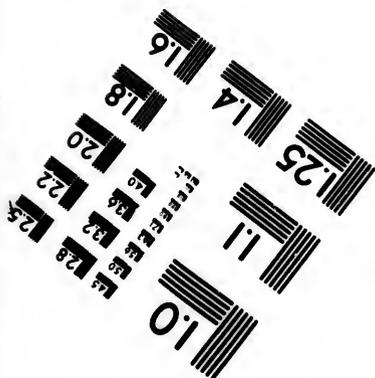
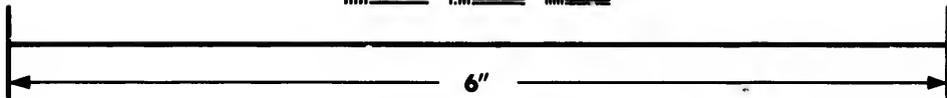
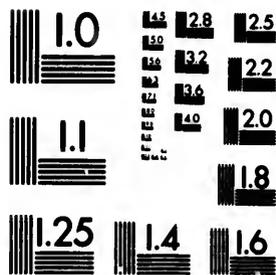


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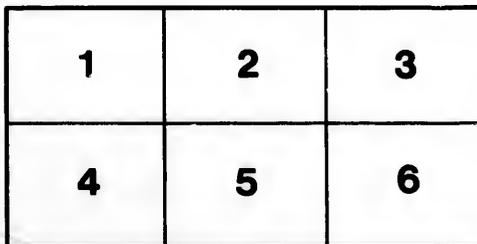
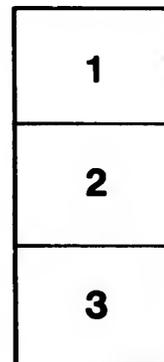
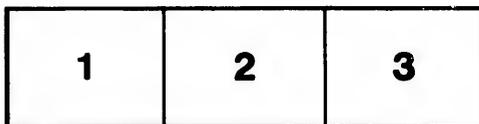
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THE
WIDOW'S JEWELS.

IN TWO STORIES.

BY A LADY.

BOSTON:
WAITE, PEIRCE & CO.,

No. 1 CORNHILL.

1844.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1844,
BY WAITE, PEIRCE & Co.
In the Clerk's office of the District Court of the District of
Massachusetts.

D. H. ELA, Printer, 37 Cornhill.

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THE author of this little work was MRS. HANNAH MAYNARD PICKARD, wife of Rev Humphrey Pickard, of St. John, N. B., and daughter of Mr. Ebenezer Thompson, of this city. She shone in this world as one of the brightest "Jewels" of nature and of grace. While it has been passing through the press, she has been suddenly taken to the better world, to shine a "Jewel" in the Redeemer's crown.

D. S. K.

Boston, April, 1844.

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INTRODUCTORY.

LITTLE READERS,—

When a wealthy Roman lady was visiting a noble friend of hers, she opened before her the rich casket of jewels which she possessed. There lay soft, pure pearls, rosy rubies, and glowing diamonds, blending their light in brilliant harmony and profusion. Their owner looked proudly up to her friend, and asked what she could show to rival them. Without wishing or attempting similar display, she calmly waived the subject until her children were returned from school, then drawing them towards her with eyes beaming with love and gratitude, said, "*These are my Jewels.*"

Jewels, you know, are beautiful and of great worth — becoming gifts to kings and princes, and chosen decorations of a crown. Even the King of kings receives them to ornament His glorious dwell-

ing place, and the Prince of Life will take them, and wear them in His diadem:—but not those sparkling formations gathered from the rock, or sand, or river's bed, which we admire and prize so much. In the sight of God there are gems of greater price, and when all else shall be destroyed, He will reveal, numbered among his jewels, those children whose humble and affectionate hearts have obeyed Him, and dutifully attended the parents He has given them.

To aid in strengthening upon your young minds impressions of this important duty, the writer has collected from memory, and placed in contrast, the incidents of the following pages, knowing that every lesson, however simple, which you treasure up and profit by, will be imparting another ray of beauty to "Jewels" which are to shine for ever and ever in the Paradise of God.

Prayerfully, your friend,

Saint John, N. B.

H. M. P.

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THE WIDOW'S JEWELS.

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## STORY I.—ROBERT M<sup>C</sup>COY.

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CHAPTER I.

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“Good morning, my little lad,” said Mrs. Selden one day to a young rosy cheeked boy, with curly hair, and full hazel eyes.

