "We are both notable examples of failure in early training."

Mamma shook her head, and the curtain dropped instantly, shutting out the saucy face, and Olive continued:—

"There's a difference in children. Eddie isn't like anybody else, and, mamma, Mary Ann has taught him that angels have wings, and good little boys turn to angels when they die. I told him it wasn't true, and he looked at me out of his solemn eyes and said, 'Mary Ann nebber tells ennything but the truf, and I seed a little an del mysef 'wid darlin' ittle wings, didn't I, Harry?' And when I wouldn't believe it, they showed me a picture Mary Ann bought them."

Olive was very indignant, but mamma had seen the innocent little print with its winged angels about the baby Saviour, and feared no harm from its enjoyment. She said so now.

Olive sighed, and a dismal groan answered her from behind the curtain.

"Kosy don't think so," she said, determined to treat her tormentor with the contempt he deserved. "You should have seen how she looked when she went to tell the boys a story the other day, and Eddie said, 'I don't want to hear the little yed hen, Wosy; tell Eddie 'bout the pitty andels where he id goin' by and by.'"

"Oh! little — mother — woman," here interrupted the irrepressible, darting his curly head between the curtains again, "I wish you could have seen Rosy that afternoon. I was an unseen spectator of the whole scene."

"You always are where you're not wanted," said his indignant sister.

"If this much-abused female will permit me to make a few 'comets' upon that story for your special benefit, mamma, I promise to retire and give her the floor for the remainder of the afternoon.

"The nursery door was ajar as I passed by, and I peeped in. There was little Ned making

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his plea, and Rosy sitting with both arms lifted in horror, and mouth wide open, as if to take him in, and thus forever end his chances of going to 'de andels.'

"Not knowing what this portended, my blood ran cold, but I remained ready to defend with my life, if need be, my brothers, my only sister, when Eddie continued thus:—

"'Dere id buful andels, Wosy, wid cunnin' wings; Mary Ann showed them to Harry an' me.' Then Rosy burst forth: 'Heaven save the childer! did wan iver hear the like? to think ov the likes ov that babby wid sich notions under his little shkull. Ah! me babby-b'y, yer not to think of angels, and sich, but jist yer play and blocks. Come here,' holding out her arms to the little chap, 'come here, me darlint, and niver a word do you mind ov May'ran McAloon's. It's elane crazy she bez, and not iver a bit ov brain at all, at all. She wouldn't know an angel, would she, if she sthumbled over thim a mile dape piled up in the strate? Wings, is it? In-

dade ye'll be wantin' jackets and pants fust, I'll be thinkin'!" And Ray burst into a peal of laughter at the remembrance, joined by his audience, for Ray was a natural mimic, and his imitation of Rosy was inimitable.

"What did Eddie say to that?" asked the amused lady.

"'Dere id andels, Wosy;' that's what he said, mamma," replied Olive. "And he shook his head at her, and told her Harry and he were going to see them soon: 'Ident we, Harry?'"

"And O, mother," again interrupted Ray, unmindful of his late agreement, "guess what our young professor of investigation answered. 'Yes; I would like to go for a little while to see what their wings are made of, and how they fasten them on.' I beg your pardon, sis. I'll go before I forget again," and off ran the lad without confessing that he had spent two whole afternoons in the construction of a pair of wings for Harry's special benefit, and that they were safely hidden away in his bedroom, ready

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to be tried on after Mary Ann had left her charge that evening.

It was prayer meeting night, so the coast was clear. Harry was dressed, and the wings were adjusted to his shoulders, fastened by hooks and eyes, the sewing on of which taxed Ray's abilities to the utmost.

"You can put them on and off as you please," said he to the little fellow, as he carried him to his own room to survey himself in the mirror.

Long after Ray left them alone the two boys lay talking of the wonderful wings, and Harry, daring and ambitious, soon had a plan arranged whereby he could try his treasures the first time unseen by any but Eddie, for Harry was very sensitive to ridicule, and he might fail.

"We ought to ask little Cousin Marion; she's company," suggested Eddie; and a few minutes later two tiny white-robed figures disclosed their secret to the little girl who slept in the small room opening from theirs. Mrs. Rogers and her elder daughter had not returned from Prof.

Germaine's yet, and this wee one, scarcely older than Harry, was left with the babies, in Mary Ann's charge.

Marion asked so many questions that Harry grew impatient. She was naturally a slow child. Her mother declared that she was born with her mouth wide open in astonishment at finding herself in the world, and had never closed it since. Aunt Jessie's pet name for her youngest born was at least expressive, — "speckled gosling." The dear freckled-face, inquiring child was just the opposite of her mother. "Born not to beauty, but greatness," that merry parent said, and Mr. Gardenell assured her that she would have reason to be proud of Marion some day. "She does not ask questions for nothing."

It was beautiful spring weather. Every day now the children were permitted to be out as much as they pleased, so conscientious little Eddie had no questionings in his little heart early though it was when they awoke next morning. Their cousin was roused, and breathlessly they

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prepared to depart. A queer-looking trio they were as, hair uncombed, faces unwashed, and clothes half on, carefully carrying the wings between them, they crept downstairs.

No one was astir. Even the kitchen maid had not arisen. The door-fastenings withstood their efforts, but they effected their escape through a window, and went out to spy the land and the best place for the flight. The prospect looked dubious until they espied a ladder left leaning against the barn.

"De andels did yant you to fly, Harry," said Eddie, with child faith. "Dick, he fordet to put away de ladder. De andels make he fordet."

"I'm afraid it's too high," said cautious Harry. "If I should fall?"

"Den you'd be a ittle andel, an' have truly wings."

"Only good boys make angels," answered Harry.

"We's dood," stoutly affirmed the tiny brother.

"What you s'pose mamma would say if she knew?" questioned the older boy, with a conscience evidently not well at ease. Eddie stood still; the first thought of any possible wrong in the premeditated pleasure had come.

"'Et's go back and ask mamma," he said.

But Harry was bound to try the experiment. "Mamma's asleep, and papa says never to wake her, Eddie."

"Ask papa, then?"

"He's out. I heard them come for him 'cause some one's dying. He went a long time ago." Harry had not been able to sleep for excitement.

Eddie was much inclined to give the whole thing up, but Marion at last settled the question in her funny slow way:—

"Would it be wrong to do what angels did?" This was unanswerable, and seemed to remove the last objection.

Slowly they mounted the ladder two at a time, Eddie ahead, and Harry with the precious wings across his back, behind. The barn had a French

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roof; the ladder hardly reached the top. But by dint of pushing and boosting, Eddie was landed, and the wings beside him; then Harry descended for Marion. It was after much labor he at last drew himself up, and the three were on the roof-top. No one thought of the matter of return; one was going to fly. With difficulty the wings were attached to the hooks, but presently all was ready.

"Hadn't you better pway first?" asked Eddie anxiously. "'Cause you know if we id naughty we yant Dedus to forgive us."

But Harry was older and wiser. He knew persistent disobedience held no place for pardon. He had been well instructed. He did not tell Eddie this; he only said he wasn't afraid, and marched to the edge of the roof.

"You won't care if I shut my eyes?" cried Eddie, with almost a sob, for he was getting frightened. Under his tightly-closed eyes tears were pressing, and through his closed lips one prayer came over and over, —

"Dedus, Dedus, help Harry to fly, and let us not be 'icked."

Herbert Gardenell had never gotten over his olden habit of answering every call of distress. It was a common thing for him to be summoned to the bedsides of the unknown, unsaved, unhappy. From such a scene he was returning this beautiful spring morning. How fresh everything seemed; as if just from the hand of God. As he turned from the city to the suburbs, where his own home stood, his heart swelled with gratitude. He had just watched another soul pass over the silent river, just pointed a dying one to Christ. How strange that men left these things of greatest moment to the last and least fitting hour of life. It is good to serve God! How kind the dear Father is to him! His nest is so full of precious, twittering life. He is early, so turns into the gate. No; he will go and look at the grape-vine back of the barn that Dick spoke of yesterday. "The Almighty often hangs great weights on slender wires."

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What is that on the roof? What odd little bundles are these! His step quickens, they move. That little crouching something with its shining dome — can it be Eddie? But that other thing with hideous outstretched wings? He is quick to think — to understand; he is acquainted with Harry's secret propensities.

"Another scientific experiment," he ejaculated with a smile and groan. He dares not speak as the little figures near the edge; a word might be fatal. Stealthily, but rapidly, he glides along under the barn. The wings are spread, the leap is taken. He hears Eddie's childish cry, "You won't care if I shut my eyes?"

A quiver 'mid air, a little quaking of a heart that questions, "If I had not been here?" and two strong arms envelop the little flyer, and two queer kite-like things are flapping about ministerial ears.

Harry's eyes were shut, too, but they opened as kiss after kiss was pressed on his face, and then he was set gently on his feet.

"Id you fyed, Harry?" piped the little voice above.

"Yes, darling," answers a voice he loves below. "Now, you fly. Just jump to papa," and unhesitatingly the little fellow leaped to the arms awaiting him. Papa caressed the golden head as he said, —

"God sent me to catch my little flyers just in time. If the dear Lord ever forgot, or was anything but the good God he is, mamma would be weeping over one of her little boys now."

"There's another one, papa," said Harry gravely. "Cousin Marion is up there."

"Little Marion!" in wonder; then, "Wait a wee, darling, uncle's coming," and over the ladder sped papa.

He had to smile as he caught a glimpse of a figure stretched out flat, face just projecting over the roof, and gray eyes intently watching the scene below.

"Why didn't you let him fly?" asked the serenest of serene voices, as he took her in his

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arms. "Now we've had all our trouble for nothing. Uncle Herbert, where do you think he'd have landed if you hadn't caught him?"

"On his nose," responded uncle, laughing, as he kissed Aunt Jessie's "speckled gosling."

There was always a little fire in papa's study mornings, and it was always a "haven of rest to evil doers," as Ray averred. There three very small evil-doers had a nap that morning, two on the broad couch, and one in the big chair, then there was a talk and a nice prayer all around, and with faces washed and hair combed, two little boys and one little girl were led into the breakfast room.

Mary Ann had just been telling the mistress that "not hide nor hair of those two blessed babbies could she find, or a stitch of their clothes, whatever could have become of them."

"My gosling's missing, too," commented Mrs. Rogers. "But she's too philosophical to run great risks; they'll turn up."

"All women are prophets," quoted Mr. Gar-

denell, opening the door in time to hear this last, and presenting his trio.

What became of the wings remained a mystery to Ray. When questioned the little fellows only shook their heads and looked at each other with laughing eyes as if they knew something worth telling if they would. And the owners of those heads knew, and those roguish eyes had seen the wings go up in flames, and papa standing by cheered Harry on as he applied the match.

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CHAPTER XIII.

AT BLOOMINGLE.

We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY.

NOW that Aunt Jessie had come prepara-
tions were soon completed for a removal
to Bloomingle, as Mr. Gardenell's residence on
the banks of the Hudson was called. The place
was a gift from Judge Wilde, who gave it this
name in honor of the book Yensie had written
in the days of her sorrow.

This beautiful house was large and roomy,
surrounded by lawns and gardens, in full view of
the river and close to wooded haunts. It had
come to Mr. Gardenell before his little girl was
born, and there Olive first opened her blue eyes
to the world, much to the delight of the judge.

That this precious baby, born in the new home,

should be a girl, the only girl of the household, was source of never-ending joy to the good gentleman, and she became his favorite among his pastor's children, the place hitherto given to Herbert.

The boy was more than willing to abdicate in favor of his darling sister, and whether the old man or the young lad took greatest pleasure in her first speeches and trembling attempts to walk, would be hard to decide. They vied in their attention to the wee lady, and she repaid their devotion with unstinted affection.

In this home were garnered the attractions of many lands, the rarities not only gathered by Herbert Gardenell and his wife during their trip to Palestine, but pictures, statuettes, rocks, gems and shells, the fruits of the many sojourns the judge had made in foreign countries. Here was Olive's grand piano, a gift from the same kind friend on her sixth birthday, mamma's cabinet organ and papa's library of restful, helpful books of travel and standard literature. Here Judge

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Wilde was always welcome, and spent much of his time in summer.

"Farewell, old friends," cried Ray, hustling his school-books, helter-skelter, into the closet of their study-room. "Take a good rest, do; hurrah for fun, and not a glimpse of algebra or Latin for two whole months, at least. I say, Herv, you needn't smuggle that Horace into your box of specials; papa forbids study during vacation."

Herbert looked up with a smile. "I shall not hurt myself, old fellow, be sure, any more than yourself. I asked permission to carry this old friend. It will be just sport studying with papa, he is such a delightful teacher and knows no end of things."

"No books!" Elsie Rogers looked her horror. "Don't your father allow any study during vacation? I should think you'd lose all you gained during school time."

"Which shows how much you do not know about the Rev. Herbert Gardenell," laughed

Ray. "Wait a wee. Don't tell her, Herv; let her find out as it comes. You see, cousin mine, our papa is himself and nobody else, and has his ways of doing things."

Which, indeed, Miss Elsie found out to her entire satisfaction. No study? No, not a bit, but such delightful additions to knowledge without a seeming effort at attainment.

"O Ray, you are a favored boy!" said this young miss smiling, as, coming from a chemical experiment just finished in Mr. Gardenell's laboratory one day, this graceless lad, making a grimace, said quizzically: "No study? I should think you'd forget all you ever didn't know."

"I tell you, coz," he made answer to her remark, "you're only beginning to get the first glimpse. You wait. There are oceans, mountains, countries, planets left yet to explore. You want to hear father read Shakespeare, so that even I get charmed with the musty old chap; then there are the magazines, and Mark Twain's latest. I shouldn't know anything if it wasn't

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for the 'no study' months at Bloomingle. I get all the material with which I astonish the fellows at school over my brilliant compositions just from this source, and the best of it is a fellow hasn't to cram for a word of it. We'll have a clear night soon and go up in the tower to get acquainted with the stars. Papa feeds up every summer while at the old 'Bloom,' and of course it wouldn't do for a minister to let his children starve while he enjoys a full meal."

Well, it was delightful; the long rambles for flowers, the examination of rock specimens. Here was geology, astronomy, botany, music, sketching, reading, and all intermingled with riding and boating parties, and the largest amount of innocent fun. Mr. Gardenell convulsed his audience at times with laughter over some bit of comic literature, and elicited many a sly tear at others, wiped on half-drawn handkerchiefs with averted faces and incipient coughs. He never appeared anywhere without

a trio of children at his heels, and led them into trials of speed which taxed the fleetest-footed of their number, and trials of skill and strength that brought out any amount of ingenuity beside health and amusement. Elsie Rogers was devoted to him. Marion was ever at his side, and all deplored his occasional calls to the city.

"I don't wonder Herbert keeps young," laughed Mrs. Rogers, looking from the window one morning as he played tag with the children. "There, if Olive hasn't coaxed the judge into the sport. I do wish George and Fred were here."

"So do I," said Mrs. Gardenell heartily, drawing her chair nearer the open window, through which floated the merry voices. "Do tell me about Fred; she is the only one of your children I have not seen yet. We have been too busy to have a real good long chat since you came. Suppose we take it now. Tell me about all your girls."

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sprightly way, "only they are all girls," dolefully. "Why couldn't I have had one boy? I tell you, Yensie, George and I coveted your Herbert when he was with us last summer. It was hard to give him up again. We missed the fun he and Tom Burton made in the house. Indeed they were inseparables. Mrs. Burton said she hardly realized she had a boy while Herbert was there, hers was home so little; and he was inconsolable after Herbert left. George used to join their romps, and, I too, for that matter. He was a real godsend. Mabel had just married and gone, and we felt as if we had buried some one until your boy came. He cheered things wonderfully. He is his father's self over again.

"As to Fred, she does her best, and is the next best thing to a boy. I still make her part her hair on one side, and keep it short. I'm bound to come as near as I can to the missing article. George says she is as good as any boy in the hay-field, but you need not look distressed, she is low-voiced and womanly, Yensie. She spent

last winter with Lois, at Chicago. Being the only boy, we missed her, but she needed a change, she is such a home-body. Lois has everything nice, is happy with her husband, and has a girl-baby. So, you see, I am grandma, and should be proud enough if it were to a grandson. How time flies! Imagine me with a daughter twenty-five years old. I must be old, though I don't feel that I am. If your first Herbert had lived, darling, he would be a man now. Do you realize it?"

"No," answered Mrs. Gardenell, a little sadly. Any reference to her lost darlings moved her heart. They had lacked so much, and there — she looked out at them with tear-filled eyes, — how full their cup.

"Neither do I," continued Mrs. Rogers, unmindful of her friend's agitation. "Fact is, one needn't grow old because the years multiply. One can't stop them, but they need have nothing in the world to do with them; simply ignore them and keep the heart fresh. Age begins

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within and works out ; I haven't the least bit of a wrinkle on my heart. I am astonished, Yensie ; I did expect to see you somewhat changed, but you are your olden self, happy and care-free as the birds, and as music-full. Your voice is not broken, and Olive inherits that gift of yours, lucky chick ! I see you find time to be interested in everything, and yet, judging from the week I spent with you in town, you have great and continued demands on your strength. The position of pastor's wife, in your case, at least, seems to be no sinecure."

Mrs. Gardenell smiled. "Yes ; I have both hands full, and my heart must have wonderful stretching capacity to hold so much, for it never feels strained ; but I have such a guardian and helper, Jessie. So few are blest as I," tears again springing to her eyes. "I am watched so constantly by such loving eyes ! It is wonderful, and to me ever suggestive of those never-weary Eyes above, the jealous care with which my husband surrounds me. He always knows when I

have done just enough, when rest is needed, and he assures it, too, by warding off all that comes near. He has such a way of compelling without compulsion, of shielding without seeming effort. He stands like some natural bulwark between me and every hardship, beating back the incoming waves by his very position. Yet I share all his labors and thoughts and burdens. I could not be denied that privilege, but it is the light end of the cross I carry; the end that lifts one into the joy of fellowship, without the pangs of martyrdom. I wish he would spare himself as he does me."

"And who are you, if not the dearest and best part of himself?" asked a cheerful, manly voice beside her, for Mr. Gardenell had entered unperceived, and heard her closing words. "Ennie dear," laying a fond hand on her head, "I need no sparing. It is glorious, just the privilege of work, hard work, for the Master. I never suffer. Every hour of anxiety and toil for his sake is its own exceeding great reward. I

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seen to 'have perennia' springs within, and He comes so nigh, lifts cross and bearer so continually and consciously, lives so beside, around, within me, I know no need. Then, sister Jessie, look at my church, my home, my children, to say nothing of this best, this sweetest gift of earth, my wife. I've known no need these seventeen years, no need but deeper consecration, renewed thankfulness, and purer, greater love to Love divine that by strange paths led me through self-renunciation to unutterable joy."

Now Jessie was crying softly, and Yensie's tears were dropping even while her eyes shone up to meet his love, and while her lips pressed fondly the dear hand on her arm.

"Herbert Gardenell," said Jessie, through her tears, "only one woman on earth was fit to be your wife; such devotion would spoil most of us. I'm glad you've got her."

"So am I," responded the gentleman heartily; and added playfully, "What sort of Providence would you make, I wonder, if you fitted more

than one woman for one man? I assure you, Jessie, much of what we ministers are called upon to do in that line is simply carpentry; job work that cannot possibly be pleasing to the Master Builder."

How time flew at Bloomingle. A month! Could it be possible? Where had the days gone? Another, "and not a scrape worth mentioning," as Ray declared; while Olive added, "We never do get into trouble when we have papa to play with. It's easy to be good with him. Aunt Jessie, don't you s'pose that's the reason that folks are always good in Heaven, 'cause Jesus looks at them and plays with them? I s'pect He is like my papa, some."