I. P.

“Good morning, ma’am,” said he, with a smile, at the same time removing his well-worn cap, and the thick, dark curls settled lightly about his temples, adorning them with beauty of which the little possessor was wholly unconscious.

“What is your name?” she asked.

“William,” he replied, “William McCoy.”

“How old are you, William?”

"Eight years old," said he, still smiling.

"Where do you live?" inquired Mrs. Selden, much interested by his manly voice and appearance.

"With my mother, just on the hill," answered he. "Surely you know the Irish woman who lives here in St. John? She attends meeting almost every Sabbath at the Methodist Chapel, and belongs to Mr. Welles' class. I and my brother belong to the Sabbath morning class."

"No, my dear, I have never heard of your mother. Is not your father living?"

"No, ma'am," said he, touching his bright lips, while a shade of seriousness passed across his noble brow; "No, ma'am, he died a long time ago, in Ireland, one gloomy Saturday night it was."

"Do you remember him, William?"

"Yes, a little; and I remember the night he died, it rained so hard, and the wind blew dreadfully. It was all dark. I remember, too, that he kissed me, and his breath felt cold upon my cheek. Aunt Dinah did not come; all night we were there alone, and I cried, for mother did. I did not know much

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about it then, but now I often wish I had a father."

"Perhaps your father is happy in heaven," said Mrs. Selden, consolingly, for she pitied the little one.

"Yes, he is, I know," added William. "Mother often says so, and when I wish I had a father, I think he *is* living there. But I mean I should like to see him sometimes, and hear him speak, and know that he does not forget us. Sister Jane and brother Robert can talk with mother all about him, how he looked and what he said; but I only mind a little of him now, and sister Nelly was not born till many weeks after he died."

Forgetting for a few moments the errand upon which William was sent to her, Mrs. Selden sat down, and drawing to her side a small rocking chair for him, bade him be seated; and while her arm rested along the top of it, continued their conversation; for the little stranger was every moment becoming more and more interesting to her, and she hoped she could do something for the relief of the family to which he belonged. His mother was poor, a widow, and they

were fatherless; these were claims strong enough to a heart which also trusted in Him, who, she remembered, in His holy habitation, has promised to be a husband to the widow, and the father of her lonely children.

"How long have you lived here?" asked Mrs. Selden.

"I do not know, ma'am," said he; "I think it is a long time; it may be as much as four years; because when father was dead, there was no one to bring us any more meal or fish, and mother could not get work enough to do, even to buy corn or potatoes for all of us, and then she came away here."

"And does she get work enough now, William?"

"No ma'am, not always," replied he; "this winter has been a hard one for us."

"How then does she support you now?" continued Mrs. Selden.

"Sometimes she does have some work to do, and sister Jane lives out to service, and brings her wages home each month; and that helps mother to pay the rent of our room; and sometimes this winter," added he, looking down, and turning round and round the

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little cap which he held in his hands, "Sometimes—O ma'am, what should we have done if the kind man had not given her something from the poor house!"

"I fear you must have suffered often from want of food and fuel, William."

"We have not suffered as much as poor old Mrs. Meloy has, who lives in the next room to us, and I do not think we shall. I cannot do much yet for mother, only while the men work in the ship-yards, which will be a little while longer; they let me go in and pick up chips for us; but brother Robert is now thirteen years old, and once in a while has some errands to do, for which he is paid money, and then he always brings every penny to mother. And this week he has begun to work on the roads; they will allow him to come three days in the week, and give him sixpence a day, for breaking stones."

As he said this, his countenance brightened again, exhibiting the hope of comfort which animated him, even from this small new source. But when all these little gains were summed together, O how small indeed were they, and how insufficient to pay rent, and

supply food, and fuel, and clothes, for four, during a long winter season.

As Mrs. Selden looked upon him sadly, and almost wept at the picture of the hardships which her fancy drew, as having been the lot of that lonely alien family; she remembered how often she had seen discontent and heard wicked murmurings among some little children who never knew want; but, while a kind father's care supplies all their needs, and a mother's gentle hand and voice is ready to soothe all their sorrows, even then they indulge in complaints and repinings, and words of sinful ingratitude not only have stained their lips, but have been heard by Him who notices where his blessings fall to bring back no return of praise, and in displeasure turns away his love from the sullen brow and thankless heart.

But William was not so. With cheerfulness he had counted up to Mrs. Selden their cherished dependencies for future comfort; but was it these poor hopes alone which sealed that calm smile upon the face of little William, and gave to his voice that constant note of happiness? O no, not these. Be-

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yond the scanty pleasures which he gathered here and there in his rough path of poverty, there was already in his young breast a deep and never failing source of joy. It is true the eye could not see its sparkling, and the ear of the bystander could not listen to its gentle flow, but all silently and sweetly it ever poured into his mind that calm content and holy hope which distinguished it as flowing only from that "well of water of which the Christian tastes, purifying the heart, and "springing up to everlasting life."

In his own home was its influence most deeply felt and blessed to his mother's joy. His brother Robert too shared in like precious faith, and cheerful was the little room in which they dwelt, with the eye of God looking down, and already numbering among his own those whom the desolate widow, in distress and affliction, thankfully reckoned as her "Jewels."

CHAPTER II.

THE eye of the reader of this little sketch may never have rested upon the scenery of one of the most eastern cities of the continent, St. John, and its vicinity. Lacking, as it does, the long and tasteful culture bestowed upon the soil with which we are more familiar, it might be to us, perhaps, in aspect, less lovely and beloved than the fair metropolis and smiling towns of our native New England; but the wildness and grandeur so strikingly marked upon the noble features of the landscape at once command the notice of the beholder, and make him feel as he approaches it, that in natural scenery, at least, it is not ground unworthy the favor of subjects of the British throne. Here, where but sixty years ago, the Indian and the deer ranged in the forests, and, in undisturbed solitude, overlooked the broad bay, now like a prosperous queen of its waters, sits this rapidly

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increasing city, a long line of rocky and majestic hills extending on either hand.

Here has been the scene of many an interesting and affecting incident, for the pen of history or romance to record; but leaving these, we shall turn to daily life, and from this place select a subject which, though it never attracted public notice, and is now humble in relation, may nevertheless not be unprofitable to the little public for whom it is penned.

St. John has been, for a time, the home of the writer of this, and near the spot where she lived is the lonely dwelling place of poor Mrs. McCoy. We call it lonely, though it stood in the midst of that busy city, and though in the house which they occupied, there were other families, like themselves, emigrants from the coast of Ireland; but it was lonely because it was the abode of the widow and fatherless, who, oppressed by affliction and poverty, felt indeed that they were "strangers to the world, unknown," and from their small upper room, saw not as the gay, the rich, may see and feel, the exciting animation which fills the breast, where business rattles in its noisy course, and

beauty, wealth and fashion walk abroad in bright display. And yet in that upper room, where were very few of the articles which comfort might require, there was an influence shed down from above, which can sweetly supply the place of other comforts, and even where most scantily is furnished "the bread which perisheth," can break in richest profusion to the hungry poor "the bread of life."

There was the table which "He who rules on high" so liberally spreads, and morning and evening did this little family encircle that spiritual board, seeking spiritual food; sometimes the tongue of the mother guided their united petitions, and sometimes in the childish tones and thoughts of little William or Robert, prayer arose to Him who "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has perfected praise."

Thus week after week went by, and cold mid-winter, with its storms, was on the land. From time to time, as Mrs. Selden saw them, and learned their circumstances, she found them happy with each other, and with the many blessings which they numbered up, uncomplaining mid wants, and rejoicing that while they were also preserved from the

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extremes of hunger and cold, they could look upward in love to meet a heavenly Father's love, saved in their poverty from suffering "as those who have no hope."



CHAPTER III.

How kind, how merciful is that arrangement of Providence which makes not happiness and usefulness dependent upon the possession of wealth, nor even withholds from the very young the capacity to contribute a share of influence to the stock of human enjoyment. Robert had commenced his day labors upon the highway, and during the few weeks in which he had been so privileged, he had felt himself to be a happier boy than ever before. His time was more constantly occupied, and he was conscious of newly awakened energy and dignity, from the important aid he was thus rendering to his mother.

A week was closing. Robert had been all day at the employment which gave him so much pleasure: for uninteresting in itself, as may be supposed, was the occupation of breaking large stones into small ones; and fatiguing as it became when sitting hour after hour upon the rough pile where he labored, he saw it only slowly accumulating, as stroke by stroke with his hammer he gradually diminished the large mass before him, yet no thought of discouragement at the very small compensation to be received, nor any feeling of weariness, could induce him to give up his post; but as if he were constantly learning the value of perseverance from the hard, unyielding texture of the stones themselves, he labored away, and made the long hours appear like short ones, by often remembering the affectionate smile of his mother when he had placed in her hand the three silver sixpences of a week's wages, and in imagining what would be her delight and his own, when he should present to her, in a form which his watchful filial affection suggested, an unexpected luxury, as the avails of his next payment; how it would cure her head-ache,

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cheer her spirits, and gain for him the oft repeated, "God bless you, my good Robert!"