"I s'pose you're a wee darling, and I s'pect you know more about Heaven than I do," answered Aunt Jessie enthusiastically, kissing the mouth that questioned.

Vacation was really done. School would commence next week. Papa and the boys always went back to the city then, though

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mamma and the little people sometimes remained a while longer, the boys running up occasionally on Friday afternoon, and stopping over the Sabbath.

"It's a shame," Ray spluttered; "school to begin on the very best month of the year. Why, September and October are the crowning months, as papa says."

But inexorable is Fate, and so was Aunt Jessie. In vain Mr. Gardenell tried to persuade her to remain a few weeks longer with his wife at Bloomingle. Her time was up. George and Fred would begin to expect her, and she must make a couple of short visits on her homeward course. So the pleasant house received the tearful farewells of the children, and they were soon settled again in their city home, for mamma decided to go with them, as Aunt Jessie could not remain.

"Altogether, it has been such a delightful summer," Elsie said. "It would be a shame to say one regretful word to mar it." So Ray, who

had been her devoted cavalier for the weeks past to the great amusement of the older part of the company, tried hard to stifle all complaints, at least in her presence.

"Extremes meet," laughed Mrs. Rogers, as her nearly eighteen-year-old daughter, and the not quite fourteen-year-old lad, paced the back veranda, arm in arm, the night before she was to start westward.

Mr. Gardenell smiled. "What shall I do with him when he is twenty?" he asked.

"Send him to me if he is too much for you. I prophesy you will be proud of that boy some day. Herbert, what will you take for one of your boys?"

"Not in a mood for money-making to-night," responded the gentleman, his eye upon his son's tell-tale face. "God bless that dear little woman," he continued presently. "Jessie, dear sister, the world needs women as well as men. God gives you one crop to raise and me another, both for the kingdom. Some day

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"Come here, my speckled gosling," called Mrs. Rogers to her small daughter, passing by, at this moment, with Olive. "Come here. Uncle Herbert gives me a little hope, and I want to kiss you. I wonder am I growing proud? I don't believe you are quite as speckled as you used to be. Either that, or Olive has taken on some tan. Herbert, since your crop is to be boys, suppose I take your girl along with me?"

For answer Mr. Gardenell stooped and opened his arms, and, as his one choice girlie sprang into them, he folded her to his bosom and chanted softly, as he walked up and down, a verse of the twenty-third psalm, his wife was wont to sing, "My cup runneth over, runneth over;" and Aunt Jessie shut her eyes and listened with a rapt face, as the little girl's voice caught up the strain, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, shall follow me all the days of my life."

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THEM WE TRUST.

Silence! Silence! Silence! — Pray!

Every moment is an hour,
Minutes long as weary years.

HENRY BATEMAN.

I WOULDN'T go, Ray."
"But I've promised."

"A promise to do wrong ought to be broken. Tell the boys, in thinking it over, you have decided it's not the thing to disobey father. Be manly about it."

"Oh! but you see I haven't so decided; my brother has done that for me. Besides, I'm to furnish half the cash for the supper. They'll think I'm dead broke or growing stingy."

"You stingy!" Herbert laughed. "Give them your share of the money, then; that will

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stop all that sort of supposition. But don't go ; we are not at Bloomingdale now, and father has strictly forbidden us to go on the water without his permission."

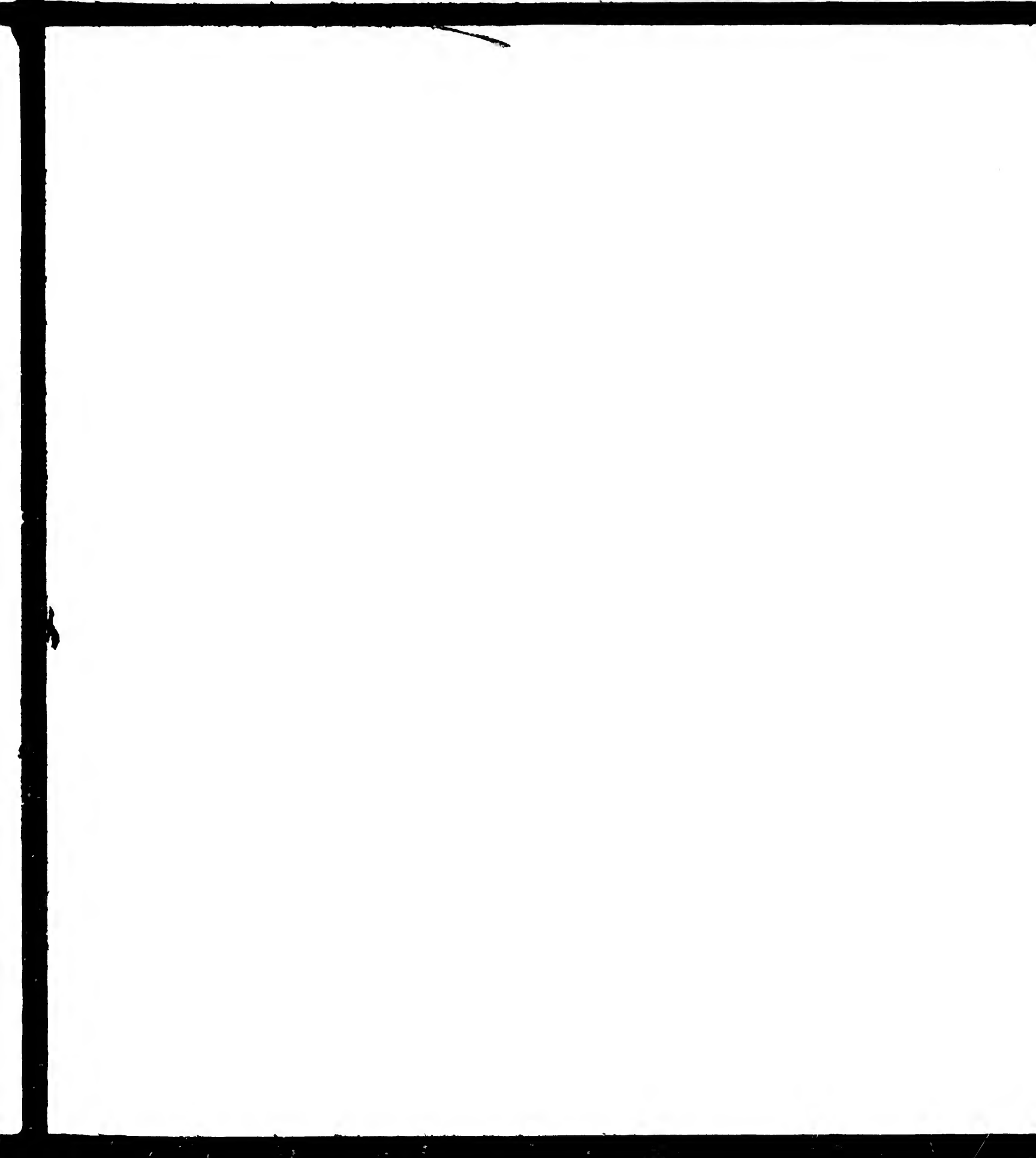
"What does father take me for, I wonder. Any one would think I was a little shaver like Harry. I'm going, anyway. It's been dismal since Aunt Jess took Elsie off."

Herbert smiled and lifted his eyebrows.

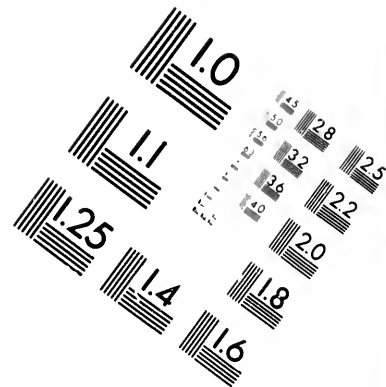
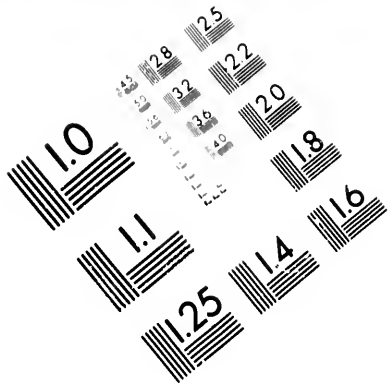
"Oh! you needn't look so knowing. Can't a fellow like his own cousin, I'd be happy to inquire? She's just the thing if she is four years older than I am. Four years aren't many, and I'm taller than she is already. I asked father if he didn't think I looked the older of the two."

"What did he say?"

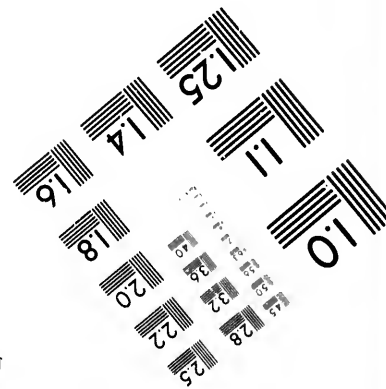
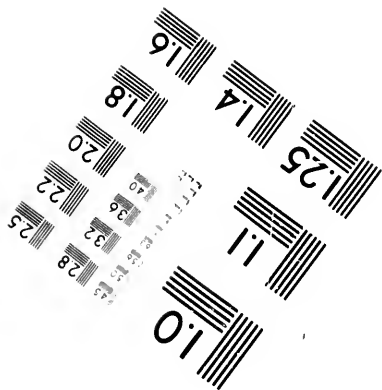
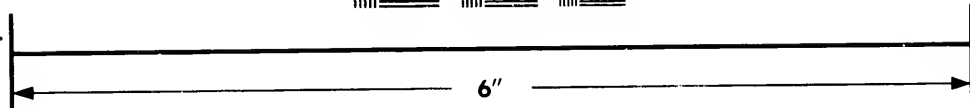
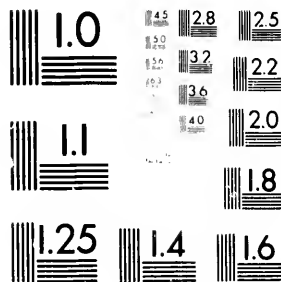
"Oh! he looked through his hand as if it was a telescope, and said 'some,' just as Ol does, and then caught me under the arms and laughed as if I had been a standing joke. I say I'm not a chicken, why shouldn't I like a girl or row a







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boat, I wonder. I can manage an oar. When a fellow's fourteen he ought to have some liberty."

"For shame, Ray, when father lets us do every possible thing we ask that isn't positively wrong or dangerous. You know there isn't one of you could mangle a boat under difficulties."

"Who's going to have difficulties? You'd better tell Jonas Cowles he can't manage a boat. Why, he's a splendid hand. His father isn't afraid to trust him on the water anywhere."

"Then he has his father's permission," said Herbert quietly, quite sure to the contrary. Jonas Cowles was a boy he did not like, and it troubled him to have Ray with him so much. "Suppose you follow his example in that respect. Then if father says No, his mouth is shut."

"And he'd be sure to say No."

"He might offer to accompany you."

"And spoil the boys' fun. You see they are in for sport."

"When did father ever spoil fun, I'd like to know?"

"Well, they'd think so; Cowles wouldn't budge. Now, Herv, remember this is an out-and-out secret. I had no business to tell you, only — only I don't feel right, and that's a fact, in slying off without a word."

"Ray, honor bright, you know the whole thing is wrong."

"Well, no," slowly; "not in itself. How can an innocent sail on the river be wrong? The only thing crooked is not telling father about it, and that's out of the question, as you see."

Herbert did not see, neither did he reply; instead he pursed up his brows and looked at his brother out of troubled eyes.

"There, don't you come father with your 'Look of Fate,' as Ol calls it," said Ray irritably. "I declare, you're the image of him, and quite as old; the best thing you can do is to take orders. It's no use," waxing wrathful, "I'm not going to be pinned down or kept from the water. I'm bound to learn to manage a boat and command one, too, if I have to run away for my chance."

"And break mamma's heart."

"Pooh! Little mother-woman isn't so soft as all that. She'd yield if she thought I was called to it," with a contemptuous curl of the lip. "She can do anything when she wills. What a splendid oar she is, anyway. I was proud of her that day Judge Wilde and Aunt Jess went with us for a boat-ride. Such little hands to make such neat strokes."

"Yes; and father said you were doing famously that day, too. Oh! he intends you shall learn and have all you want of it, but he has been pressed with care lately, and can't find time for boating. He's as fond of it as any of us."

"But a fellow can't wait forever. I was cut out for a sailor; I'm finding my calling, and I'll be one some of these days, you'll see. I'll have a vessel of my own — a beauty — and take you all around the world. You needn't look at me out of such eyes; I know what you're thinking; but mamma will sail across the briny deep in my own bark yet, my hearty. Anybody'd think, the

way you talk, that little mother was a bundle of nerves. Who was it quieted that crazy man who escaped from the asylum and invaded the woman's prayer meeting that day? Why, he was like an infant in her hands, and walked back to his keepers lamb-like. And who is it hushes that crowd of vagabonds at the Mission by just lifting her hand and opening her mouth to sing? She is never afraid of the worst man or woman among them, Mapes says. Oh! our mamma is a wonderful little woman," cried Ray, getting warm over his favorite theme, "and I'd like to see the person who would deny it or" —

"That her son is the sweetest flatterer in the world," said a tender voice, while two arms encircled the boy's neck.

"Mamma, you here!" rising, and flushing crimson. What might she not have overheard? "How long have you been listening to us?"

"Fie! my son, I thought mamma was a wonderful woman, and now you suspect her of act-

ing the spy on her boys ; as if that was ever necessary. I wanted something from this closet and just stepped along in time to hear your eulogium. You must both be in earnest discussion not to hear the door open. What is the subject up ?”

“Mamma,” answered Ray, putting both arms about her, and thus hiding his face from view, “our dear mamma,” shaking his head furtively at Herbert, finger on his lips. His brother understood this was to enjoin silence on their late conversation, and he motioned back that his lips were sealed only on one condition, the giving up of the whole project. Ray nodded a hasty assent, and mamma, unconscious of this by-play, having opened the closet door to which Ray had conducted her, laughed as she made answer from its depths, “Surely there can be no difference of opinion between Numbers One and Two on such a theme ; two such loyal subjects queen never had before.”

“We will always be loyal,” Herbert said, kiss-

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Herbert said, kiss-

ing her as he helped lift the bundle she sought
from an upper shelf. "Loyal till death."

"And after," laughed Ray, springing to take
the bundle and carry it to the sitting-room, thus
avoiding further talk with his brother.

Herbert was not troubled as the majority of
boys are, with scruples about "telling" on his
brother. If mischief was in the air and he could
prevent it he was bound to do so. Yet he was
not a tell-tale, and Ray would have been first to
knock the boy down who dared call him such.
Number One was in the habit of reasoning with
Number Two, who generally confided his proj-
ects to him, and usually succeeded in talking
him out of them. When Ray passed his word
Herbert rested. "There never was a more hon-
orable fellow," he often asserted. So he went
to school that afternoon with a light heart and
was not suspicious even though Ray failed to
put in an appearance at the supper-table.

"Off somewhere with the boys and forgot
himself, I suppose," he answered to his mother's

comment at this unusual occurrence. He gave a little sigh of satisfaction when he found himself in the study-room alone; as he recalled Ray's pledge he was sure his brother was not on the river: he had his promise to that effect.

"Have I a boy at command?" asked mamma pleasantly, fully an hour after, putting her head into the room where Herbert sat alone with his Latin.

"Number One at your service in a half-minute; only another line to translate."

"And where is Number Two?"

"Still among the missing," responded her eldest cheerily. "Won't I do as well, mamma?"

"You will do, but hardly as well. Then I am really uneasy about Ray; he seldom transgresses like this. Have you no idea of his whereabouts, Herbert?"

"Why, he must be all right, mamma. You know Ray is honorable." Yet his mother's uneasiness communicated itself to him in spite of his assurance. "Why won't I do, mamma?"

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"A basket for old Auntie Stewart. You know she will be sure to say, 'Why didna me ain bra' laddie bring it?'"

"And I'll answer as sober as a judge, your ain bra' lad has brought it, Auntie."

"And her reply," smiled Mrs. Gardenell. "It is no use, Herbert, Ray's jolly little speeches have won the first place in her heart, and she will say, 'To be sure, Master Herbert, your me ain lad, but it's the curly-pate with his wee bit fun I'm after asking for. I hope he's weel, this evening, and no forgets old auntie.'"

"But, if the basket mun go, it mun go, mamma; and you'll want it there before dark."

All the way to Mrs. Stewart's Herbert reassured himself. He was vexed at his own uneasiness, growing fast as he recalled his mother's troubled face. Could Ray have been overpersuaded, after all? "Of course not. He is the soul of honor," he answered himself. "His nod is as good as his word." Nevertheless he decided to consult his father if Ray was still miss-

ing on his return. He met Olive at the gate, hat on, just returned from a call on a little friend.

"Herbert," she asked immediately, "where did Ray go after school? There was that old Jonas Cowles and Ben Gordon and Ira Faulks with him. Grace Turner met them, and she said they were laughing and talking as if some fun was on foot."

Her brother stopped abruptly in front of her. "O, Hervie!" she said, reaching up to smooth his brow with her little hand, "how that 'Look of Fate' grows on you. Please don't let your eyes go any deeper. I've told you all I know, every word of it, and I don't 'serve to be stared at."

He kissed her. "Run in, Pet, and stay with mamma. Play for her, sing that new song — do something, everything — but don't lisp a word of what Gracie said. That's a dear; I'll go see papa." And Olive who no more thought of disobeying Herbert than papa when he used that

tone, ran in, after a troubled glance into his face, and he hastened to the study.

A little later from the parlor window she saw papa and her brother pass out and hasten down the street. Her mother, just beside her, saw them, too, and a smile brightened her lips. How much alike they were, her eldest son and her precious husband. The lad was already nearly up to his father, and had the same princely figure, the same noble head. Her heart always thrilled with pride when she saw them thus together.

On they strode. Herbert had hard work to keep up with his father. Straight for the river they shaped their course, and reached it in a marvelously short space of time. It seemed scarcely a moment to the boy since he stood in the study repeating his fears, and now the boat was loosed and they out upon the water. How the little skiff bounded over the waves under the manful strokes at the oar.

"To the Point, did you say, Herbert?" that

RUST.

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was all the word spoken. Mr. Gardnell had been seized with the awful conviction of immediate necessity for action. A horror for which he could not account, and which left no room even for surprise, had taken possession of him from the moment Herbert had uttered his first word. And now, hat pushed from his forehead, locks free to the breeze, coat removed, he bent to the oars as if life and death depended on his exertions. How Herbert exulted in those masterful strokes! His father was so grand, so much a man in everything; he would be like him, God helping him, and then a sudden ejaculation from the alert man sent his thoughts in another direction.

They were midway across to the island; a boat approached. There were only boys in it, and one crouched over as if in fear. They had taken in sail, and were coming slowly, but the grand strokes of this single oarsman soon brought the skiffs abreast. Herbert discerned Jonas Cowles, Ira Faulks and Ben Gordon in the

gathering dusk. Where was Ray? Perhaps he didn't go, after all, "honest old fellow," he commented inwardly, with a little self-reproach that he ever had doubted him.

"What have you in the bottom there?"

How stern his father's voice sounded; not a boy in that boat but shivered as he heard it.

"Ray Gardenell," answered somebody timidly. "He fell in as we were pushing off; not very deep, but he got tangled somehow. We pulled him out, but he isn't conscious."