Could the little boys, whose cheeks would probably have been bedewed with tears, if they had been compelled to endure what they might call the hardship of sitting thus at labor, in cold and poverty, have seen young Robert—his cheeks and ears tinted with ruddiest crimson from exposure to the wintry blasts—his eyes without a trace of tears, brightened by the emotions of gratitude and affection, while his steady-going hammer kept time with the tune he whistled—they could, overlooking his well patched jacket, almost have been induced for a while to exchange their warm firesides for his warm heart; and, leaving the little pleasures which money can purchase, they would certainly have felt and acknowledged that they are all small indeed compared with the pure pleasure of doing good.

It was Saturday evening. The hour for him with his fellow laborers to leave their tasks came with the shades of night, and Robert carefully putting up his hammer,

which constituted all his little stock in trade, turned from the scene of his toil with happiness. A Sabbath day of rest was before him on the morrow — and ere he should sleep, preparatory to entering upon it, he could bring to his beloved mother a new comfort. Lightly he turned his steps toward the paymaster, and receiving the money due to him, grasped the rich treasure in his hand, until it left upon his hardened palm the lineaments of the good young queen which it bore stamped. But the queen herself had never *such* a pleasure as he foretasted now, — perhaps none to be preferred to it.

“Holloa, Bob McCoy!” called a young rough voice to him from the opposite side of the street. So occupied was Robert’s mind with the one thought which had possessed it, that this sudden interruption of it made him start, and looking confusedly around, he distinguished in the faint twilight, the stout little form and tattered coat of Jim Doherty.

“And where are you going now so fast?” said James, “my soul, I thought the street itself was not long enough for ye then!”

"Home, as quick as I can, to mother," answered Robert, continuing on his way.

"Never so fast, Bob," shouted James again, eagerly, "I am older nor ye, and may be can tell ye a word worth knowing."

"No, no," said Robert, "I have a great deal to do to-night."

"O yes, an' don't I know it? ye're cat'-chism to be sure. Ah hah! ah hah! That's for being such a foolish tory that ye were to larn to read indeed! But faith! an ye *must* wait a bit," said he, looking at Robert, who heeded him not. Then using all speed, he soon overtook the composed boy, and holding out his hand, containing a few coppers, said softly, slyly nodding his head, "Just down by the yard yonder is a nice handy corner, where Patrick Mahoney and I have been turning coppers so neatly to-day—let yere mither go—an' come ye with the change the man gave ye but now—see who'll win—an' good luck to ye!"

"James Doherty!" exclaimed Robert—and he was about to add—"you are a wicked boy;" but checking himself, remembering that this would only make James angry, and

prevent his doing him any good — he said solemnly, “Who are you talking to! *I* let my good mother go, indeed! and I am her oldest son, and she is my best earthly friend! Let her go, James, and go with you, to spend so wickedly the money I have received — not I!”

“Yere mither’s oldest son, to be sure ye are,” said James, “an wiser than many an older one, as meself, ye think, but ye yet can larn of some a wee bit; an’ it’s I can tell ye; ’tis far aisier to throw a copper with a good lad, than to sit batin at stones all day.”

“Not easier for me,” said Robert dignifiedly. “And, James, do you know *who* sees you all the time, and knows your sin? You forget *that*, when you call it easy — no! it is *hard* work to sin!”

“An’ who says it is sin, ye sinner, jist to pitch a copper at a stick, an’ see it turn the very way ye said it would, an’ put it in yere pocket then so swately; as if that were not yere own, an’ staling ye were all the time — no, no! it is the same thing that’s done by gentlemen; an’ when I am ould enough I

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will learn how they turn the *cards* — faith! Come, we are jist foreanst the place.”

“ James, I told you I should not go! I am in a hurry to go home — and if I had the whole day and sunshine before me, I would not go with you. I tell you it *is sin*; — were those coppers each a golden ‘sovereign,’ and were a thousand more there shining by them, I would not take one of them so! It is sin — and *no gentleman* can make the matter any better.”

The wretched urchin turned around facing Robert, and dancing along backward directly in his path, raised aloft his hand containing the coppers, and shaking it ’till each rent in his dirty sleeve became visible, exclaimed —

“ Ha, ha! iv’ry man laugh that wins.”

“ Ah, ah! let every boy mourn that sins,” responded Robert.

And so their interview ended; for poor Doherty was one of those who “refuse instruction” — and always hastened to escape from it, where escape was possible. His parents were both unhappily of the same description, who, having lived long in disregard of sin, seldom feared or thought upon its pun-

ishment, and were rapidly preparing to leave to their numerous family of sons and daughters, the miserable inheritance of their own poverty, idleness and sin; with the sure prospect of its final, just recompense — even endless death. Much as these circumstances of their comfortless and discordant home recommended the children to the sympathy of those who condemn sin — although untaught, as they were, beneath that profane roof; yet from time to time a voice reached their hearts as they turned to commit evil; for God has not left himself without witness, even in such abodes, and in such hearts. Conscience, that sure evidence of His own existence, every where remains the faithful friend and teacher of the young, and although to these persons, blinded by ignorance and superstition, the Holy Word of God was as a sealed book, yet this moving principle within, ever gathered for them choice instructions from the light and truth, which in our favored lands are so widely scattered from its pages.

Conscience taught, then, of the sin of this species of gambling, and silently reprovèd within his own bosom, as well as by the words

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of Robert, James hastily sought to flee both the words and thoughts of remonstrance so annoying to him, and murmuring the angry curse he dared not pronounce, darted down the lane leading to the "wee handy corner" to which he had been inviting Robert, hoping to meet there with some more ready victim of his temptations and skill. For James had so thoroughly learned the art of cheating, and had so little regard for truth, that seldom did a copper make its appearance upon "pitching ground," where he was present, which he did not manage in some way to pass into his pocket; while few indeed of them ever escaped thence to appease the anger of those, who, vexed at the "luck" which "wicked Jim" kept in his own control, not only sacrificed their money and disobeyed the right, but received from him their first lessons in swearing.

But Robert had given to conscience, that friendly voice from God, a strong place in his heart, and therefore could not be easily betrayed into evil; for those who fear the Lord, are kept from falling into sin by His Power. Again, as he proceeded homeward, his thoughts returned to the pleasing subject

from which they had for a time been diverted, by pity for the vicious boy. And when he came to a grocer's store, brightly lighted, he bounded in, and laying upon the counter two of his sixpences, demanded their equivalent in *good tea*." As he received the small parcel from the tradesman's hands, a smile of delight overspread his features, and the involuntary words, "my dear, good mother!" dropped touchingly from his lips. It was worth a week of toil indeed!

Cheerfully then laying down the remaining sixpence, he purchased with it a few potatoes and three or four farthing candles.

With a proud heart and light step, he sprang up the stairs leading to the low room in which they lived; then setting by the potatoes and candles, he went softly up to his mother, and placing in her hand the new luxury, turned quickly to the window to conceal the tears which were starting to his eye.

"Robert! my good Robert!—God spare you to us!" ejaculated the poor woman; and laying her hand upon his head, with fervent kiss, and fervent faith, she silently asked for him the richest blessings which Heaven might condescend to give.

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CHAPTER IV.

HUMBLE and courteous in his manner towards all, Robert was rapidly gaining friends. Among the few who began to appreciate his unassuming worth, were some who were able to assist him in his efforts for a livelihood, by furnishing him occasional employment. But not from such individuals alone did he seem desirous of securing favor; the poor, and feeble, and aged, shared in the attentions which he could bestow, and among them, where least observed by others, were some of the brightest manifestations of his kindness. One, who was almost blind, he was in the habit of guarding to and from meeting, when other infirmities did not prevent her from attending; with another, who was old and much affected by a cancer in the head, he was accustomed frequently to sit, in his leisure moments, sometimes reading to her from the Word of God — and when one day

a little boy, who had been sent to her with some honey for her cough, exclaimed disdainfully to Robert, because of the long visit he had been making in her room, saying, "Pah! I was glad enough to get away as soon as I could, her head smells so bad—and looks so disagreeably with those thick bandages!" Robert only answered by saying that *he* could bear it very well, though it did seem bad, because he thought to himself— "What if she were *my mother*, and living alone so? I should want some one to be willing to sit by her then!"

For many, indeed, Robert was never unwilling to perform any service, and was frequently offering his aid; so that in the small circle with which he was connected, his very name was beloved, and his coming every where welcomed.

Some, who are not thoughtfully desirous of improving every opportunity to add to the happiness of mankind, may think these were but small matters, and regarding them as of little consequence, will be very likely to lose the pleasure of contributing their aid towards increasing the general stock of good,

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forgetting how much they really *might* do, and leaving to those only who can perform great deeds, which may attract the notice of hundreds, the delight of relieving, in some degree, the sorrows of the world. Such persons, would they reflect a moment, will be surprised to find how much the comfort of their lives has depended upon little kindnesses and momentary attentions, and how small a share of it has been caused by any *great* efforts of others in their behalf.