Another stroke, and silently as the boats met, two hands passed Herbert the oars, took up the motionless form beside which Ben Gordon cowered, wrapped it silently in his coat, and hastily resumed the oars. Forward with a bound went the little skiff under a desperate touch.

"Was Ray dead?" Herbert felt faint as he caught sight of the white, upturned face. Did the strong man ask himself that question also? On, on, back towards the city they went with

mighty plunges. From the boatman's lips dropped these words, these only :—

"Thou art God, our God. In Thee we trust."

Like music they fell on the boy-ears over yonder, between whom and the speaker lay that white something. "Our God. In Thee we trust." Herbert wept as he repeated them softly.

How short, how long a time since they left that wharf where they landed again. Herbert never knew how the boat was fastened, or what happened next. The first he realized several old sailors were helping to lift Ray into an old shed near by, and his father's voice was saying, "A doctor, my boy; be quick!" Then he ran, the last words in his ears those of one of the seamen, "I think he's quite gone, sir," and his father's calm and reverent answer, "Since God lives, we will hope."

Providence favored Herbert. Only a block or two away he fairly ran under the feet of Dr. Ford's horse. He was a friend of the family,

RUST.

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only:—

"In Thee we trust."
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Herbert. Only a block or
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and as he drew up, Herbert scrambled to the seat beside him. How breathlessly he waited as the physician felt for the heart and pulse of his brother.

"I fear there is little hope; no perceptible pulse," he said sadly.

How his father's eyes gleamed in the dim light; what unearthly strength and beauty lit up his fine face! "With God, a little goes far. There's abundance of hope somewhere."

And while they labored to resuscitate the limp body Herbert crept back in a corner, and, dropping on his knees, prayed. There was wrestling the next hour in that old shed; no Jacob wrestled harder. One wrestled as he worked, and one worked only wrestling.

"O, Lord, I will yield all my preferences, I will do thy work, and thine only, while I live. My life for his, dear Lord. I will be your slave, go to heathen lands—anything—but spare him till his soul is saved," moaned the boy under his breath. And then as the sudden conviction

that death had even then taken possession wrung his heart, in desperation he cried, "With Thee are the issues of life. Oh! bring him back, back, back, until his soul is saved."

And yet not the quivering of lip or nostril gave sign of returning life.

"Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," at length moaned Mr. Gardenell, lifting himself from above his boy and raising his eyes in heart-broken resignation to Heaven. "Not my will, but Thine be done." And just then Dr. Ford said fervently, "Thank God!" and one of the old tars uncovered his head, and sobbed out brokenly, "Ye's be answered, yer Riverence; the b'y brathes."

Breathes! They held their breaths as they waited for another gasp. Yes, surely, another; there is life, and with a glad, "Herbert, our God does answer prayer," the father bent over his son. Yes, he lived, and by and by, with the doctor beside him, Ray was placed in an easy coach, while his father and Herbert hastened

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IN THEE WE TRUST.

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ahead in the doctor's carriage to prepare the
household for his coming.

"Go to Martha, and have his bed made ready
at once," whispered Mr. Gardenell at the door,
with a pressure of his son's hand, and he turned
to his wife's room.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DANGER PAST.

Ah, yes, His pity, like His heaven, is large.

J. P. C.

MRS. GARDENELL had been passing a wretched evening. In spite of her little daughter's efforts to entertain her, all through the hour spent with the wee boys her heart had been heavy with some ill-defined dread, some premonition of sorrow. A few friends dropped in, and she tried to be pleasant and interested in their conversation, but her thoughts would wander to the missing boy, and wonder that his father did not return. Some one ought to be searching for Ray. Unwilling to burden Olive with her fears, she dismissed her at last, and felt relieved when she could go to her room alone and pour out her heart before

God. She had just arisen from her knees when her husband found her.

"Darling, God is good to us," he said, kissing her brow as he bent over her.

"O, Herbert! what has happened?"

Something of the strain, the agony of the past hours may have been in his voice; much of the joy of deliverance from a great sorrow. This one whose every heart-throb had long since learned to vibrate to the cadence of that beloved voice — to whom the slightest variation of his tone was understood — this one knew that danger was past, that some great blow had been averted, that her husband needed her now, and as she sprang to her feet, the question on her lips, she turned to the door, adding, —

"I am ready, darling. Yes, God is good. What am I to do?"

"Thank Him, first, that our Ray is saved from an awful death — from drowning. I hear the carriage coming. God bless my brave little wife!" For Herbert Gardenell had never yet

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J. P. C.

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come to Yensie, whatever the exigency, and found her unready.

Together they met the burden at the door; he proud and exultant, and not to be dismayed at the white face and wilted body before which his wife paled; but, in spite of an inward sinking, no one responded more calmly to every demand of the physician or assisted more efficiently at that bedside than Yensie Gardenell. Herself was put aside, and when everything was arranged for the night she insisted that she alone must watch by the couch while others rested.

Herbert had found his little sister waiting for him in the hall, crouched on the top stair, when he went in search of Martha.

"What are you doing here, Pet?"

"O, Hervie! I couldn't sleep. Mamma sent me to bed, but I was so afraid. I didn't say one word to her all the evening, but my heart felt so — so dizzy, and I most know hers did too. She didn't want me to s'pect anything,

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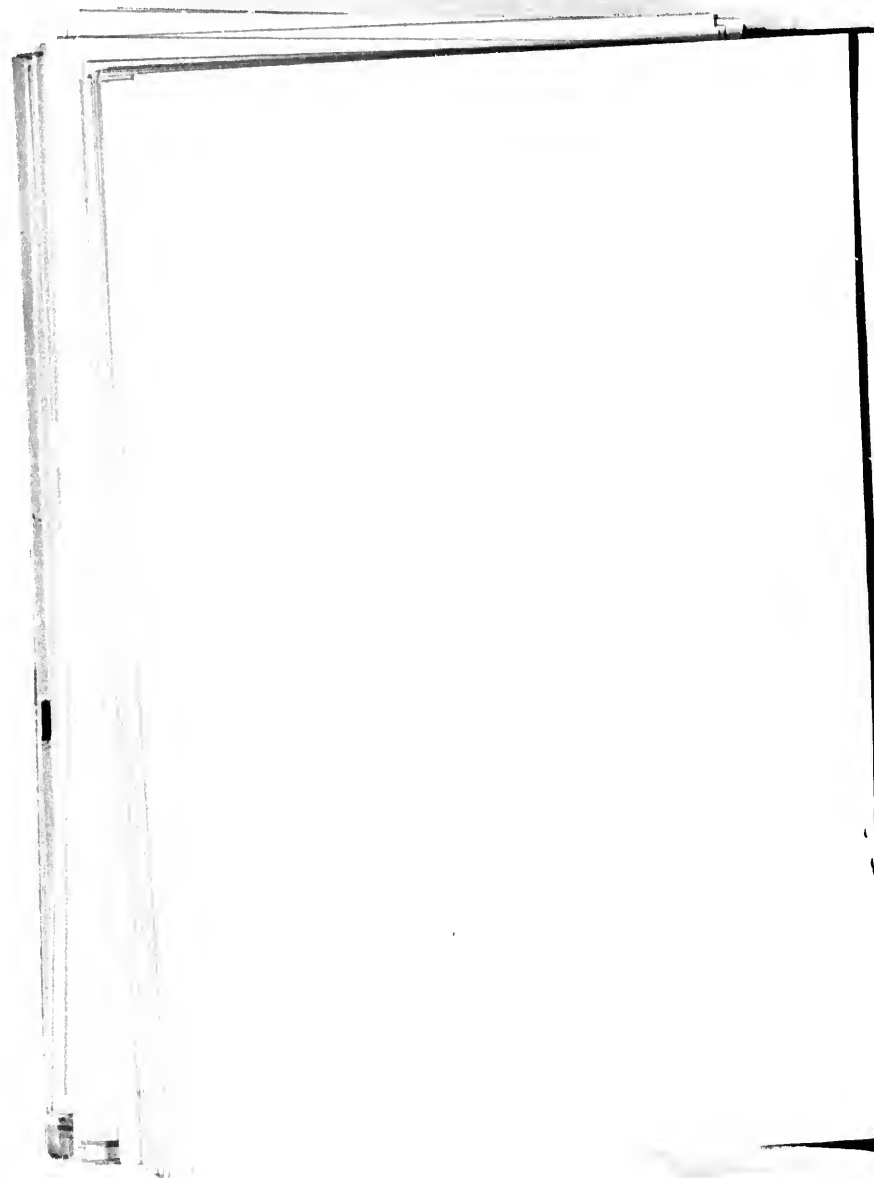
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WAITING FOR HERBERT.



and I didn't want her, and we were such miserable hypocrites. I wish I hadn't promised not to tell. It's just dreadful to be making b'lieve happy when p'raps something awful is happenin' to your own brother. Hervie, tell me truly, did Ray go on the river with those boys, and is he dead?"

"He went on the river, but he is safe, darling. God has given him back to us, and now you must hop into bed like a precious."

"Oh! I can't, I can't; don't ask me too, Hervie. I'll be just as good and just as still, but I won't leave you again to-night. I feel safe where you are, and my bedroom is so lonesome."

What could Herbert do but kiss the tearful little face, and, putting a shawl about her, allow her to follow him to Martha's room, thence to Ray's, and so into the very scene he longed to spare her?

"Please come in here," he said, opening the door of his own pleasant chamber as he heard the carriage wheels approaching. She followed

him, but only to spring out into the hall again when the heavy steps ascended the stairs.

"Don't look, don't, Olive," Herbert said, putting his hand over her eyes. Too late! She had caught a glimpse of that deathly face, and was clinging to him in mortal terror.

"He is dead, I know he is, and, oh-oh! if I had only always been good to him," she moaned.

In vain Herbert soothed and reassured her; told her Ray had opened his eyes, spoken, that Dr. Ford said he would live. Apparently convinced one moment, she broke into wails the next, and at last he took her to Ray's own room and asked the doctor to tell her himself that her brother would live.

"Yes; bless God, little Olive, I trust the boy is out of danger now," said the physician cheerfully. "Now, lady-bird, you get into your nest, or I shall give you one of these terrible powders."

Then he kissed the little girl's cheek, and papa carried her away in his strong arms and

put her to bed himself, and sat beside her until she had fallen into a sound sleep.

Herbert and his mother were alone when he returned to Ray's chamber. There was no need to keep the household up, Mrs. Gardenell said, so she had dismissed them all but this one; he insisted on remaining until sure Olive slept.

Mr. Gardenell stooped above his eldest-born and folded him in his arms. "Kiss your mother," he said, holding the dear face for the caress. "Now I will see you in bed. I want to feel sure of my treasures to-night."

"You will go to bed and get a little rest yourself, Herbert," Mrs. Gardenell said to her husband as he returned again to her side.

"Rest!" he smiled. "Shall I ever need rest again? I feel as fresh as a skylark, and as ready to soar. 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.' Literally has the promise been fulfilled in me to-night"

"And yet Herbert has told me how you labored. You will feel it to-morrow. Do go to

bed. I covet the first conscious glance of my boy."

"'Thou shalt not covet,'" fondly. "Did Herbert tell you, also, that the first, the only words the boy spoke were, 'Little mother-woman'?"

"No."

"Ah! but they were." But Mr. Gardenell did not tell her that these words seemed the sweetest music his ears had ever heard, and that, as they reached him, he caught his eldest son to his bosom, crying like a babe, while every one present wept in sympathy.

So it happened when Ray opened his great black eyes some time after, and repeated his first words, "Little mother," she was there to respond, "Yes, my darling."

He put up his mouth childishly for a kiss, sighed, and fell off to sleep again; but not for long. Before morning he woke again with the same words on his lips, and more: "Will you forgive me, little mother?"

"I have, my son."

"Pray."

That was all. Only as she knelt and held his hands, praying, she saw two bright tears course down his cheeks. He was very weak. She did not talk to him. It was better for the dear Holy Spirit to talk, she thought. That would not weary her boy.

There was great joy and thanksgiving in the hearts of each member of the family next morning, as they assembled at breakfast, and knelt in prayer. How praise abounds after sorrow averted! Strange we do not offer it oftener before it comes—when it has not even threatened. Queer mortals we are. Ray was missed; the vacant chair was there, but oh! "not forever," thought father and mother, and though tearful eyes met, there were smiling lips.

Ray was very weak; would be a prisoner for some days, and all vied in their attentions to him. His parents noticed, in the days that

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"I don't deserve it," he said to mamma, as his father laid the new book he had been desiring, on his pillow.

"Love is God-like," she made answer. "'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, He saved us.'"

Ray was thinking. Might not this dark road lead to the King's highway? They hoped so.

PAST.

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CHAPTER XVI.

BETTER AND WORSE.

The darkest day
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

COWPER.

AS Ray got better, he acted very much like his olden self, much to the disgust of Olive and the sorrow of Herbert, who had one long solemn talk with him.

"If you had died then, Ray, where would you be now?" he asked, shuddering, and with such pain in his voice that his brother was moved.

"Dear old Herv," he said, laying a caressing hand on his brother's, "you care altogether too much for this boy; he's not worth it. Don't waste your time; let me take my own way. I'm not just ready yet. If you'd spent all this time on your Horace it would have paid better," lifting and passing him the book he had dropped.

"Ray, Ray!"

"Herbert, Herbert!" mockingly. "Honor bright, you'll never find me in such a scrape again. I shall not blame you if you don't take my word; I've forfeited your respect, but I do intend to keep straight henceforward. Farther than that, I'm not ready to go. There's too much to give up. There's lots ahead I want to do, and religion—your kind and father's—would be in my way. If I could take it as some do—the pliable sort that stretches—I might try it; but that wouldn't suit you any better than my present position, and I hate shams myself. Now, let me alone awhile. When I'm ready I'll let you know, and you can pitch in. It's kind of taking advantage of a fellow to press him when he is down, and hates to deny you.

"Everybody thinks I ought to turn pious now because I've been into this scrape, and everybody thinks it their business to throw in a dose of advice with every flower and bit of fruit

they send me. I'm sick of it. I told manna I would not see another person. I guess papa is parson enough to attend to all my needs in this direction, and if he is not he has a very able assistant at hand. I say no man has a right to attack another just because he don't agree with his beliefs."

"Has a United States officer a right to arrest a criminal without his permission?" asked Herbert quietly.

"Of course he has. He isn't a faithful officer unless he does. That's his business."

"Just so; and it's my business and papa's and every other Christian's to arrest every sinner in the name of Jesus Christ, and bring him to unconditional surrender. You are a rebel against Heaven, Ray Gardenell."

"And you are a born parson as well as a first-class lawyer," laughed Ray uneasily. "But I tell you, Herv, your special police had best settle it that half of your work is but lost time."

"None of my business or a government officer's, either. Our time is not our own; it has been bought up. Mine was given me to lose or spend as God wills for his own glory. Henceforth by his grace He shall have his way in one boy."

"You don't mean," said Ray, cying his brother keenly, "you can't mean — Herv, old fellow, what's the matter with you, anyway? You don't appear natural. Did I give you such a scare that you lost yourself altogether?"

"Do you miss me, Ray?"

"Miss is no word for it. You always were good, but not gooder. There," answering a wistful look in his brother's eyes, "don't preach. I am what I am, and you what you are. I'm really half afraid to be left alone with you lest I have to turn parson to please you."

Herbert smiled sadly. "If you will only turn Christian we will wait for the parson a few years."

"As if I ever could be parson. You were

WORSE.

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meant for that yourself, Herv ; got the exact
cut.”

“ I believe you're right, and I've decided
to ” —

“ O, Herv ! you don't mean it. What a
shame ! a boy with such talents. Why, Judge
Wilde expects you in his office some day ; he
told papa it was best for a boy to follow his bent,
and I heard the old professor tell father you were
by far his brightest scholar, with evident talents
for the bar. A ' natural pleader,' those were his
exact words.”

“ Let me plead the cause of my King, then,”
said Herbert softly : —

“ Lord, I am Thine, entirely Thine,
Purchased and saved by grace divine,
With full consent Thine I would be,
And own Thy sovereign right in me.”

Ray's face sobered. “ It's a sudden change,”
he said. “ I know father never persuaded you,
that isn't his way ; and that very afternoon be-
fore — before I got drowned,” half-laughing,

"you were telling me of dropping into Judge Wilde's office and how pleased he was to find you had been digging into his old tomes."

"Yes, I know," replied his brother; "I think unconsciously I was trying to have my own way. I was not fully sure the dear Lord wanted me to follow papa, and I did not care to find out. I was uneasy at times, but — O, Ray! I can never be the same after that fearful night," falling beside his brother's couch and hiding his face in his hands.

"Brother, dear brother, when I saw your deathly face, feared you might be even then standing before the bar of God, unforgiven, unprepared — my own brother, my loved brother condemned, lost forever, my soul well-nigh died, too. Oh! it was fearful, fearful. I never shall forget the look on father's face; and as I crept to the other side of the shanty I got on my knees and gave myself to God and souls as never before. I realized the worth of a soul, the awful interests at stake in life, and it seemed the only

WORSE.

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thing worth living for to snatch men from the
power of sin, to work, pray, preach day and
night if only some were saved. How little other
ambitions looked beside such work done for
Christ, in Christ; what value had any success
that did not succeed in saving men? Just to
follow Jesus, just to live and die as He did for
others, just to lose myself and interests and be
swallowed up forever in his will, his service. I
can't tell you, Ray, I can't tell any one what
that night was to me. If only God would spare
your life I vowed to be his slave, and yet it
seemed such great honor then, that had you
died I should still have craved it at his hands. I
never again could be content to do anything else.
My ambition died that night; it almost seems
as if I died, too," said the boy solemnly. "I
haven't been the same since. God, Eternity,
Heaven — everything seems so real. I feel every
moment as if I stood in the very presence of
the King."

Ray's face was hidden in his hands when

Herbert lifted his radiant yet wet with holy tears. No such sermon had ever been preached to Raymond Gardenell before; his form shook, and tears oozed through his fingers.

"You have given your life for mine, your prospects for my soul," he said huskily. "It is too costly a sacrifice; my miserable, selfish life was not worth the strength and purpose of yours. O, Herv! I wish you'd take it all back, but I know you won't. You are like some old rapt saint; your very face shines as Moses' did of old. You'll go on and on, like father, denying yourself, and never counting anything too hard to do for the meanest scamp that lives. I expected to be proud of you, Herv—I am, too. You've got the real kind of religion, the only kind I ever want. But I can't get it; the price is too high; I could never yield my whole life as you do, don't ask me, for I feel it's too mean to say No to you, but I never could, dear old Hervie; it isn't possible, it really isn't possible."

And that was the best that Ray would say.

"I'd like to, I would indeed, but it isn't possible."

"Isn't possible!" Herbert left his brother's room, a smile wreathing his lips as he repeated, "With God all things are possible;" "All things are possible to him that believeth." He seemed to himself to have reached the place where nothing could be denied him. "In the very presence of the King," he had said in describing his experience to his brother. Yes; basking in the sunlight of his smile, looking into his loving eyes, hearing the music of his voice. Young as he was he had learned the secret of absolute surrender; other words for absolute peace and joy. He had "reached the land of corn and wine." — "The life hid with Christ in God."

Father and mother had both noticed a subtle change in their first-born. Always tender, thoughtful, obedient, Christian, an added something thrilled their hearts with joy, and the hope that this dear one had indeed reached the "secret place of the Most High." That the

night of their terrible testing was at the bottom of this Mr. Gardenell never questioned; that the cherished hope of his heart would be yet fulfilled in Herbert he never doubted; that it was near, he dared to believe. He had not uttered a word, but a hand-clasp as they passed each other, a flash of eyes and lips had revealed much, and he was quite prepared for the conversation that took place in his study that night after the talk with Ray.

It was so sweet to know, to have assurance more assured, to look into the clear eyes of his darling boy, and listen to the earnest tones of his rich voice, broken occasionally as they wept together. It is blessed to be understood. Such sons have not always such fathers; mutual understanding, the flash of thought to thought, spirit to spirit ere words could be their interpreter, prayer, thanksgiving, praise, joy beyond expression, as soul melted to soul, and both were one in God.

This boy, always so precious, what did he

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become to his father that night? Long after he had left him, Mr. Gardenell paced his study in a tumultuous rapture under which his human heart almost gave way. Saved to the uttermost! Not only heir to, but in the kingdom, partaking even now of the supper of the Lamb. Wave after wave of glory passed over the father's soul, and weak from excess of joy, his wife found him presently.

"My darling," he said, drawing her to his arms, "our tree of sorrow has blossomed, and the young fruit hangs heavy. My soul is overwhelmed."

Then she sat down beside him, and told how she had surmised all.

"I knew from his face some heavenly cloud had burst in blessing," she said; "and I knew at the bottom must lay a surrendered will. I went into his room this morning and found him with such a face pressed against his window, eyes, attitude, everything betokening rapture unspeakable. I threw my arms about him, and

just knelt down and praised God that my boy was wholly his.

“‘You prayed out of my heart, mamma. How did you know I had yielded?’ he asked.

“‘How do we know the clouds are dissipated?’” I counter-questioned.

“‘Because the sun is out,’ he laughed. Then we hugged each other and sung, and I think he forgot to tell me his story because I seemed to know, and I forgot to question him, I was so satisfied.”

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CHAPTER XVII.

AN URGENT APPEAL.

'Tis Heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

I SAY, Ray Gardenell, why aren't you a
Christian?"

Ray stopped abruptly. Such a question from
such a source was like thunder out of a clear
sky.

"How long since you became interested in
such matters, Ben?" he asked, in what was
intended to be a very unconcerned voice.

"Oh! well, I don't know," taking Ray's arm
as they strolled along. "Fact is, Gardenell, I
never had any bringing up in that direction.
But I've always sort of hankered after it, as the
little chaps say. My father's an infidel, you
know, and don't allow anything religious around,

but I've wondered how you, with your teaching and such a father and mother, can be — be" —

"Well, out with it. Can be such a rascal, I suppose you would say."

"You know I wouldn't say any such thing," responded his friend warmly. "There isn't a mean or rascally thing about you; you're a prime fellow, and no mistake, but — but" —

"I'm not like my brother, for instance. I guess you've hit a problem, Ben, and there is no answer but the undemonstrable facts. I am the one goat in the flock; the scapegoat, we will say, for elucidation, and all the Adamic inherited depravity which should be shared equally by the members of the family, has fallen to me. Ben, what's up? You look as grave as a monument."

"I'm in earnest, Ray."

In earnest Ray might well believe. When before had he ever heard Ben Gordon speak in that tone? He grew silent himself.

"It seems as if there ought to be something

better for me," continued Ben. "I'd like to be different. Perhaps you can help me, Ray. I've hoped you might. You've been taught religion all your life. I never envied any one as I did you that morning I called at your house so early and was present at family prayers. Your father prayed for me, you remember," his voice choking a little. "I never heard myself prayed for before."

Ray was much moved. "Poor old fellow! I've had it all the days of my life, and never valued it much. You might come in every morning. We'd all like to have you."

"Father stopped that," answered the boy, shortly. Then looking at his friend wistfully: "Suppose you and I turn over a new leaf, Gardnell? Suppose we try to be what we ought to be," slowly, "what your father would like you to be. I'd be green, but I'm in earnest — and you could tell me what to do."

Ray tried to laugh, but it was a failure. It struck him dimly that his friend was laboring

under what his father would call "conviction," also that this was a fresh call to himself, that God was multiplying agencies to draw him heavenward. He wished with all his heart that Herbert was in his place, but he wasn't. It was his opportunity, and he lost it.

"You don't, can't really mean that you want to be an out-and-out Christian?" he said, rallying. "It's the proper thing, and I don't want to discourage you, but there's lots of time for that, and I want a good taste of other things first."

"What things?"

"Oh! they're numerous; too much so to mention. The world is full of everything, and I haven't begun to find it out. Religion is good; I mean to have it myself some day, but not yet."

They walked along silently for a spell, then Gordon asked abruptly, "What would have become of you if you had been drowned that night?"

Ray started. "I'd have been lost, sure; but you see I wasn't. Ben, what a streak of the blues you have; you're gloomy, old boy. If you go to getting good, you'll die young. I never told you that joke, did I?" And then Ray struck into the story of Olive's manœuvre to save Herbert from an early death, and from that ran on to another light story and another.

Ben did not renew the conversation; he feared to. He was not acquainted with any Christian person to whom he could talk freely, so he had thought Ray Gardenell the next best thing. But now he reasoned if his friend could afford to put off salvation, why not he also? He stifled his uneasiness. Perhaps, after all, his father was right when he called religion a sham, and referred to the children of Christians to prove how unprolific it was where best known. But, no; Ben could never quite forget Mr. Gardenell's face that night he prayed above his son's unconscious form. The faith so simply grand, and in its very submissiveness so sure of victory, the

ring in his voice as he cried, "Herbert, my son, God does answer prayer!" all this had thrilled the heart of the boy, crouched unobserved in a corner, as all the learned arguments and eloquence of his father's infidel friends, and all their literature had never done. "Religion is a reality, and I want it," was the conviction under which he staggered home that night.

Had he dared he would have applied to Mr. Gardenell himself, for his heart yearned towards him. But his father had forbidden him that house, fearing this very thing. So he turned to the son. Alas, that Herbert Gardenell's son should thus fail his father and his father's God in such an hour.

Ray was almost afraid to be left alone with Ben for the next few days after this conversation. It was never renewed; the winter passed and early spring arrived, and he had quite forgotten the occurrence.

One day Ben was missed from his usual place at school; another and another day passed, then

it was whispered round that Gordon was very sick; the doctor feared he would not live. Ray was much shocked, and called at his chum's house on his way home. The lady who answered the bell said no visitors were allowed, and he had to be content in sending up his love and a little bouquet.

After that never a day passed that a nosegay did not find its way to Ben's bedside with a message from his friend, and at last one morning he was told that Ben had begged so hard to see him the doctor had given his consent provided all exciting topics were avoided. So Ray was to call in the early afternoon.

He was there promptly at the appointed time. The nurse warned him of the change in his friend's appearance, and told him that Bennie was very near his end, and he must show no surprise however badly he looked, for his father had forbidden any one speaking to him of death.

"Really it seems as if the poor Colonel thinks he can ward off death by ignoring the truth,"

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Indeed Ray was shocked at the change in his friend. This poor, thin, exhausted boy, with unearthly eyes and parched lips, was so unlike the rugged, fun-loving friend of school-days. Yes, he was dying, Ray could see that, and at first could do nothing but hold the weak little hand in his own and swallow hard to keep back the tears.

But Ben was overjoyed to see him.

"You look so good, Ray. I haven't seen a boy in such a long time. You mustn't feel bad over me, old fellow. I want you to be your best self for awhile until I get a first-class feed of you. I've wanted you all this time, and the flowers did me no end of good; they always seemed to say 'Good-morning, Ben,' as you used to, in a kind of a fresh and wholesome way.

"You're a lucky fellow, Ray. You've got everything. I never knew how much I liked you till I got keeled up here. Then it seemed

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as if I'd give all I ever owned just to hear
you laugh or tell one of your funny yarns. But
father wouldn't yield till the last minute; but
I've got you now and you must stay as long as
you can, and I want to hear all about the
fellows."

It took Ben a good while to say all this, and
he was terribly exhausted and coughed much
when it was said, until the nurse came in from
another room and gave him a drink. She went
right out again. Evidently the boy had planned
to have his friend to himself, and Ray stifled
back his feelings and told him all he thought
would interest him.

"I'm afraid you're getting tired," Nurse said
at length, coming in to administer his medicine.

"Just a few minutes more, good Mrs. Wheel-
ock," said the invalid feebly, and she disappeared
with a shake of her head and a muttered some-
thing about the colonel.

"Now, Ray, just a minute. Oh! I must say
this. Ray, I'm going to die young, and I'm not

good," said the poor boy, stretching out a hand to his friend.

"Don't say so, Ben. Perhaps you will get better, after all;" but something within Ray contradicted his words.

"No, I won't. I never can, and — Ray — it's about over; I'm most gone, and I'm not ready. You won't mind if I talk about such things now, will you, old fellow?"

Ray covered his face with his hands to hide his tears.

"Don't cry, Ray, don't. I want you to pray. I want you to teach me how to die. You're the only one I ever had who knew anything about it. Father is good, and he loves me, but he wouldn't have me taught anything religious, not even how to pray. It might have been different if mother had lived. Somehow I've missed so many things; but I've wanted mother most."

Here the sick boy stopped to gather breath, and Ray gave a little sob.

"Ray, I know it's real — religion, I mean. I never could doubt it after that night you came so near drowning. Your father prayed that night. O, Ray! I never heard anything like it. I knew if there was a great, almighty God you would live, and you did, and — and I never could ask you to join in a scrape after that. I always thought of your father, and I knew if he'd been mine, I — couldn't have — have grieved him. O, Ray! I almost prayed myself that night, my heart was so hungry for the great God; I wanted to have him care for me. You know all about the Bible and being saved — tell me how."

Never was such a boy in such a situation as this. What could he do?

"I can't help you, Ben," he said brokenly, "let me go for father."

"My father would not allow him in his house."

"Herbert, then?"

"I might die while you were gone," solemnly.

"You don't realize how near I am to death. Then, too, I am tired; they would not let any

one else in. You are here, you must tell me all you know."

"I don't know anything." Oh! what an admission for the son of Christian parents.

"You must, you must know something, Ray. What is that Bible verse about God so loving?"

Ray repeated reverently, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"That's it," said the boy with satisfaction. "I heard your father preach from that once. It was just after that call at your house at prayer time. I wanted to hear him again — you know he prayed for me. It was in the summer, and you were at Bloomingale; father was off that Sunday with a party of friends — he didn't often leave me alone — and when he found out where I had been he was very angry. Poor father, he meant it for my best good. Ray, I must be saved through Jesus somehow?"

"Yes," again reverently.

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"And your father said any one might come
to Him."

"Yes, any one, no matter how bad; and every
one, however good, must come through Jesus to
be accepted. That's the only way."

"How can I come, Ray?"

Ray was silent. If ever he prayed in his life
it was then; he needed help.

"Have you a Bible anywhere, Ben?"

"There's one in papa's study, but he never
allowed me to read it. You see I'm nothing
better than a heathen," with a sad smile.

"And I'm another," said Ray remorsefully.

"Here's one verse, Ben: 'If we confess our sins
He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.'"

"I am a sinner, I do confess," said Ben.

"He that cometh unto me I will in no wise
cast out."

"I want to come — I don't know how," said
the sick boy feebly.

"Listen, Ben; here's a verse mamma said to
a poor sick man, and it brought him to Jesus:

'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'

"How can I believe?"

"Oh! you know; just as you would believe me, I suppose. I am your friend and I would save you if I could, but I can't. He is your friend and died to save you, and can do it. Believe it." Surely God was helping.

"I do believe," said Ben solemnly. "Ray, am I saved?"

"You must be. God says if you believe you shall be saved, and he always says the truth."

"Pray for me, Ray."

How near he came to saying "I can't." But the look on that poor eager, dying face restrained him. He knelt down humbly and sobbed, as Ben slipped a thin hand into his, —

"O, Lord! I'm a dreadful sinner, worse than Ben, but I don't want anything for myself. Oh! if you'll only save Ben because — because it was my fault he didn't come long ago. I'm to blame" — "No, you ain't," interjected Ben —

"forgive him, please. He has confessed and he does believe, and your words are true; and please let him know they are, and that he is all right, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

"Amen," echoed the dying boy. "Ray, it's all right; I most know it is."

Ray looked troubled. "He ought to know sure," he thought; "papa and mamma did, and so did Hervie when he was converted." Mrs. Wheelock came into the room just then to say he must certainly go, for the colonel had come and would be angry if he found Ben tired out.

Tired out! He'd soon be where people never tired, Ray felt, and if only he was sure he was saved. A terrible conviction of his own sin in laughing away his friend's concern months ago had seized him; he would never take another moment's comfort in life unless he knew Ben was saved. He held his hand tightly, even kissed his cheek and stooping, whispered, "Hold on to Jesus, he will carry you through," then he darted from the room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN INSTRUMENT FOR GOOD.

The best of what we do and are
Just God forgive.

WORDSWORTH.

WHEN Ray left his friend's presence so suddenly it was to repair to the colonel's study. He knocked. What a stern face met his.

"Do you wish to see me?"

"Yes, sir. I've been to Bennie and he's dying, sir, and he wants to be saved."

"Are you saved?" sharply.

"No, sir," with mounting color and downcast eyes.

"I thought not from your past record. I think Ben can take his chances with you, if you are a parson's son."

"O, sir! please, sir," cried Ray, forgetting to

be indignant, "don't blame religion or father for my sins. Ben is better than I am — lots better, sir; but our own goodness cannot take us to Heaven; we haven't enough of it."

"Ah! needs to be patched out. If you have had your say I will excuse you now," turning as if to go.

Ray clutched him with both hands.

"You couldn't refuse him — you wouldn't refuse him, and he dying, sir!"

"Who says he's dying?" fiercely.

"I do, sir; and he says so himself, and he wants help, and oh!" tears starting to his eyes, "it's my fault if he's lost, for I knew the right and might have helped him. If you'd only let father come and see him, sir, it would lift a load from my heart."

"I want neither you nor your father, nor any other canting, ranting religionist under my roof."

Then Ray ran off quickly, sure he would be ungentlemanly if he heard another such epithet applied to his father.

What could he do? The weight of that soul was on him. Papa couldn't go, but, happy thought! there was mamma. The colonel had not really forbidden her, though the spirit of his command included them all. "Mamma is neither canting nor ranting," he muttered.

A very short time after mother and son stood before Colonel Gordon's mansion. Ray had told his mother little; nothing must interfere with his plan. He had no need to fear, however; Yensie Gardenell would have faced the legions of darkness to rescue a soul.

Ray had left the front door ajar. It was so still; no one had passed in or out. They mounted the stairs softly and he halted a moment before his friend's chamber to listen. Not a sound from within. Colonel Gordon had taken one hasty glance at the white face on the pillow and retreated to his study where he was now walking rapidly up and down. His son die? Never, never! His only son! He could not, would not give him up.

Quietly Ray opened the chamber door, beckoned the nurse to come out, then slipped his mother in and felt satisfied.

"My mother knows everything and has been with the sick and dying; she will help, not hurt him," he said. And Nurse, whose eyes were red with tears and whose conscience smote her over this boy drifting into eternity unprepared, soothed herself by saying it was too late to prevent anything now, even if the colonel had just issued orders forbidding any one outside of the household excepting the doctor, seeing the boy.

Ray stood guard at the door. He should like to hear Colonel Gordon or any one else call his mother a "canting, ranting religionist." He could discover the voice of prayer, then the sweetest and lowest of tender hymns, and she was beside him. It took mother so short a time to do things.

No need to ask her if Ben was really saved. Her shining face satisfied his heart. It felt so

light to what it did an hour ago. Then it was sweet, on reaching home, to have her kiss him, and looking in his eyes say, as only she knew how to say, "My boy has been honored. Erelong Heaven will have another saint, and through his ministry."

"O, mother! I don't deserve it," he said, bursting into tears and confessing all. "He might have been saved long ago but for me. God is good, mamma. I never could have borne it had he been lost through me."

How Yensie prayed; how she hoped this might be the turning-point in this young life, as she solemnly, yet tenderly, laid before him the magnitude of the sorrow which he had been spared.

A day or two after young Gordon died. Ray took the flowers his mother cut for him, and went to take his last look at the dead face. He met the colonel in the hall. "What, sir! you are here again," said the gentleman sharply. "I thought I forbade you entering this house."

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e dead face. He
"What, sir! you
ntleman sharply.
ring this house."

"I knew you would let me see his face again,"
said Ray gently, reading the sorrow under this
sternness. "These are his favorite flowers; my
mother sent them; she always remembers our
likes."

"How did she know he liked them?"

"Oh! he happened in to our house one day
when mamma's window garden was doing its
best, and these so took his fancy that she
pinned a bunch in his button-hole. After that
she often sent him a little bouquet when they
were in bloom. I thought he'd like them in his
hand now."

The man looked at the boy, a kindlier light
coming into his eyes. His son had loved him.

"So you think Bennie has likes yet?" he
said half-musingly.

"Why, sir, if there is a Bennie, he is our
Bennie with just the likes he always had."

"True — if" —

"And there's no if about it, sir. My mother
talked to him and he was ready, and where he is

every like and love is stronger and sweeter ;
mamma says so."

The gentleman still looked at him out of half-dreaming eyes. How his soul had been stirred since his child died !

"Then he loves you and me better, you think, and knows we — we miss him to-day," with a tremor in his voice. "That is a pleasant belief, at least."

"It was his belief, sir ; and it is the belief of almost everybody who ever heard of Jesus. My mother says it is the belief of all the heroes the world has ever had."

"Your mother." The gentleman almost smiled. "She is authority, it seems. How did it happen you brought her here when I forbade the house to any of your kind ?"

"You did not mention her by name, sir ; and 'canting, ranting,' doesn't describe her. I had to have some one, because it was all my fault Bennie did not seek Jesus long ago."

The gentleman winced, yet he said, "Tell me

OR GOOD.

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AN INSTRUMENT FOR GOOD. 241

about it." He began to like this frank boy who had been his son's companion, who knew portions of his life that this father did not — this agonized father who had watched his one treasure carefully night and day only to have it stolen away.

When the story was ended, without a word the colonel led the way to the drawing-room. How cold and dreary it looked in all its splendor beside the cheerful home parlors full of life and light. And that covered something — how its presence added to the effect.

Silently the boy stood as the man uncovered that face and let his tears drop on the soft, fair hair. Silently the father stood and watched him as he put the flowers between the stiff fingers, patting them gently in half-caress and, stooping, kissed the cold lips.

"It's a dreadful thing to stand between any one and Jesus," he said simply, lifting his eyes to the colonel's face. "I'll never do it again." Then he extended his hand frankly, and as frankly it was clasped.

"He would like you here to-morrow," said the gentleman as he conducted him to the door.

"I'll be here, sir," with the flashing of bright eyes to the face above.

Ray was invited to the funeral. More than that, before night fell Col. Gordon called on Mr. Gardenell.

"Wife, I am to conduct the services over Ray's little friend," said the clergyman later. And the colonel said to his wondering friends, "Ben would desire it if he was consulted. His preferences shall be respected."

Ray had sown better than he knew. His words over that dead face were not forgotten by his listener: "It's a dreadful thing to stand between any one and Jesus."

Col. Gordon repeated them slowly that night after the funeral, standing before a life-size picture of his son, and recalling the sneer he had seen on young lips during the service that day; lips he had taught to sneer. If this religion his wife, his son had believed in, were a reality after

FOR GOOD.

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AN INSTRUMENT FOR GOOD. 243

all! Had that prayer his dying wife breathed
over her baby's head anything to do with his
end?