The earth in its lovely drapery of green, the trees which compose our vast forests — even that one which may stand loftiest, and highest wave its luxuriant branches — owe not their beauty and their grandeur more to the copious shower and favoring noontide sun, than to the softened morning beams and gently nursing dews of eve. Then let the youngest heart which may have learned to estimate a comfort, begin to cherish there that true benevolence which will lead it to seek, in small events, to bless the world. Afterward, “because they have been faithful in little,” the commission to do those great things which they desire may be given them.

Good little Andrew did not laugh at Robert, when one night meeting him in the street with his arms full of shavings, he asked, "Where are going, Robert?" "To make a clean bed for old Mrs. Morey's pig," said Robert.

"You are always kind to every one, Robert, and so I suppose every one thinks you have nothing else to do."

"No," said Robert, "she did not ask me to do this for him, but you know she has no little boys to wait upon her, and I thought poor piggy must be cold there alone, in his wet, dirty nest; so as I was coming by Mr. Williams' work shop, I begged these shavings for him. I believe I shall sleep the better to-night myself, to know that I have made even a poor little pig more comfortable than he would have been but for me."

Meantime William was emulating his elder brother in goodness, and so far as his younger age and tender frame would permit, was very ambitious to follow his example and perform labors of usefulness. Sometimes he was entrusted with the charge of an errand, when Robert was otherwise engaged, and the speed and accuracy with which he suc-

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ceeded in performing it, often gained him the surprise and reward of the individual who had employed him.

Then too, he had been able by manly effort to keep their hearth stone warm during the cold winter days, thus far, by his diligence in bringing home the chips which the laborers in the ship-yards allowed him to gather up from around them; and when these failed, he would go to the distant forests, often mid storms, and bind up the knots and dry branches which the fierce winds had broken from the trees and strewed upon the ground; and daily did he divide these necessary but humble supplies with the poor widow, Mrs. Meloy, living in the next room to them, who, aged and almost blind, had neither son nor daughter to cheer her loneliness, nor penny of her own in store to relieve her wants; but dependent upon the very scanty provisions afforded as her share from the parish, was almost unknown to charity, and was waiting only for the change which would remove her from her infirmities and poverty to the weary pilgrim's home — the grave.

The little boys were both happy in doing all in their power for her comfort; nor were their sincere endeavors unavailing. Robert was always ready, when at home, to serve her in some way, and William, in addition to the chips, shavings and branches, with which he contributed with some success to warm her trembling limbs, was not less useful to her.

At the foot of a high, rugged hill, a short distance from them, a small spring of water issued from the bank, and falling over the projecting point of a ledge of rocks, supplied many poor emigrants with almost the only article of use to be obtained without money or price. From this little fountain William brought water for their daily use, until now, in the severity of the cold, the small stream was so choked by the ice, that it was long ere a bucket could be filled from it, and the stones and surrounding embankment were so covered by its thick incrustations, that as his shoes were worn out, he could no longer stand and wait as formerly for the slowly dripping liquid; this attention to his mother and Mrs. Meloy had therefore passed into the care of the more hardy Robert.

One evening, hastening home from his employment, and quickly performing the customary little services for each, he stood leaning against the low window, looking down upon the many houses about them. He was planning for future years; his thoughts roved wildly, and hope promised fairly, as he summed up a long list of time, and labor, and knowledge, and pleasures which he was fancying would be his portion. He would be willing, he thought, to labor hard, to deny himself—and he would do so; then, having acquired the knowledge and resources which he imagined would satisfy his wishes, he went on to paint in mind the snug home he would like to have for his mother's comfort—he seemed to see her occupying the principal seat within it—a little older it is true than now, but softly touched by the hand of age, so that she could still retain her health and capacity to enjoy the pleasures he would so delight to pour at her feet after her long series of hardships and toils. O, this was the brightest part of the picture, and long did he dwell upon it, changing and improving his fancied

arrangements as he thought would best please her, with all the interest of reality. Then his little sister Nelly should know no want of aught he could procure to gratify her. William should be sent to school, and be supplied with means to support himself, and all their now poor and anxious circle should be happy — when he should be a man! O, how should he then gladden the hearts of the poor whom he knew, and how generously would he remember to reward any little destitute boy whom he might send on errands for him, when he himself would be the gentleman.