"I'll never do it again, Bennie," he said
firmly, repeating intentionally the vow of his
boy's friend.

He did not. He was at Mr. Gardenell's church
the next Sabbath morning. He hired a pew
there; one so situated that he could watch Ray's
face during the service. He took the boy's
hand as he passed out and looked in his eyes
with almost tenderness; when Ray introduced
him to his mother he touched her hand rever-
ently, and bowed over it as a courtier might over
a queen's, as the delighted lad informed Olive.

CHAPTER XIX.

"TIME FLIES!"

Evil news rides post, while good news waits.

MILTON.

HERBERT GARDENELL began to believe the truth of the old adage, "Time flies!" as he looked at his children. Olive, who had stood still so long, lengthened perceptibly this last year, Eddie had grown an inch, while his eldest son was as tall as himself.

Herbert was seventeen now, and had really entered college. Mother congratulated him on his success, and kissed the manly face as she wondered what they would do without him. As for Olive, she went about with such a melancholy countenance, for a week after his departure, that she won the sympathy of all.

She did not eat; was not the seat beside hers vacant? How could she sing and Hervie's

tenor missing? Her lessons never were so hard, and no one knew how to help her as the brother gone. How long the days were!

Papa tried in vain to console her. But presently came such a real, jolly, love-full letter, as newsy and delightful almost as a talk with Herbert's self, and she felt better. The honor of receiving a letter addressed to herself, the excitement of answering it, and the acquaintance she began to feel with her brother's new surroundings and associates quite inspirited her, and she soon recovered her wonted gayety.

Every week she received a little missive, and every week returned an answer. Ere long she felt she quite knew Prof. B—— and Dr. W——, and as to Stanton Cartwright, he seemed like an old friend. Indeed she had met him when a very small child during their sojourn one year in Vermont, whither the doctor had ordered mamma for her health. He had dragged her on his sled quite often, and his mother had been very kind to her mother while she was so delicate.

XIX.

ES!"

good news bait.

MILTON.

NELL began to be the old adage, "Time flies like children. Olive, who lengthened perceptibly grown an inch, while as himself.

now, and had really congratulated him on the manly face as she could do without him. As with such a melancholy after his departure, that all.

ot the seat beside hers he sing and Hervie's

Olive remembered nothing of this, but was very glad to know it through Herbert, and she voted her brother's classmate and chum "a very nice boy." Whether Stanton was flattered or not by this cognomen, he was certainly much amused by the little bits of her epistles that Herbert read to him, and began to share his sister's letters in return — his precious, only sister Wingate, or Gatty, as they called her, the next in age to himself in the family, and, therefore, more than a year older than Olive.

Mr. and Mrs. Gardenell had pleasant recollections of the fresh-faced country boy they used to know, and were glad their son had found so congenial a friend. Their good opinion of the young man was heightened when Herbert brought him home to spend the short Christmas vacation.

Stanton, like Herbert, had the ministry in view, and Mr. Gardenell felt almost as if another son had been added to him ere the fortnight was over. Olive condescended to share

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"TIME FLIES!"

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her caresses with him, though charily, Mrs. Gardenell took him into her heart, Ray voted him a "big thing," while the little fellows followed him around as they did their brothers.

To Herbert this new friend was flesh of his flesh. They shared the same bed, read the same books, preferred the same studies, were, in fact, a "David and Jonathan," as Ray said, adding pertinently, "but which is which might puzzle the doctors."

Stanton left Mr. Gardenell's mansion feeling that his life had taken on "whole acres," as he expressed it to Mr. Gardenell when that gentleman bade him "Good-by! and a welcome home any time, my boy," as the train whistled out of the depot.

It was dull music after they were gone to Raymond. "A fellow might as well cram and get ready to follow them as soon as possible," he said, and consequently went at his books with a will, much to the satisfaction of his father and teacher.

"A brilliant boy; needs sticktuitiveness; he has the material in him," one of the teachers had said a few days before to Mr. Gardenell. "Give him real incentive and he will make his mark in the world." And his father smiled and sighed as he prayed, for he believed that the only incentive sufficient to make any life a success must ere long be his son's. Did not his God answer prayer?

Herbert shared his next vacation between Bloomingdale and his friend's home in Maine, whither they had moved from Vermont. Ray went with him, but their stay was short, for mamma needed her big boy, and her big boy needed mamma. "Ray and I are going to bring back Gatty Cartwright with us," wrote Herbert. "Stan is needed on the farm, but Gatty is not, and if she is she must be spared, for she is getting thin with overwork, her mother has been sick so long, and Stan is anxious about her."

So, sure enough, when the boys came they brought with them a dark-eyed, dark-haired little

maiden of fourteen, the strangest mixture of coyness and piquancy imaginable. Always so sweet, and quiet, and lady-like, that all were drawn to her instinctively, she was yet so full of mischief and repartee that even Ray found his equal, and Papa Gardenell a constant source of fresh delight. What a month at Bloomingle would be to one of just Gatty Cartwright's temperament only those like her could guess; and what her queer questionings, funny speculations and pertinent comments were to the Gardenells, only they can tell.

"She is uncommon, wife," said paterfamilias, "a rare flower. Do you notice how she watches my experiments and how quaint her suggestions are, and how her eyes glow over some of our readings? She is big — fathoms deep; it would be beautiful to study her soul fully, to fashion and develop her nature. Then she is so simply and truly religious. A safe companion for our boys and girl. Who would guess that only a year and a half lay between her and Olive?"

They all missed her when she went. Bloom-ingle lost its charm. No one minded going back to the city after that; they would not expect to meet her at every turn in that other home. School was to begin soon. Herbert must return to college. Suddenly one day his eye brightened as he caught sight of a dainty missive waiting by his dinner plate. He put it in his pocket, blushing fiercely, when he met his father's eye.

"Private," said Ray slyly.

"Nothing to blush over, my son," said mamma. "Papa liked such letters once himself."

"Only received one in my life, however," commented papa, as if seeking commiseration.

"Why, papa, this is only a friendly letter," said Herbert.

"So was mine, my son."

"I'm sure there isn't a line in it I would not willingly have you read."

"Nor one in mine you might not enjoy."

Come up to the study after dinner and let me show it to you. Oh! mamma was a funny little girl in those days, and scarcely older than our Gatty."

Ray was tired of study, tired of play, tired of everything. He was growing, and at that restless age so hard to pilot boys over, especially boys of a certain temperament. Mamma called it the "puppy age," and not without reason, for Ray teased Olive and the little boys constantly, was always sitting with limbs extended, to the endangerment of all who passed him, and really acted sometimes as if he were forgetting the pretty polite manners for which he had been noted.

He had been in disgrace at school twice this week, once with papa, and mamma had just said "My son!" in such a sorrowful tone that he ran off to his room angry with himself, out of sorts with the world in general, and wondering if life was worth living, after all.

That in such a mood he should go up to the old attic to hide his misery is no marvel, but

that he should hit upon just the comfort he did is surely another proof of the depravity of all things earthly.

The attic, deserted by the older children for some time past, was beginning to hold attractions for the younger ones. The day before had been stormy, and Harry and Eddie had enjoyed themselves in masquerade fashion dressing themselves in all the garments they could find. Now, as Ray flung himself down, his hand hit a sailor hat and immediately his face brightened.

He tried it on. A little tight, a little shabby, but "quite a thing, after all," he pronounced it. "I'll bet it's the one Herv had the summer father bought him that sailor suit. I wonder if that was ever worn out? Come to think, Herv outgrew it. Wonder if it's around here?"

He got up lazily and looked about. "Here's the pants—yes, and the blouse; those little fellows have dug them out. Not at all bad. I believe they'd fit me." And quick as a flash,

all his melancholy dissipated, Ray ran down to his room, locked the door, and donned the clothes.

Supper-time came, and a letter from Herbert who had been back to school for a month.

"Where's Ray?" asked papa; "here's a note inclosed for him." But nobody knew where he was. He had been home from school, mamma knew; the maid had seen him enter his room, but he was not to be found in the house now.

An hour passed — two; mamma was alarmed, and his father went in search of him. His school friends had not seen him, and when bed-time arrived and he had not appeared, his father reported at the police stations. The whole night was spent in searching for the missing boy. His room was thoroughly examined, but there was neither word nor sign of his whereabouts. Indeed, the sight of his school-clothes kicked under the bed added to the problem. His clothes-press and drawers showed not an article of clothing missing; even his every-day

hat lay in the corner of the room. Before another night the rivers and harbor had been dragged, detectives hired, rewards offered, telegrams sent to various quarters, cablegrams delivered at different ports to meet outward-bound vessels, for he might have taken ship. Everything was done that could be done, and yet there was not the slightest clew to his disappearance. No one had seen him; no one knew anything about him. Ray Gardenell had disappeared as suddenly, as mysteriously as if the earth had opened and swallowed him.

Here was a sorrow Mr. Gardenell could not bear for his wife; here was a burden he could not lighten. Without God, how could they have lived the months that followed?

Olive wisely, and without a word to any one, telegraphed at once for Herbert. Papa was so busy, mamma so stricken that naturally her heart longed for her comforter. Quickly the message was answered by his presence; the few words "Come home at once," startled him.

Catching up his sister, who was watching for him at train-time, he stepped into the parlor and said, "Now, darling, tell me all."

It was soon told, and, comforted by his presence, his voice, his strong assurance, "God will keep him safe," she lay quietly on the couch where he placed her, and he sought his mother.

She was in her room on her knees; she lived there most of the time lately. Her husband was out to hear if any news had come yet.

"Mamma, dear mamma!" He was kneeling beside her, holding her to his heart close, close, and with every pressure bringing comfort to her heart.

"He is safe, mamma! God sees him, knows where he is, watches him; he is safe. Nothing, no one, is ever lost that God keeps. If we knew all, we might not be able to keep or save him, but God can and will. 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth'—to our Jesus, mother. Earth is as safe as heaven; we never get out of

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his reach, his arms. Ray is not dead; he cannot die until our prayers for him are answered. If I knew he was dead to-night, I should know he was safe in heaven, for God, who never lies, has given his word that he will save him. Listen, mamma: 'If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' My name! It is so great, so powerful a name, so wonderful that anything becomes possible to him who uses it. I have used it. Mother, I am sure our boy is safe. I've asked, and God says Yes."

She was crying softly now; blessed tears of relief. This was her boy holding her; her boy. The other boy—God watched him; God cared for him; he must be safe. Yes, she believed; and tenderly kissing her face, Herbert soothed her on his bosom, rocking her in his arms as if she had been Olive, until she fell asleep.

He hardly breathed then lest he should disturb her. His father found him thus, and together they laid her on the bed and loosed her clothes.

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; her in his arms as if
she fell asleep.

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"TIME FLIES!"

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The heavy slumber was not broken; it was the first she had fallen into since Ray disappeared. Then rising from over the dear, peaceful face, father and son looked into each other's eyes. No need of words. Instinctively, hand grasped hand, and in that moment each felt the other's soul was counterpart of his own. They were no longer twain, even in that dear relationship of father and son; nay, they were one, and each opened arms to the other in a loving embrace.

His son pressed to his bosom until he felt his heart beat against his own. Herbert Gardenell senior said fervently, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, for this God is our God forever and ever."

And the answer was as if his younger self had spoken: "'He is my father's God, and I will exalt Him.'"

Then they two knelt and agreed as touching one thing.

Weeks, months passed. Telegrams brought no hope. Only one vessel had shipped a boy that day, and he was colored. Many and cruel were the comments passed; sympathy and criticisms flowed in from many sources, but as to the persons concerned, they had reached Solid Rock.

Carefully Olive watched over her mother and sought to comfort father. The newspapers of course had flourished. Many kind things were said, but "ministers' sons and deacons' daughters" had to be aired; much was hinted about neglecting one's own while tending another's vineyard; most of it written, no doubt, by those who tended neither.

Mr. Gardenell read, smiled, sighed, and saying, "Little mother must not see this," cut out the article. Mrs. Gardenell met with a similar paragraph. "Dear heart, you shall not see this," and it was burned. And all this while Herbert and Olive searched papers daily, lest any of

these objectionable things should reach either parent.

The nine-days wonder was over at last, Herbert went back to college, and everybody tried to settle back to former habits.

During all this strain none had been kinder, more diligent and persistent in his efforts to obtain news of the missing boy, than Col. Gordon. He doubled all rewards offered, hired other detectives, was unsparing in his endeavors, and, best of all, never doubted his boy's friend.

"Be sure," he said to Mrs. Gardenell one day, "be sure your son himself is not grieving you like this. He is too honorable and manly for that. I don't believe he is dead. He will come back to you some day, and I predict will be a joy of heart to you as long as you live."

"Thank you," answered Herbert Gardenell, his eyes flashing out his gratitude, "I believe you are right. My faith claims him. He is loved in Heaven, and therefore guarded on earth."

"Bennie loves him," said the colonel gently, "and if your theories are true, perhaps he knows where he is to-night. It lightens things wonderfully to think so; he can never be quite friendless while my boy's love can reach him."

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d the colonel gently,
ue, perhaps he knows
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n reach him.”

CHAPTER XX.

THE DARKY SAILOR-BOY.

He trudged along unknowing what he sought,
And whistled as he went for want of thought.

DRYDEN.

IN spite of the colonel's assurance it was quite true that Ray had brought all this sorrow on his parents and friends through his own heedlessness. To do him justice, he had planned no mischief; he had simply drifted into it; but the consequences were as fatal as if with malice aforethought he had planned the whole miserable scheme.

In his bedroom that day he donned the sailor suit, delighted that it fitted him so well. “I'm in luck,” he said exultantly, kicking his clothes one side. As he did so his foot came in contact with something hard; his eyes shone.

“What a jolly lark,” he cried, fishing a small

vial from the pocket of the discarded pants. "Cowles said his uncle brought this from the Indies, and it would make a fellow a regular darky. I believe I'll try it."

No sooner said than done. "My! that's neat," he said, applying a little to his hand. "Let's see how I'd look!" And soon his face was so transformed that his dearest friend would not have recognized him. He viewed his work with great satisfaction.

"Not a fellow of them would know me; I don't know myself. I'll try just for fun. But here's the hands; they'll tell tales." Up went the shirt-sleeves, and soon Herbert Gardenell's second son was a fine-looking, bright-eyed, well-knit little darky.

He whistled as he thrust the empty bottle in his pocket, donned his hat and sallied forth, perfectly delighted when his father passed him without recognition. Farther up the street he met several schoolmates with the same result, and last of all he met Olive talking to a friend.

"What a good-looking colored boy," he heard her comment as she glanced up, and he chuckled aloud. This was prime fun.

Of course he went to the wharves and looked over the shipping; that was the proper thing for a sailor to do. There he took out the bottle and pitched it into the water. What was it, as he saw it sink beneath the waves, that recalled an item of information given him with the vial and until then quite forgotten?

"Uncle says the stain is not easily removed; I suppose that was to frighten me out of using it," Jonas remarked. "He says boys are always up to everything, and if I applied that article to my skin I must be content to be a darky for one while. He heard a certain chemical solution would remove it, but didn't know what it was."

Raymond had swapped off a jack-knife and several other things for this stuff, and now, if it wouldn't come off, what should he do? With dismay, he recalled his friend's assurance that he put a little on his own arm months before,

and it was there yet. Perhaps it would yield while fresh. He bought a piece of soap and went to the water; his hands were black as ever in spite of all his rubbing.

His father? Well, of course he would forgive him and help him out all he could; but — why, he couldn't go to school; and the boys, what would they say? considerations that should have entered his plans some time before. Such a scrape! He was getting so ashamed of these continued difficulties, and — what would Olive say, and mamma — dear little mother-woman! she must never know. If he could ship for a short voyage it might wear off. Just the thing; what a brilliant idea! So it happened that after several unsuccessful applications he was taken aboard of a vessel just weighing anchor, and two hours after donning that suit of clothes was putting out to sea as Richard Green, darky sailor-boy, in the ocean-bound Maria Thompson.

No wonder his disappearance was shrouded in mystery, and his mother and father filled with

sorrow. How little this poor sick colored child tossing about in his bunk, suffering with nausea, disgusted with the coarse food offered him, appeared like the boy from that Christian home.

"The way of the transgressor is hard." Perhaps no Bible verse ever meant so much to Raymond Gardenell as that did for the next few months. Oh! to be home again, to have one glimpse of mamma, hear father say but once, "My son." He wept himself to sleep night after night, and woke tired, sore, half-wild. He could not eat the food at first, and the coarse jokes of the men shocked him, his had been such a careful training. They called him "Gentleman Nigger," and knocked him about in their rough fashion, denying him the little kindnesses he might have won but for his color. He was learning many useful lessons, but, oh! in so hard a school, and it was long before he got used to it or any of his ready wit returned.

They were out on a long voyage. In the course of a few months the sailors began to

SAILOR-BOY.

Perhaps it would yield
a piece of soap and
his hands were black as ever

Perhaps he would forgive
what he could; but — why,
and the boys, what
reproaches that should
be time before. Such
was so ashamed of these
— what would Olive
little mother-woman!

He could ship for a
week off. Just the thing;
it happened that after
several days he was taken
to the hospital, and two
pieces of clothes was put-

Green, darky sailor-
boy, Maria Thompson.

His face was shrouded in
a white cloth, and his father filled with

rally him, declaring "Nigger Dick" was getting white, losing the tan, etc. Alarmed, he took opportunity to examine himself in the captain's mirror. Truly the stain was disappearing fast. He would be white again; an almost despair of this or of any change in his hard lot, had taken hold of him. But in the midst of his joy entered fear of detection. His secret must not be discovered; he determined to run away at the first port they entered.

The end of a year found this child of love and care in a strange land among people of a strange tongue, almost penniless and quite sick.

At the hospital the nurse was kind, but she did not understand a word of English. In his fever delirium he raved of home and mamma, begging to be forgiven — prayed for. But when the doctor, who knew some English, questioned him as he grew better, he steadily refused to say one word of his friends. He felt sure he had broken their hearts, he would not disgrace them by disclosing his name.

He hoped he would find some American-bound vessel when he grew stronger. Just to get home and hear mamma pray for him once as she used to do, became the one longing of his heart. He was such a sinner — beyond pardon, he feared — for he had been well-taught, and neglected the truth. He recalled Ben, and his hungry eyes as he spoke of their family prayers. Ah! he understood that now.

Just to kneel about the altar once more and hear father and mother pray! Tears would burst forth at the thought, shut his eyes ever so tightly, and then the foreign nurse would bustle about, hovering over him and chattering her solicitude.

Poor Ray! he did not think of praying for himself; it never entered his head as possible. To be prayed for, to kneel by mamma and see his prayers as he used to years ago, this was his hungry cry. To just lie once more in his own soft bed and die at home — for he was sure he was going to die; but he must get home and get mamma to pray for him first.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOLDING TO THE PROMISE.

Our Father in Heaven — tell me the rest,
.

There's something about a forgiveness of sin,
Put that in! put that in! — and then
I'll follow your words and say an amen.

J. W. WATSON.

IT was a long, long year to Herbert Gardenell and his wife, the year that followed the disappearance of their son. It seemed to move on leaden wings.

Their eldest had gone back to college, and the house seemed desolate robbed of the two active youths, but the father's faith seemed never to waver from the hour he knelt with his first-born and claimed God's promise to two agreed on earth as touching anything they should ask. If he had hours of doubt or fear he never revealed

them. Always the same hopeful words, the same cheerful spirit greeted wife and children.

The missing boy was never forgotten. At the family altar, tenderly, lovingly, expectantly, he was commended to divine love and watchful care. Mrs. Gardenell doubted if he was ever out of her husband's thoughts, he was so doubly tender to all young life, so abundantly sympathetic with all child-woes. Always kind and thoughtful of youth, now no child seemed to pass unnoticed. It seemed as if his sorrow sanctified all boyhood. She often saw him on the street-corner stop until some step, heard in the distance, brought its owner near. How gently yet how cheerily he always greeted the stranger, and yet with an almost disappointment in his eyes as if he had expected what he had not found. He seemed ever looking for some one.

One day she was in the library, work in hand, when Col. Gordon was announced. Presently Judge Wilde dropped in, and the three gentle-

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HE PROMISE.

—tell me the rest,

at a forgiveness of sin,
—and then
and say an amen.

J. W. WATSON.

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men fell into an earnest conversation. Suddenly, in the midst of it, Mr. Gardenell rose hastily from his chair and opened the hall door. He shut it again instantly at sight of one of the maids disappearing through the corridor, but he did not resume the conversation or his chair. Instead he walked slowly up and down the room, one hand for a moment flung across his eyes. As it dropped he met the questioning glance of his friends and smiled sadly, as still pacing the room he repeated softly : —

“ I walk my parlor floor,
And through the open door
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair ;
I'm stepping toward the hall
To give the boy a call,
And then bethink me that — he is not there !

“ I thread the crowded street,
A satchelled lad I meet,
With the same beaming eye and colored hair,
And as he's running by
Follow him with my eye,
Scarcely believing that — he is not there ! ”

E PROMISE.

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floor,
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chamber stair;
ard the hall
a call,
at — he is not there!

wded street,
I meet,
g eye and colored hair,
ning by
n my eye,
— he is not there!"

HOLDING TO THE PROMISE. 271

Before the full, rich tremulous voice had finished the second stanza, his audience was reduced to one person. Mrs. Gardenell hurried to her own room to hide her tears, Colonel Gordon seized h's hat and in the street below paced up and down like a madman. Only Judge Wilde remained, and he was leaning forward in his chair, face hidden in his hands.

His pastor stopped before him and laid a hand on the bowed head. "He will be here, old friend," he said, a thrill of joy in his low deep tones. "Be here speedily, thank God. Beloved, our Lord reigneth, blessed be His name!"

So Mr. Gardenell's sorrow tinged his life with an added glory, an under-glow suggestive of sunset clouds or October woods; a sort of "victorious suffering," as Judge Wilde called it. His gentleness was greater, his sympathies broader, for those who strayed or sorrowed. True pain should always mean gain to God's own. His devoted people said he preached better, and his labors among the bereaved and fallen were more

abundant. As for his wife, she tried to carry the same sunny face; husband or children never missed her smile, but her health failed steadily, perceptibly, until more and more she was confined to the house, and part of the time to her own room.

At these times Olive was a great comfort, for Herbert had left her to fill his place as well as her own, he said, at departing, and she was trying hard to do it. His occasional vacations brought fresh air and new impulse into every avenue of the home-life. His father and he were inseparable during these weeks, and mamma always revived physically.

Mrs. Rogers wrote a long letter from her Western home.

"That precious boy is safe, and will be home again soon," it ran. "It is one of his pranks which has carried him farther than he intended. The dear Lord will take care of him. Be sure he will never get away from the grip of the fifteen years of your prayer and instruction.

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prayer and instruction.

Be of good cheer. I expect to hear he is at home every hour."

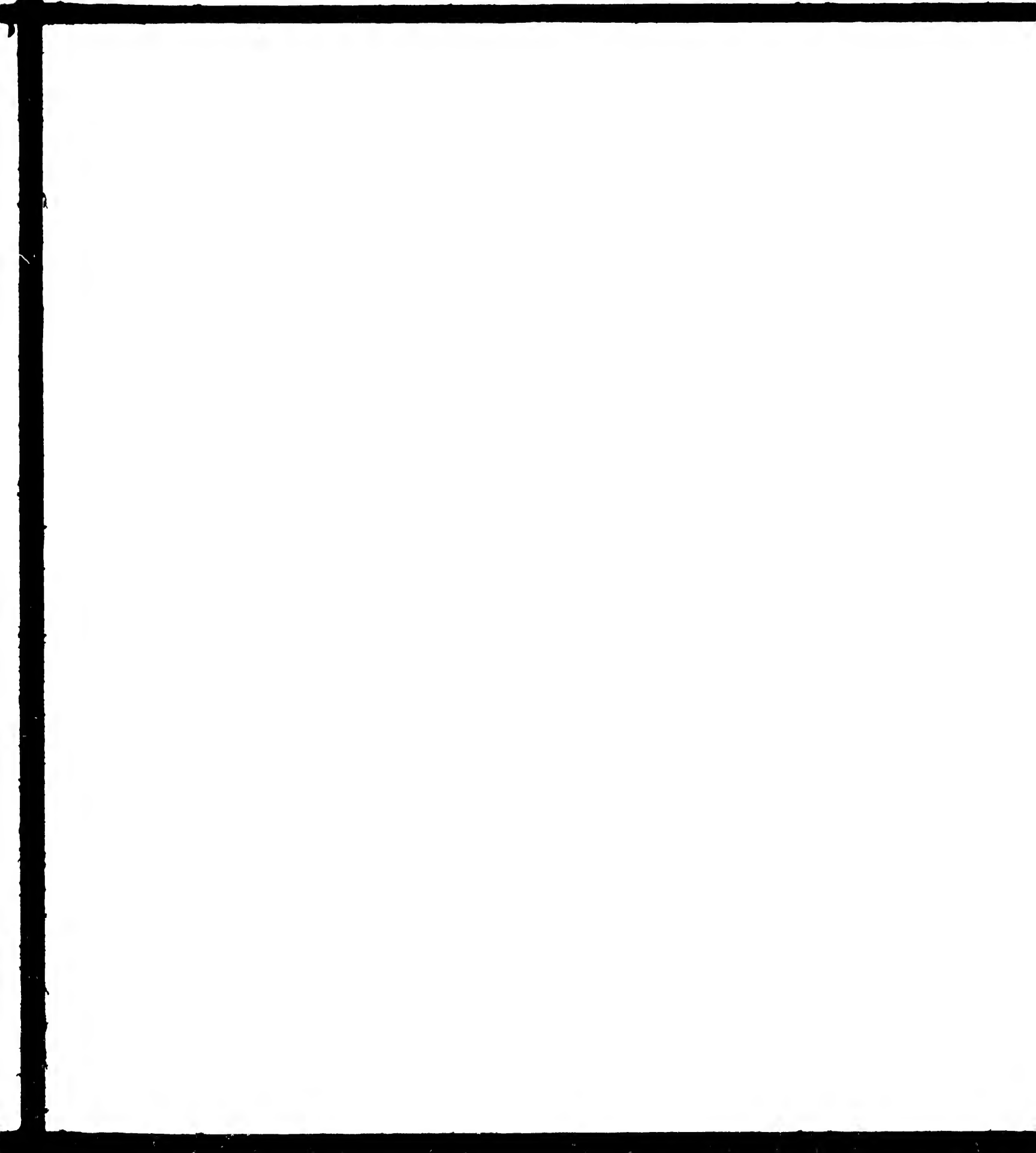
That letter helped wonderfully; so did the sympathy and prayers of Prof. Germaine and Esther, and of dear Eddie Campbell, who, with Achor, took a week to visit the "dearest mother in the world." There was Judge Wilde, Fred Walton, and hosts of friends uniting hearts and sympathies and petitions.

"We will surround our God with a hedge of promises, Yensie," said the judge one day. "He will never break the least of them to get out."

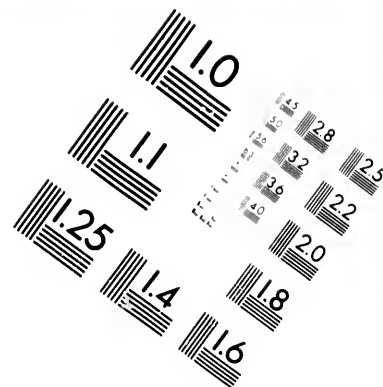
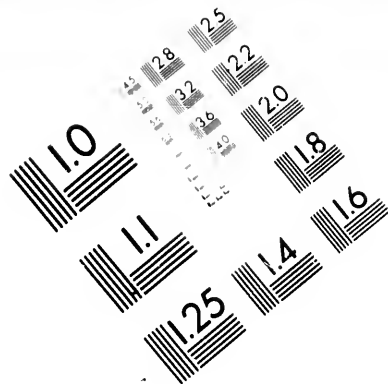
"Nay, rather," commented Mr. Walton, who stood near, "he will link them into a chain to draw the wanderer home."

They were all so kind. Still the time was long, very long, for every day had to be lived, and Mrs. Gardenell realized as never before that it takes three hundred and sixty-five days to make a year.

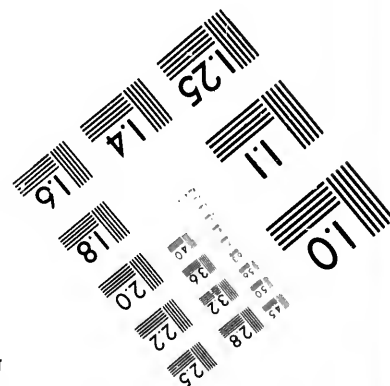
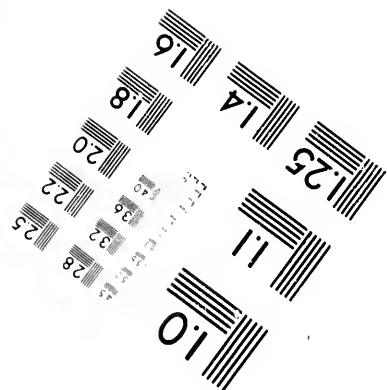
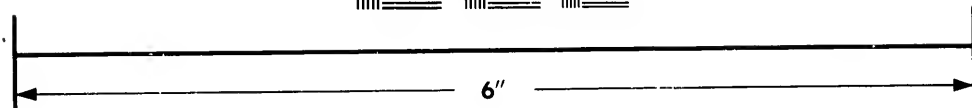
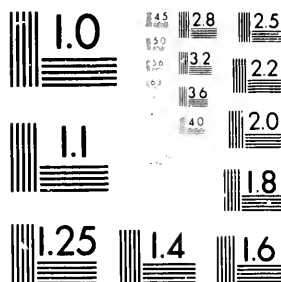
The anniversary of Ray's disappearance came







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and went unmarked except with a fresh baptism of tears in mother's room, a fresh waiting on God for renewed courage in father's study, and a long letter from Herbert.

"We will claim his speedy return by faith, at three o'clock this afternoon," he wrote. "Meet me then at the throne, and let us raise our Jericho-shout for victory. Sing the Doxology after prayer. I'll join you. If I am not where you can hear, God will, and I feel sure of his 'Be it unto you even as thou wilt.'"

They followed his request fully. It was a sight for angels, that tearful group as they sang; the little boys with eyes wide open with wonder, mamma with closed ones through which tears crept softly, Olive with quivering lips and half-bowed head, and papa erect, with head thrown back and lifted eyes, arms folded on his breast and glory touching his face.

And in a small college chamber, at the same hour, stood two young men, hand clasped in hand, eye shining to eye, smile answering smile

PROMISE.

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a fresh waiting on
father's study, and a

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ge chamber, at the same
; men, hand clasped in
e, smile answering smile

HOLDING TO THE PROMISE.

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singing the same words exultantly over and over,
and as they closed the fervent "Glory to God"
of Stanton Cartwright was followed by the sol-
emnly joyful "Amen" of his friend.

It was a month after, and Monday; mamma
was far from well. Twilight hour, the little
boys in bed, Olive thrumming on the piano in
the room below, she waited for her husband's
return from a bereaved parishioner's.

There was a fire upon the grate before which
she sat, for the spring was late and the day
chilly. Her eyes were fixed on the coals as if
she read something in their glowing depths;
preoccupied, ears filled unconsciously with the
music from the room below, she scarcely heard
a step, and did not look up as the door opened.

In the dusk she did not discern whose figure
knelt down before her; it was not an uncom-
mon attitude with her husband, but the touch of
the hand, the tone of the voice which said
"Mamma, pray for me," thrilled her deepest
soul.

She was very still. Oh! how still God kept her. Instinctively, she took in the situation; understood the weakness and the need of the sick soul and body at her feet.

"Pray for me, mamma; teach me 'Our Father'; I've forgotten how it goes. I must say it once again."

"Our Father which art in heaven," she began in low, clear, tremulous tones.

"Our Father which art in heaven," echoed the voice of her lost boy, and she pressed with both hers the hand he had given her as she said fervently, reverently, "Hallowed be thy name," recalling what Herbert had said about that name.

Like a baby the great boy beside her knee followed her through the prayer. Had he gone back to childhood again? A terrible fear smote her heart.

"Forgive us our debts,"—he repeated that twice—"as we forgive our debtors—I never had any to forgive—never had any. Forgive me my debts," he said again.

Mamma stooped and pressed her lips to his damp curls; she was making an effort at self-control.

"Say 'Now I lay me,' mamma." She did so, he following as before, word for word.

"Now I must go to bed."

Yensie Gardenell rose and drew her boy's arm through her own. Together they went across the hall and entered his chamber.

The dainty bed had been aired every day since his departure, waiting for his coming; she was so glad. Fresh flowers stood on the stand and mantle: Olive kept them there; their fragrance filled the room.

He sighed contentedly as he dropped into a chair, and she dropped at his feet and unlaced his shoes.

"It is nice to be home, mamma," he said.

"I'm very tired."

"Yes, darling; you will soon rest."

"O, yes! I will soon rest. I could not rest away from you, mamma."

She helped him undress, and soon in snowy night-shirt, his curly head pillowed where it had been from infancy, he lifted his face for her kiss.

"You will sing me to sleep as you used to do, mamma; that was so long ago."

And she nerved herself to sing until his regular breathing told her he slept. Then she knelt down and thanked God.

How she longed to see his face. She feared the gas-light might shine on him and awake him if she lighted it. She dreaded to leave him for an instant, but she did slip away a moment at length, for the tiny night-lamp kept in her room.

"I wonder where my wife is?" asked a familiar voice as she opened her door. "Surely this buoyant step is not hers! Darling, what has come to you?"

"My boy, Herbert, my precious boy. Don't detain me! Pass me the lamp; I must see his face. Herbert, God is good."

He did not answer her. The strong, brave

man was unnerved by the sudden joy ; they had changed places for awhile.

Yes, it was Ray, it was Ray. Fond faces bent over him, and tender, though light kisses were dropped on his face. Every time he stirred that night he put out his hand always to find another hand ready to clasp it, and he smiled in his sleep and murmured Mamma !

That night Herbert Gardenell junior received the following telegram :

" St. Luke, 15 chap. 32d verse."

" Stan, Stan, old fellow," he cried, bursting into his chum's room and waving the paper above his head, " read that, and see if you don't want to sing the Doxology again ;" and then two young men flung themselves into each other's arms and laughed and cried as if suddenly gone daft.

CHAPTER XXII.

CAUSE FOR REJOICING.

Loving smiles
Lit up the beauty of each angel's face
At that new utterance, smiles of joy that grew
More joyous yet, as ever and anon
Was heard the burden of the hymn.

T. WESTWOOD.

"TINKLE, tinkle," went the telephone bell in Prof. Germaine's study, and "Halloo!" came to his ear as he applied it to the mouth-piece.

"Halloo yourself," he answered.

"Horace, help me to praise God; Ray has come home."

"'Bless the Lord, O, my soul, and forget not all his benefits.'"

"He is sick; can you come to him?"

"Yes; immediately."

Which all meant that Herbert Gardenell had

more faith in the opinion and skill of his friend than in any physician in New York.

"He is left pretty badly off. Has had a fever, poor fellow, and is well shaken up. We shall have to trust largely to his youth and a good constitution, under God. He has not brought him home to die. A little medicine may help, but Nature is the grand restorer, and just now Nature demands sleep."

And sleep Ray did. It seemed as if he would never get enough. If he aroused for a moment, a word of intelligence, a gleam of consciousness was all, and he was off again. But there was a look of restful satisfaction on the young face, of child-like abandonment, that deepened as the hours went by, much to the professor's delight.

Quite early the morning after Ray's return, a bluff-faced, gruff-voiced gentleman called and asked to see the Rev. Gardenell. His first inquiry, on taking the minister's hand, was, "Have you a missing son?"

"No, thank God, he is returned," replied Mr.

R XXII.

REJOICING.

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T. WESTWOOD.

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Herbert Gardenell had

Gardenell fervently, thereby relieving his visitor of a great load.

He introduced himself as Capt. Shaw, and informed the gentleman that he had brought his son home in his vessel. He then told where he had found the boy.

It seems Ray knew his as an American ship by the flag at the mast-head, and begged to be brought back in it. His name he was determined not to divulge, until the captain refused to bring him on any other conditions.

"He actually got on his knees to me, sir, when he found I was bound to New York, and begged so hard I could not deny him. Seemed as if the sight of the old flag set him wild. He ran up the mast like a regular soilor, and kissed it as it floated in the breeze. I could hardly believe it when he said he belonged to you, sir; I had seen you at the Mission. But my wife took a wonderful fancy to the boy, and said she could see his likeness to his mother, which is a fact, sir. His pretty ways won her heart at

REJOICING.

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CAUSE FOR REJOICING.

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once, and I sha'n't say I didn't set a good deal by him myself. He's been low-spirited and unnatural for a young thing, but I make no dot of that's the remnant of the fever—nasty things! Those fevers leave folks kind of shaky.

“Last night when we got so close to land, it seemed as if nothing could hold him. We lay out in the harbor, but some of the men were coming ashore, and he begged so hard to come too, I hadn't the heart to say No. But wife, she worried and fretted all night, especially after the men came home saying he ran off like wild the minute they touched the wharf, and nothing would do but I must come to you this morning early.”

Mr. Gardenell was very grateful to this good man and his wife. They never would take a penny of passage-money for Ray, but were made happy in numberless ways by the boy's parents in the following weeks and years, for they felt this was a debt they could never repay.

Of the months spent prior to his voyage home

Ray had revealed nothing to these friends. His parents must hear that from his own lips.

Herbert arrived on the noon train to add to the joy of the occasion. Unlike the brother of that Bible prodigal he was unstinted in his attentions to the returned wanderer; nothing was too hard to perform that brought him comfort or pleasure. It was ample recompense for many weary watchings when one day Ray opened his eyes and said, with much of his old-time vivacity as he caught sight of Herbert's book, "What, old fellow, still pegging away?"

After that he came back to himself rapidly. In a day or two he sat up, received Olive and the little fellows later, and finally was carried, chair-fashion, to the dining-room below, by Stanton and Herbert, who had constituted themselves his body-guard.

Yes, Stanton Cartwright was with them. Vacation coming a few days after Herbert's return, left him free, and Mr. Gardenell felt he must have him. Ray was soon able to be re-

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moved to Bloomingle, and a delightful two weeks
followed before young Cartwright turned towards
mother and the farm. Every voice urged his
longer stay; each had the same answer, "I am
needed at home." To Mrs. Gardenell, whose
favorite he was, he said more: "You know how
mothers miss their big boys?"

"Yes; and I must not rob any mother of such
a boy; but you are very dear — like an own son
to us, Stanton."

"Thank you," he replied, kissing her tenderly.

"You will send me the best of news soon,
Ray?" he said, on parting with the invalid.

Ray understood him. "Stanton, just hold on
for me and wait. I hardly know myself yet."