So busy was he with his boyish schemes as to forget his fatigue and the darkness of the hour, all in the bright days of coming years. Suddenly a town clock reminded him that the time was approaching in which old Mrs. Meloy was to go out to her evening meeting; he left the fair dreams of future prosperity and usefulness which he was picturing, and presented himself as usual at her door to accompany her, still exhilarated by the effect of his imagination.

The old lady, sitting on a low stool by the

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fire, was just putting on a clean cap. As Robert opened the door, his little sister Nelly sprang from her posture by the shoulder of the poor woman, upon which she had been leaning during the story she had been listening to from her lips, and clapping her hands with joy as a pleasant thought seemed at once to suggest itself to her mind, she said, "O Robert, Robert, come in; I want to tell you something. O, I wish it were not so dark now, then you could see; but only think, grandma' Meloy's hair is turning black! I wish you could see it; there's one black hair and then another, and another, and close by it two or three together, all turned as black! Sha'nt you be glad when they are all alike? then I guess she will be young again, and stand straighter and walk faster than she does now; and I suppose she will see again; she will not wish, Robert, to have you come to go to meeting with her then."

"No, no," said the poor woman, shaking her head, "I shall never be young again. Once, many, many long years ago, my hair was dark and smooth, like your own bright

locks; my eyes were as blue and quick to see, my cheek as soft and round, and I could stand as straight and run as fast as your little self, Nelly; but O, those years have gone: they came and went so swiftly that I scarce could tell how they passed; but by and by, here and there a white hair came, and wrinkle followed wrinkle on my cheek, and from my eye the clear blue faded, my sight grew dim, my ear grew dull of hearing, my steps were slow and slower still, till my feet trembled as I put them to the ground, and my shoulders bowed down beneath the weight of almost eighty years.

“Now lay your hand just here, Nelly, upon your heart; you feel it beating full and fast—that is your life. You cannot make it still, nor could you wake it into motion if it once should cease to throb. ’Twas God who gave it first that motion, and ’tis he who keeps it active still. Perhaps for eighty years to come he will watch around it every little moment, that it may not cease, or he *may* bid it *soon* to beat no more. But should he condescend to guard you thus so many years, then you will be as I am now, and

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need some happy little child for your lonely hours, or some kind hand like Robert's to lead you to the place of prayer."

"O grandma!" she exclaimed, "and then shall we live on, and be always so old and lonesome and sick?"

"Not always, Nelly; feel here, my heart beats slower and more feebly than yours and Robert's. It will not beat much longer, for its strength is almost gone, and before many months are passed, probably it can move no more; then when it has moved for the last time, this breath will cease, these dull eyes will close, this face, these limbs will stiffen and be laid away in the grave, to moulder, and blacken, and crumble into dust; but still, Nelly, I shall live; God will then have called my spirit to himself. There, in that other world, I shall not need this heart to beat, or these limbs to move — like the angels I shall live.

"But there will be a day of glory and of terror, such as has never been—for God will come. Man shall look upward to the opening skies and behold him there in awful brightness, surrounded by a thousand times

ten thousand of his angels. The sun and stars shall fade away before him; the mountains and the seas shall tremble at his presence; and when he shall utter his voice, it shall shake terribly the earth and all the dead shall hear it. Then rising from their long slumbers, these bodies, once decayed and mingling undistinguished with the dust, shall put on life immortal at his command. None can disobey him then, or flee the glances of his eye, or tarry in the grave. *You* will be there, *I* shall be there, to occupy again these bodies, not blackened and mouldering, as when the worms fed upon them in their dark abode, not old, and weary, and sick, as when the spirit left them, but sown in corruption, they shall be raised in incorruption, never to grow sick, and weary, and old again; but if buried in faith, new rising, they shall meet the Savior's smile, and in the twinkling of an eye be changed; beautiful and happy for ever shall they be, like his own most glorious body.

“Because of sin once, God condemned all mankind to die in punishment; but because Christ redeemed us by his death, the bodies

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of those who forsake sin, believing in Him, shall be restored to life everlasting. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life."

Robert turned away with a sigh and a smile. With a sigh—for the solemn thoughts upon that certain and awful future, had dissipated the frail vision of the brief and uncertain future which he had been so busy in portraying to himself; but a smile may well follow such a sigh, when the heart can feel itself secure in pardoned sin from the fear and destruction which is to overtake those who have not "fled for refuge" to the blood of Christ.



CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER Friday night came around, and scarce a week had passed away, since, exhilarated with joy and health, Robert had almost

flown up the stairs to meet the blessing and prayer of his pious mother. That prayer was soon to be answered by Him who knows "what best for each will prove," and who will surely recompense the blessing of the parent upon the head of the child.