Herbert and Mr. Gardenell were to accom-
pany Stanton to the city. The two young men
stood on the veranda awaiting the gentleman,
the morning of the departure. Cartwright had
just received the warmest of caresses in parting
from Mrs. Gardenell, and turned to Olive, hid-
den somewhat as she stood beside Ray.

"Aren't you going to kiss me good-by, Olive?" he asked, stretching out his hand, as she remained in the background.

"I'm too big to kiss boys now," she answered half-saucily, half-shyly.

"Why, Olive!" cried Herbert, "not this boy."

"And I've grown big enough to kiss you instead," laughed Cartwright, lifting her chin and placing the caress on her lips.

"Another law of compensation," said Herbert, joining the laugh.

"Delightful!" chimed in Ray, "and never brought to my notice before. Lucky chaps! I begin to estimate my privileges. I've been wondering what I should do when too big to be kissed. I see. Then I shall come into liberty to kiss. Poor Princess! You've had your day and it's over; you are only a girl. I pity you, but submission's the word."

"Spare your pity till it's called for," returned Stanton with a sly little laugh. "Judging from my past experience it isn't such a fearful thing

REJOICING.

"kiss me good-by, Olive?"
"Put his hand, as she re-
und.

"Boys now," she answered

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"Big enough to kiss you in-
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"Compensation," said Her-

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"It's called for," returned
e laugh. "Judging from
sn't such a fearful thing

to submit in such cases. I see my kiss has only
turned pearl to ruby."

The ruby flashed just then. "Boys always
see too much and take too much for granted.
I shall always kiss when and whom I please." —
Here Ray encored. — "Papa, papa," running to
meet that gentleman, who just then appeared,
and thus hide her confusion.

"She appeals to boys of a larger growth.
Courage, Stanton; you and I will grow in years
and wisdom."

"I'm afraid you sadly need the last, Ray,"
laughed mamma just then, pitying her girlie.
"I see you are getting well fast. We shall have
to furnish you with something substantial soon
on which to sharpen your wits."

The summer at Bloomingle passed, oh! so
sweetly. No company after Stanton left except
an occasional visit from a friend. The hours
were quiet, restful, and freighted with peace.
The brothers took short rambles together, pleas-
ant rides; Herbert read aloud while Ray lounged

near, and oftentimes papa and mamma and Olive were part of his audience. They lingered long in the beautiful spot — until it was nearly time for Herbert to go back to college.

His summer had not been unimproved. Many and long were the conversations he and Ray held together over better things, and one night, just at dusk, he rapped at his mother's door.

"Come in, my son!" She knew his step.

At the open window she was gazing out over the water, Olive's voice as she sang to her father while they rowed lazily along, floating over the waves to her. It was the then new hymn that made Sankey famous: "The Ninety and Nine."

Herbert dropped beside his mother to listen.

"Rejoice, for the Lord has found His own," rang out the clear, sweet voice.

"That's it, mamma; the very story I came to tell; 'the Lord has found his own.'"

She turned and put her soft palm on his cheek caressingly.

OR REJOICING.

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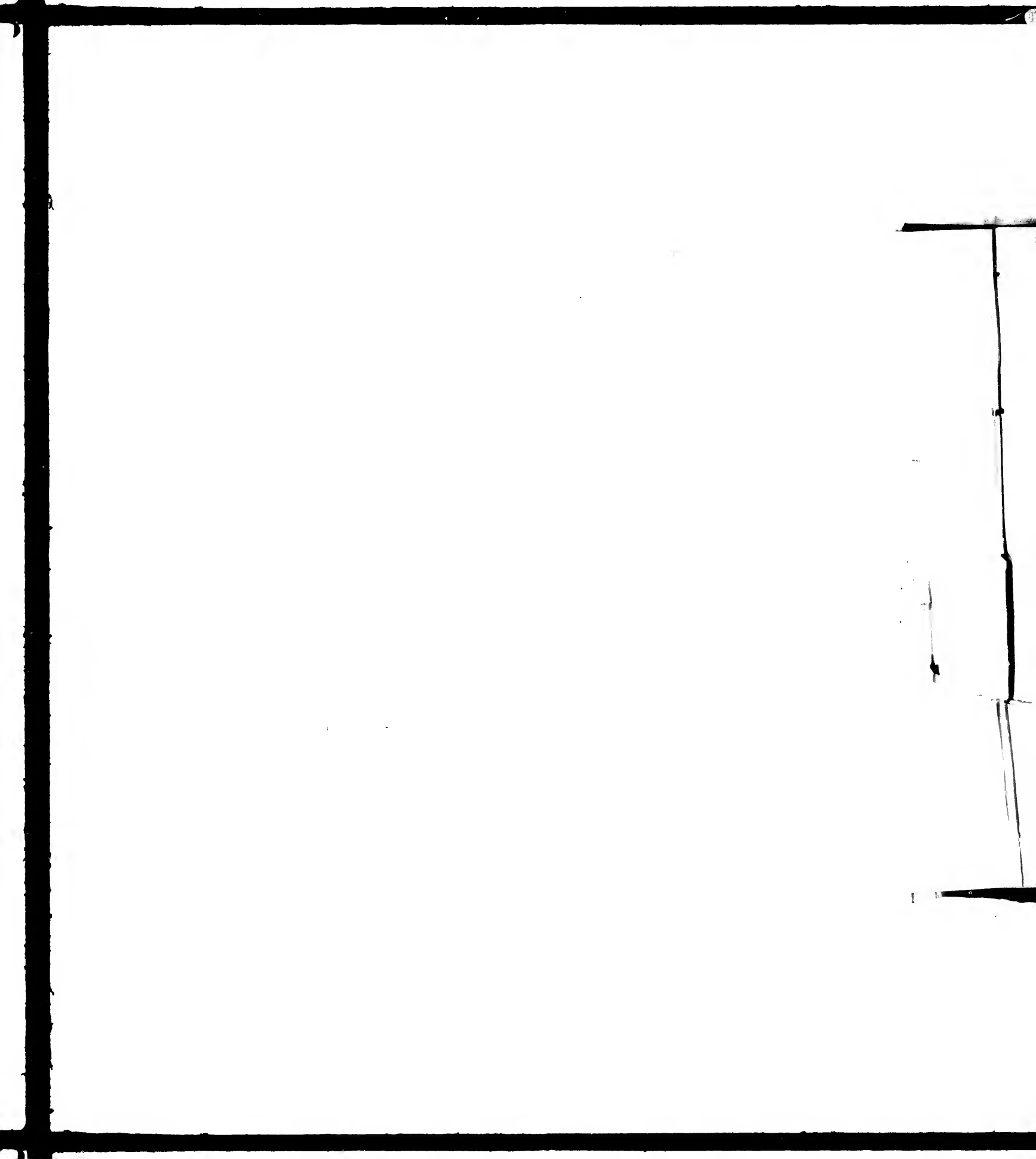
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found his own.'"

ut her soft palm on his cheek





"You mean Ray, my son?"

"I mean Ray;" and just then there was another tap at the door.

"Yes," said the mother encouragingly; and with a gentle pressure of her hand which she understood, Herbert vanished out of one door as his brother entered the other. Herbert knew Ray would like to have mother to himself. Seated at another window their voices reached him, but conveyed no meaning; only the soft murmur of earnest tones.

"Darling mamma, I am found, found, found!"

That was what Ray said, and she kissed his lips for every repetition of the precious word.

"I have almost believed it ever since God brought me home. With home it seemed as if I got Him — Jesus; and when I lay in my own bed it seemed his arms, and your kisses were his tender pardons pressed on my heart. I could not think much, I dared not believe it true. I cannot reason it out now, but I believe He is mine, and I know" — emphatically — "I am

his — all his, mamma ; body, soul, spirit, forever, ever more. I am given away ; I am not my own ; I will not be ; I am so glad to get rid of myself. O, little mother ! Herbert is just a saint — a living, loving, manly saint ; the kind Heaven loves ; and I want you to ask God to make me as nearly like him as it is possible."

"Like Jesus, you mean?"

"Yes, like Jesus; for that is just what Herbert is." And just then over the waters came again Olive's sweet refrain: "Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own," and leaning from her window mamma echoed it full and clear and sweet. It fell on her husband's ear like an angel-note out of the sky above as it descended on them: "Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own."

He bared his head, he dropped his oar, and just then two strong manly voices, with simultaneous impulse, caught up her words and sent them back: "Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own."

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CHAPTER XXIII.

CONSCIENCE FULLY ROUSED.

Heaven is not always angry when he strikes,
But most chastises those whom most he likes.

JOHN POMFRET.

THE rower understood the import of that refrain, so did the girl beside him. Not a word she uttered as he hastened shoreward ; her singing was over for that night ; and as the boat touched the wharf she sprang over the ground, into the house and to her own room.

One watcher saw her and presently as she sobbed, a sorrowful little heap upon her bed, some one stooped over her, and, picking her up, carried her in his arms to a rocking-chair.

“Ollie darling, the Shepherd has room for another in his arms ; is it you ?”

No answer.

"Ollie, little sister, will you let Him have his own?"

Still no answer.

"Ollie, my life for yours, my soul for yours, if it were possible, because I love you. His greater love accomplished both; will you thank Him?"

Still she was silent; not even a sob, now. Only a face pressed close to his bosom as she clung to him.

"I cannot save you, darling, or I would. Papa, mamma, Ray — we are all powerless. One only is mighty to save. Will you let Him?"

Not one word. He held her close, and rocked back and forth in quiet for awhile, then asked in a tone she always answered, "Ollivè, will you, or will you not, take my Christ for your Saviour?"

"I can't — oh! I can't."

"Do you mean I will not?"

"No, no, no! I can't, Hervie; really and truly I can't. You have all left me, and I am miserable, but I can't."

In vain he plead, reasoned, prayed with her.
At last he rose to go.

"Olive," he said sadly, "this may be my last opportunity to plead with you. If you would as persistently say 'I will,' as you now say 'I can't,' Heaven would rejoice over another found. I am sorry for you; you are in danger. Promise me at least this much, that you will decide once and for all, either for or against my Lord before you write to me again. Then send me your decision. Olive, what you need now is to face your own soul and the truth, and decide. It rests entirely with you, and with you only, whether you will be saved or lost. Will you promise me? I am going away in the morning."

"Yes;" she promised him reluctantly, and then sobbed herself to sleep; Herbert's solemnity frightened her.

One, two, three, four — the weeks passed rapidly. Back to the city again. Ray was well enough to begin study once more, under papa who

would make a careful teacher, and Olive went back to school. Many and pleasant were the letters from Herbert, full of college life and Stanton, with sweet and frequent messages to Olive, and occasional little notes, but not a word as yet had she written in return. That question he left with her to settle kept her uneasy and restless most of the time. She was not ready to face it, and for the first time in her life felt almost indignant with her brother, since it stood between her and the correspondence she loved.

Winter set in early and severe, the thermometer way below zero, with fierce and bitter winds. The sudden cold made work for kind hands in many a destitute family. Coming home from such an errand one day Mr. Gardenell met a servant girl at the door with a telegram in her hand a boy had just delivered.

It was customary for his wife to read and answer such communications when he was away, but her head was aching to-day, and she had

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fallen into a light sleep, from which Ray had said she must not be awakened.

Satisfied with the girl's explanation, the gentleman said, "It is doubtless of little importance," and passed on to the study. The warm room with the welcome glow in the fireplace was pleasant after the dreary scene from which he had come. "God is good to me," he said, donning dressing-gown and slippers and seating himself in an easy chair before he opened his telegram.

What! He started as if shot.

"Your son lies very low — accident — come immediately. — Dr. W."

He sat stunned. His son! What son? Not Herbert? O, no! not him. What harm had ever, could ever touch him? That danger could approach this precious child had never entered his thoughts before. But who else had he at H——? Was the telegram for him, anyway? He looked at the address, then the signature, and groaned. He knew Dr. W—— well; he was the last man to alarm anybody unnecessarily.

He read the words again : "Lying low," "accident." Were there any accidents with God? Could Heaven want his son? He took out his watch ; an hour and a half before the next train. How interminable that time!

He got up and walked the floor, a life-long habit when troubled or perplexed. Herbert suffering, needing him, dying, perhaps, without him. He staggered and sat down again. If he was only there! What could he do if he was? His impotency, his utter helplessness and nothingness broke on him as never before. His wife! Who would break this news to her? Could he? yet there was no one else. How would Ray bear this in his shattered condition? Olive? then he groaned again ; her idolized brother.

He fell on his knees—his never-failing refuge :

"Lord, Lord, Lord! yet will we trust, though the earth be removed. Thy will is right, thy will is best. I know not anything, O, my loving Lord!"

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That was all he could say, but the answer came: "To them that have no might He increaseth strength." Ah! he could claim that, surely, "no might." He rose calmed, comforted, and went to seek his wife and children.

But as he went he thought of Horace Germaine. So the telephone sent out its message again: —

"Can you go with me on the next train to H——? Herbert lies low; accident."

A few questions, then, "I will meet you at the depot."

Yensic had waked from her sleep refreshed. He entered softly and knelt beside her chair.

"God is good, Ennie," he said tenderly.

Ah! She read below the words. "Herbert, husband," — she was on her feet; she knew she was needed; must be brave to meet some sorrow, — "you have bad news."

"I have sad news," he corrected. "A telegram, love; I must take the next train to H——."

She turned on him startled eyes.

"Some one needs you there?" inquiringly.

"Our son. Yensie, what if Herbert has received his call?"

"To Africa?"

"No, to glory. What if they need him in Heaven?"

She put out her hands and he drew her to his heart. "He lives, but he lies low; that is how the message reads."

"I must go with you, Herbert."

"Can you, dear wife; are you able?"

"Could I stay here? Herbert, I must go. Ring for Mary Ann; I will be ready."

"Brave little woman," he said. "I will go and prepare Ray and Olive for our departure."

"Go to Olive, I will see Ray," and as the maid gathered a few necessities into a valise Mrs. Gardenell sought Ray in the parlor below, where he sat at the piano, and Mr. Gardenell knocked at Olive's door.

"O, papa! is it you? Come in. Did mamma tell you about our nice little plan? I am to em-

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broider Herbert a pair of slippers all myself for his birthday - a beautiful pair, with great pannies on the toes." This was Olive's little compromise with her conscience; Herbert must feel so hurt at her long silence.

Her father took her on his knee. "I have had news from Herbert," he said. And then she noticed his gravity, and that something in his voice.

"Papa, what has happened to Hervie - my Hervie? O, papa! is he dead?"

"No, thank God, not dead. Olive, can you be brave for my sake and mamma's - for Hervie's sake? Ray is not strong yet, and somebody must care for him and keep him cheerful while mamma and I go to H——. Is my girlie brave enough to read this telegram?"

He held it under the gaslight while she read it with compressed lips and dry eyes.

"Papa, go quickly," she said. "O, papa! go to him now. I will take care of Ray - of everything; you and mamma go."

"And have you no message for him?" Her father had expected she would beg to go, too; she surprised him.

"Papa, I love him, love him, love him. Papa, I shall die if he dies, and I deserve it."

"My darling, no, you will not die, but you will pray, you and Ray; ask that his precious life be spared." Then Mr. Gardenell kissed fondly his little daughter's face and hastened to order the carriage.

How dreadful were the weeks that followed! Telegrams came often during the first two days. "He was unconscious." "Prof. Germaine had some hope for him." "Still unconscious," etc. Then came a letter from mamma.

A not uncommon story it related. This precious life was almost lost by the daring of a schoolmate who recklessly ventured on the ice before it was fit for skating. Herbert saw him go under and plunged in after. Waiting hands seized the frightened youth as his rescuer brought him to the surface, but by some chance

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CONSCIENCE FULLY ROUSED. 301

Herbert slipped back under the ice, hitting his head, it was feared, in some way.

Only Stanton Cartwright's prompt action saved their dear one from immediate death. Crawling over the rotten ice and placing boards where he could grasp them, he dived down again and yet again, coming to the surface for breath, while his eager mates cheered him on.

His efforts were crowned with success, and he never left his friend's bedside until his parents arrived. Herbert was still unconscious; his brain was the seat of trouble, but the physicians now saw favorable symptoms. If he recovered, it would be slowly, and a long time before he could be removed to his home. They must be patient and pray much. So the days dragged on.

What days these were to Olive! How filled with self-upbraidings and anguish. Conscience, fully roused, gave her no rest. Her dry eyes refused to weep, and had it not been for Ray what would she have done?

It seemed strange to be clinging in this fashion to Ray, but he had grown so suddenly brave and helpful and strong. To his side he drew her, in his arms he rocked her—great girl as she now was—beside her he knelt and prayed; for, as he said, and she assented, "God is our only help."

"I can't ask Him, but you can," she said one day.

"But you must, Olive. The promise is to two who agree."

"Oh! I agree, I agree," she said, and then he urged salvation upon her. She opened to him her heart and how she had resisted the Spirit; he understood that. "But you do not resist longer; you do give yourself to God now?" he asked eagerly.

"I must," she answered. "If he spares Hervie, I will love Him forever, and if—if Hervie dies, I must go where he is; I could not live an eternity without him. But I fear God does not want such love as that."

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"God puts up with so little till we can give him more," said Ray. "He is different from us, Princess. He will fill your heart full if you only give him a chance. You see I know, for no one could bring less to him than I did, and I feel sure he will spare Herbert to us."

So, strangely enough, not Herbert but Ray was privileged to bring Olive to Cirist.

Yes, Herbert would live; the news came one day in the shape of Prof. Germaine himself, with the happiest of faces and the lightest of hearts.

"We all have reason to praise God," he said fervently, kissing Olive's cheek, "for he only is to be praised. I'd give more for an ounce of prayer than pounds of medicine in a case like this, and you have helped on the cure. Make haste and grow your roses, Blossom, before Herbert misses them."

How sweet to have them all home again—papa and mamma and Herbert. Yes; and Stanton, too. He came for a few days, and

everybody vied with each other in their attentions to him. He told Olive, as she pinned a gay little bouquet from the conservatory in his button-hole one day, that he "feared he would be quite spoiled, but he enjoyed it immensely." And there isn't a doubt that he did.

Rapidly Herbert recovered now that he had begun, and it was joy enough for Olive just to sit by his side and hear his voice. How could she help loving God now? She felt she did with all her soul, and her first words to Herbert after his coming home were:—

"I've decided, and it's beautiful to belong to Jesus. Oh! Hervie darling, if you will only forgive me."

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CHAPTER XXIV.

A WORTHY RESUME.

"The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Where deeds both great and small,
Are close-knit strands of one unbroken thread,
When love ennobles all."

ANOTHER peep into the Gardenell man-
sion and then good-by.

There are many changes, first of which is Mary Ann McAloon no longer presides over the nursery. Truth to tell, there is no longer a nursery or a Mary Ann McAloon. Harry and Eddie are anything but babies, and their nurse has changed her name and vocation. It happened on this wise:—

"Shure, Mrs. Gardenell, it's yerself knows I love you all," she began one day. "But there's Dick the coachman; he's that anxious about

being married, I don't see as there's any getting rid of him."

"Why, Mary Ann, what do you mean? You can't think of marrying a man to get rid of him?" replied Mrs. Gardenell in feigned astonishment.

"Well, the children, God bless them! is well up, Mis', and me work's clane gone from me hands. What is there left for me to do?"

"You will always be loved and needed here, dear girl," replied her mistress, smiling. "You have been faithful to us, Mary Ann, and as the children grow up their respect for you will increase. You are just like one of the family. Don't leave me unless your heart really leads you away."

"Me heart is it? Me heart was all gone to the babbies, mum, long ago, and little of it'll be left for anybody, I'm thinking. But Dick, he's willin' to take it, such as it is, and he needs a home."

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Mary Ann. If he loves you and offers you a home, you ought to be able to return love for love, to deal honestly."

"And whoever said I didn't love him, now; To be sure the heart is all hacked like and destroyed with the children, but that's neither here or there; if the bit that's left suits him, who's to blame?"

Yensie smiled; she saw her maid's heart was really interested, and reluctantly she parted with her. The children made a great fuss over the wedding, and each gave her a valuable present, and she wept bitterly in parting with her "darlins." "Though, to be shure," she said, "it's not a rod off I'm goin', and me house is always your own, me pets, as I'm well shure there'll be always a place for me in the big house, if the worst comes to the worst."

The worst has not come to the worst yet, and Dick and Mary Ann still occupy their snug cottage.

The nursery became a sort of play and study

room after her departure, and the old study room was turned in time into a "scientific curiosity-shop," to quote Ray, through the untiring efforts of Harry who was still devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. He had grown to be a tall, fine fellow, much resembling Herbert at his age, and his father greatly enjoyed his idiosyncrasies.

Eddie, more slender and rarely beautiful, was now quite a lad, and as devoted to his mother and sister as they could wish. Olive was exceedingly proud of him, and his voice was sweet and rare as her own.

Herbert Gardenell's one choice girlie was quite a young lady, too — all of nineteen; and as intelligent and beautiful and helpful as her papa's greatest hope for her had pictured. He would hardly know how to live without her constant devotion and help; and mamma, well, she called this maiden her "fair right-hand."

Yes, Olive was fair to look upon, and one of the sunniest, merriest girls that ever made home happy. Copying sermons and manuscript, mak-

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ing muffins and cake, amusing the children at
 some entertainment, or leading in some prayer
 meeting, she was always the same cheerful,
 bright self, and the old parishioners, to whom
 their pastor was the sum of all excellence, de-
 clared she favored him more than any of his
 children.

She was very popular, and the center of every
 merry group; her Sabbath-school class — six
 bright boys — quoted her freely, and her
 brothers were vain and her papa glad when her
 sweet voice rang out God's praises every Sab-
 bath morning. That voice was her choice gift,
 and she had dedicated it to her King and sung
 many a soul into his kingdom, and many a saint
 over the river in mission room and lowly cham-
 ber where papa and manna ministered.

Of Ray she was very proud. Her tall, elegant,
 handsome brother, who during vacation some-
 times preached for papa. Yet her heart clung
 most fondly to Herbert still, her olden comforter
 and guide, who was head and shoulders spiritu-

ally and intellectually, above most of the men about him.

Yes, Ray was to be a minister; or, as he put it, a "parson." The love of Christ had given the needed impetus to his life, and month by month, year after year, his parents saw him develop in grace, manliness, scholarship—in all they could desire. And one day, covered with honors, the handsomest, most brilliant of his class, Raymond Gardenell received the congratulations of his teachers and friends and stepped out to take his place in the arena of life.

His call to the pulpit had come first, however. Clear, unmistakable, he was satisfied Jesus said to him as to his apostle of old, "Go preach." And now he had been invited to take charge of a church; yes, several of them, and had well-nigh decided which was the field he was to occupy. He seemed the only person surprised at the situation.

"Me a parson, after all; can you credit your senses, Herv? I wonder if it is myself or that

darky sailor-boy they want?" for Ray was as mirth-loving and happy as ever.

There was a tap at mother's door early one morning. "I know I can come in," said some one, following his rap immediately. "Mamma, can you spare me a few days to run down into Maine?"

"Maine!" cried mamma, in well-feigned surprise. "I didn't know you had a call from Maine."

"A very urgent one," laughed her son, taking her right into his arms as he seated himself. "Now, precious mamma, stop teasing and tell me you think Gatty Cartwright the dearest girl in the world, and the one of all others suited to be your Ray's wife."

"Gatty is a precious little woman. I love her dearly, Ray."

"Of course you do; every one loves her," replied the young man exultantly. "But I wanted to hear you say so, and go to her with your spoken blessing."

"Are you quite sure it is Number Two and not Number One she prefers?" asked the lady mischievously.

"Absolutely, mother mine. She likes Herbert, but she makes eyes at me."

"O, Ray, Ray!" laughed his mother. "Imagine our dear lady-like Gatty 'making eyes' at my big boy."

"Well, I only judged by their effect on that little spot under my vest, mamma. Tell me you think her an angel."

"She is quite good enough for you, if not an angel," said mother gayly. "Have you spoken to your father?"

"Not yet. Little need; he treats no other girl but Olive as he does Gatty. When she was here last I heard him call her 'daughter' so tenderly that her eyes filled with tears, and she kissed his hand. Then he stooped and said, 'I would rather have it on my lips,' and she put it there. I broke the tenth commandment on the spot."

"And the young lady herself?" questioned mamma, bound to tease the tall boy who took so much for granted.

"I am a Yankee," he laughed. "You forget I was born in Vermont. A big 'guess' makes me quite comfortable; but with your consent I will make it assurance before to-morrow night."

From his mother's chamber to the study, thence to the breakfast-room, where his brother waited and read.

"Herv, you can't have Gatty Cartwright; she likes me best," said the irrepressible, opening fire.

"Poor me!" a little shrug of two broad shoulders.

"I'm sorry for you, my boy, but you are cut out for a bachelor," continued Raymond.

"Self-evident fact," two blue eyes flashing up from the absorbing page before them.

"Bother that book! you are wedded to letters. Herv, I'm bound for Maine this morning," were his next words.

"And I'm bound to wish you good speed and all progress in your main project, my young brother."

"Now that's something like; but, Herv, you are wise: what if the young lady refuses me with thanks?"

"You must refuse the thanks and accept the young lady without them."

"Herbert, I admire you! what a cool lover you would make."

"Of another's maiden? I should hope so."

"And you can really see me carry off Gatty Cartwright without an inward protest?"

"I protest, my boy, that I don't see anything of the kind, but my faith in your ability is unbounded. Good-morning, father!"

What a merry group gathered about that breakfast-table that morning! Immediately after the blessing was said Olive commenced, "Papa, what are we to do with the young parson meandering about the corridors before daylight and disturbing honest folks in their sleep?"

Raymond sent a sly glance from under his lashes in the direction of his sister as he helped himself to a muffin. "For instance, honest folks who are sitting at their windows writing before daylight — wasn't that your expression, Sis? — by the help of the morning star."

Olive blushed crimson and exchanged glances with Herbert. He, and he only, knew she was sending forth her first literary venture.

"Fie, Ray," she said, rallying. "You are a spy as well as a somnambulist."

"Not guilty on either charge," replied her brother good-naturedly. "I could not help seeing you, Princess, as I leaned from my window. I appeal to mamma if she was not up and dressed when I invaded her room, and I heard papa descend some time before."

"Poor papa!" Olive patted the hand near her affectionately. "It is nothing uncommon for his sleep to be disturbed. See what is ahead of you, my young parson, and garner your strength. Who needed you this morning, papa?"

"Our faithful Mapes!"

"No! How sorry Achor will feel."

"Yes; he left a message for her."

"And he was ready; that always comforts your heart. What would they all do without you?" fondly.

"Get some one younger and better, perhaps. Mr. Halladay is already a power among them; I am sorry he thinks of going away."

"Papa, I've been thinking that would be an excellent field for Herbert. Just the preparation he will need before entering his broader field. It would be so nice to have him near us while we can. Africa is so far away!" with a sigh and a love-glance at her brother.

"I had thought of that, too, Olive. If it is God's way, I should like it. If he has his way I shall not be much disappointed. I am attached to the Mission, and its old workers love me. Dear old Mapes had Mr. Halladay and didn't need me, but he thought he did."

"And of course he did. No one could fill

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your place, papa, not even your worthy son," with a naughty little glance at Raymond. "But then, he'll never try. He doesn't take to early rising; that is why I presage some pending evil from this morning's occurrence."

"Don't presage, Princess; it isn't healthy. Every morning does not find me en route for Maine."

"For Maine!" incredulously.

"Yes, sister mine; don't you wish you were going, too? I do. I'll take you if papa says so."

"Perhaps somebody else would have a say in the matter."

"Certainly; but you couldn't say anything but Yes."

"Indeed! I'd say No decidedly."

"And confirm your reputation for contrariety. What message shall I take from you to Stanton? You know he is supplying now only five miles from home."

Olive's face grew rosy, but she said, "I have no message."

Ray dropped his fork in assumed consternation.

"Is it possible you have answered already that half-quire letter that arrived yesterday? My dear sister, you might have saved postage and made use of the little vest-pocket next to my heart."

"Your heart already carries all it will be able to deliver safely, I fear," was the laughing retort.

"My sister's interests will always be as sacred as my own," laying his hand mockingly on his heart. "Mamma, what delicious muffins your daughter makes; one positively grows light-hearted in spite of possibilities; I'm a good mind to carry one to Stanton."

"Ray," said his mother, "when will you get over your teasing propensities?"

"When Olive does; apply to her for information, mamma."

"You are a fortunate boy, Raymond. Not every young man starts out on such an errand

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as yours to-day, with so light and assured a heart."

"Not every young man is after so sweet and sensible a young lady."

"Indeed, she proves it, my brother," interjected Olive slyly, while Mr. Gardenell continued:—

"Her sweetness would hardly insure her against mistakes. All honor to her faithful and wise mother."

"I only know one better," answered Ray, kissing the face beside him. "And Stanton is a royal fellow. I have only one fear, and that is, that when he reaches missionary age we will lose him, unless," glancing at his sister, "unless some one is able to convert him over to home missions."

"Imagine," said Miss Olive, her blue eyes flashing ominously, "imagine any one thinking herself able to turn Stanton Cartwright from what he considers God's call. And imagine any one mean enough to try it."

"Spoken like Olive Gardenell," cried Raymond, with real admiration. "Father, you will never need to be ashamed of your daughter or the one she brings you for your blessing."

Olive laughed. "Since Herbert refuses to be anything but a bachelor," she said gaily, "what is left for me but to share his fate? 'I'll never forsake Micawber.'"

"Your hand on that, little sister." She laid her palm unhesitatingly in the one extended for it. "Bear witness, father, mother, all," Herbert said as he pressed it to his lips, and added softly for Olive's ears alone, "This may mean another for Africa."

Olive walked to the depot with Ray, kissed him good-by, and said "Good luck." But there was a great lump in her throat which her brother discovered and tried to dissipate by his added gayety and tenderness.

"Precious little Princess, the very best sister boy ever had," he said, as he pressed his lips to

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hers; and she watched the train out, waving her handkerchief, and turned up the street fighting back the tears.

She stopped suddenly half-way home and turned toward the old schoolhouse, a minute later entering the sitting-room of the little yellow ell.

There sat Miss Jennie Ralison. "How fresh you look, my dear," the lady said as Olive drew a hassock to her feet and dropped her head in her lap.

How wrinkled and feeble her dear Je had grown; the girl noticed it as never before as she looked up to the placid face.

"Everything changes," she broke out tempestuously. "Why can't we keep things as they are always — bright and fresh and ours? I'll be old and wrinkled some day. Dear Je, I feel dismal to-day."

"That isn't like our sunshine," commented Miss Jennie.

"No, it isn't. But — but Ray has gone to

get him a wife," and down went the brown head with a little sob. What could her friend do but caress the dusky crown, and wait till the shower was over?

"'Tis a wicked little weep and you ought to scold me," said the wayward child, raising her face. "I love Gatty, oh! so much; and it would be dreadful for Ray to look at another girl, but — but — oh, dear! one does like to own their friends and keep them for just their own," with another wee storm.

Just then some one stepped through the kitchen and halted at the sitting-room door. Miss Johanna had been marketing. Old as she was she yet superintended all of their affairs, and looked younger now than her sister. She stopped in a sort of dismay, bonnet and shawl still on, at sight of the little figure bowed at her sister's feet.

"What? Tommy isn't crying!" she said, in such real astonishment, that Olive laughed in spite of her blues.

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"Only a miserable little selfish drizzle, Miss Jo," she said penitently. "I'm dreadfully ashamed of myself. Ray has gone to Maine for a wife, and I wish you'd tell me how mean I am."

"Miss Gatty isn't going to carry Raymond off, is she?" inquired Miss Jo innocently. "I thought he was the thief in this case. These things are much as we take them, Tommy; addition or subtraction. I always did like addition best. Two girls are none too many in a family, and it wouldn't be good for Mr. Ray to go off preaching alone. You can't well go with him, for then what would father and mother and Herbert do, I wonder?"

"I will never ask them. Miss Jo, you are splendid. I'm as hungry as a bear; I couldn't eat my breakfast. What have you got in this house that is nice?" getting up and shaking herself. "I feel better. I wonder which did the most good, your philosophy or my showers?"

"Both," answered Miss Jo sententiously.

"What's in had better come out, and there's nothing healthier than showers in spring, or more natural, either. Don't you begin to stifle your feelings and brood over things until they become mountains to crush you. Jennie, Tommy must have a gingerbread horse. Where is that one we baked yesterday? There," as it was produced, "I always believed advice and medicine belonged together. There's an old maid's remedy, sweets for the young."

Then Olive's laugh rang merrily through the little house. Hers was such a musical laugh — like her mamma's, Papa Gardnell said, and suggestive of a spring full of robins. She said between her laughing, "I must bite," and off she nipped the tail, with a doleful little sigh as she remembered Ray always did that in other days.

"I suppose I'm robbing some poor child, but I can't help it. Miss Jo, what a comfort you are."

"Prof. Germaine," said this same young lady ten minutes later, as that gentleman drew his

come out, and there's showers in spring, or don't you begin to stifle over things until they smother you. Jennie, Tommy and the horse. Where is that? "There," as it was proved by the best advice and medicine there's an old maid's remedy for." "I'm coming."

He came along merrily through the streets, and such a musical laugh — "I'm coming," Gardenell said, and suggested that she must bite, and off she went with a doleful little sigh as she did that in other days. "I'm coming," said some poor child, but "I'm coming," Jo, what a comfort you

said this same young lady that gentleman drew his

carriage to the curb to greet her, "don't you want to drive me home this beautiful morning?"

"I'm aching for the privilege, my dear," smiling, as he helped her to the seat beside him. "But seeing you are suffering from your old complaint, chronic cheerfulness, I would like to borrow you awhile first, to call with me on a lady who has an acute attack of the blues."

"Poor dear," sighed Olive, "I pity her, but I have an infallible cure."

"Ah! tried it yourself, I suppose," answered the gentleman quizzically.

"Yes, sir; and this very morning."

An amused smile flitted over the professor's face. "Olive, you ought to thank the Lord for your heritage of pure, strong, healthful life from a godly father and mother."

"I do."

"That much advantage the poorest Christian man or woman has over the wealthiest unbeliever, his faith grows courage and cheerfulness, and his offspring reap the benefit. This lady

whom we are to visit has 'blue' blood in the fullest sense of the word. I suppose you advertise this nostrum of yours like other quackeries, 'no cure, no pay?'"

"No pay indeed! Prof. Germaine, did I not tell you the cure was positive? I'm half a mind to be offended. You have no faith in me; you call me a quack."

"On the contrary, my dear, I believe you are just the medicine I am after, and the best thing possible I can carry my friend."

"That's because I swallowed my own remedy twenty minutes ago."

"I grow curious; this cure-all is"—

"An old maid and a gingerbread horse."

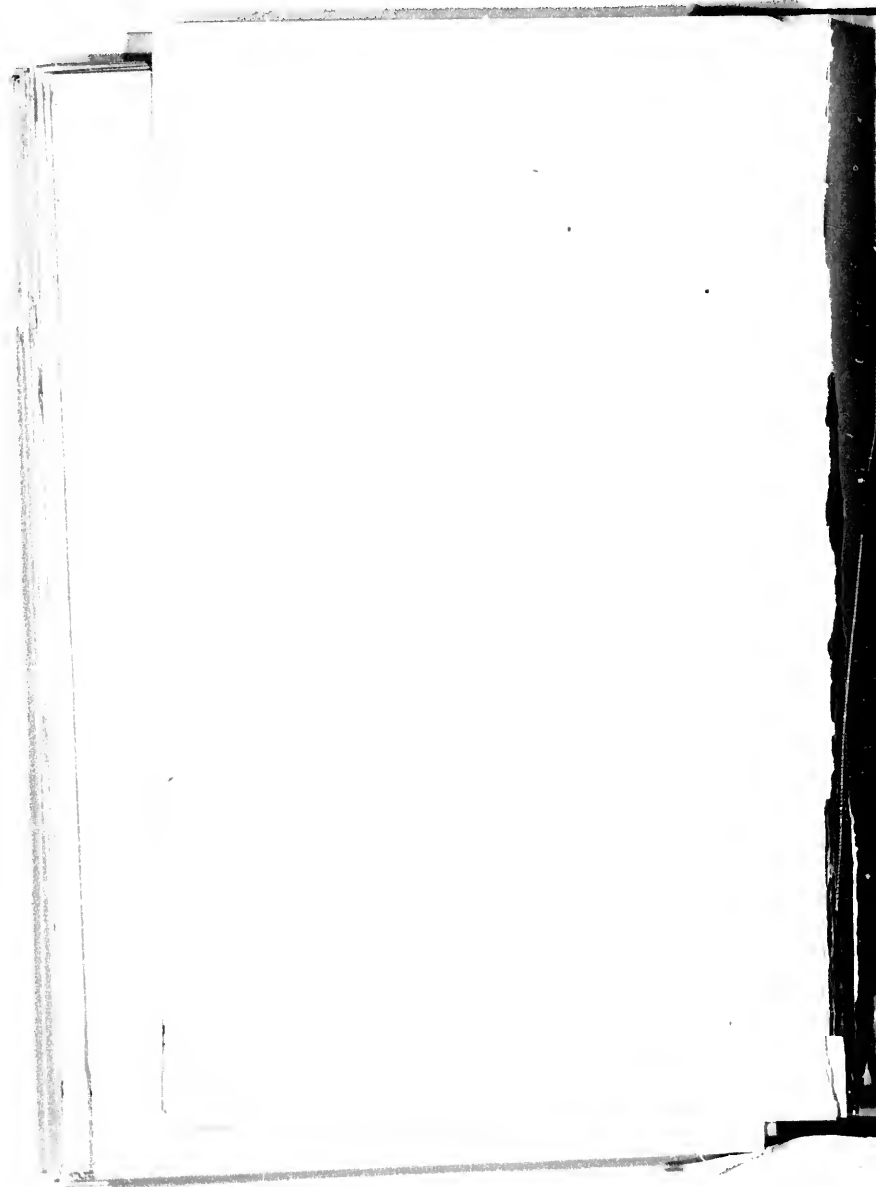
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In 1833 the wife of Horace Mann spent the winter in Cuba under circumstances extremely favorable to an intimate knowledge of life there; but was under a double restraint from making a book, a close and sympathetic friendship and numerous hospitalities.

Nevertheless the book was written, but kept for fifty years till the death of the last of her friends who figured in it

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But, when a novel is full of every high satisfaction, refreshment and gratification in spite of its carrying freight of practical wisdom, or rather, when wisdom itself is a part of the feast and the flow of soul's all the more refreshing for it, then, we take it, that novel stands apart from the novels of any time or country. And such is the Dorothy Thorn of Julian Warth. Not the loftiest flight of imagination; simple in plot—indeed there is no plot—the passing of time lets the story go on, and it goes the easy way; and, when it is done, it is done. We close the book with regret. The exaltation has passed; and we are again in the world where wisdom is tame and common things bereft of their dignity. But we have sat with the gods and the nectar was heavenly.

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