It was late in the afternoon as he turned his steps homeward from his labor. The dark purple clouds lay threateningly and low along the horizon, and the wintry night winds swept coldly through the streets and lanes of the city. As the darkness increased, the chill blasts became more and more penetrating, and as they hurried one after the other, bore along upon their course clouds of the light snow which had fallen during the day.

The traveller, who here and there was facing the rough wind, felt its force, and shiveringly gathered his thick clothes more closely about him.

Trembling more than he was wont to do before the cold, and with no extra garment to protect him, Robert could only grasp his little jacket tightly to him with one hand, while quickening his pace, he pressed the other to his aching head. Flushed and fatigued, it

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was with difficulty he could ascend the long flights of stairs leading to their abode; and when he had performed the tasks which devolved upon him at night, for his mother and Mrs. Meloy, he sunk down upon his little couch, feverish and restless, begging his mother to pray that the pain in his head might abate. All night scarcely could he refrain from disturbing the family with his groans; and when the morning light appeared, his waking eye hailed its coming, but it brought no relief to that deep-seated pain. Unable to rise during all the day, the long hours, as they passed, seemed but to add to it in their wearisome flight. Towards evening his anxious mother, alarmed much by his increased sufferings, and fearing the result, though not expecting immediate danger to his life, sent away little William for a physician. But it was too late. A fatal disease was upon the brain, so speedy in its distressing effects, that medicine could not check its power. God was calling him home, and with a heart almost breaking, his mother bowed above him, and watched the symptoms of approaching death.

He only who formed that heart — who had once before visited it in “disguised love,” leaving it widowed and bereft, could now measure its deep sorrow, as the dreadful blow was about to fall upon it, again to remove the earthly hope on which she leaned. But He who layeth waste can best restore. While He marks the degree of affliction needed, and measures the sorrow of His suffering ones, His own unerring skill knows how to mete out consoling grace for the bitter moment of trial here, and also, how rich treasures to reserve for the mourning, in the bright world where the cause of every grief shall be known, and every sigh and tear receive its just recompense of reward.

“So comforted, and so sustained,” Mrs. McCoy watched him as the short breath grew shorter still; and catching the last smile from his lips, as his spirit was departing, closed his eyes just as the light of the holy Sabbath morn was beaming upon the earth.

CHAPTER VI.

One of the mildest days which winter had brought during all its reign, was the Monday which followed this Sabbath. The very winds seemed hushed and soft as spring time, as if unwilling to add to the widow's gloom by one mournful note. The sun looked into the low window of their little room, with warm and cheerful light—it was shining for the last time upon the still form there which was so recently rejoicing in its brightness.

It was the burial day of little Robert. But calm as was the air, and bright the sunlight, they could not cheer into one moment's forgetfulness, the hearts of those sincere mourners for the dead.

Desolate indeed is the dwelling of the wealthy, where sorrow and death are visiting; and a loneliness is there, which not the presence and sympathy of many friends, nor all the pomp of riches can relieve;—bu

when in the abode of deep poverty the shadow of death falls, *there* is gloom which nought but the light of God's smile can penetrate; when from thence the promising hope and future support are removed, *there* is a weight of sorrow which presses the spirits down.

When the hour appointed for the ceremony arrived, a few individuals, some of them strangers to the afflicted mother, who had yet known young Robert, and appreciated his worth, assembled in the small attic room once his home, but so low it was that scarcely could they stand erect. The decent black coffin in which he was now laid, attired for the grave, stood all uncovered upon two chairs in the centre of the floor. The mother in silent grief sat by the head of the departed boy, with one arm encircling the pillow on which it rested, as if in sleep; and gazing steadily upon the dear remains with fondness which could scarce relinquish them in these last short moments of possession. Little William with calm brow stood by her side, looking within the coffin. The elder sister, Jane, had come in from her place of service, and sat near them, weeping aloud. Little

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Nelly, Robert's pet, though very young, appeared as true a mourner; and seated upon a block close to the head of the coffin, with eyes red and swollen by tears, often sobbed and murmured something about *her* Robert.

Old Mrs. Meloy was there, and a few other tenants of the house had come in to share in the sorrowful exercises. As the kind hearted minister glanced upon the group before him, his heart melted with sympathy; the deep feelings of his breast were traceable by the flush upon his temples, and the moisture in his eyes; and looking upon the young boy whom he had once so highly esteemed, he interrupted the silence of the apartment by touchingly uttering the words,

"He rests in Jesus, and is blest,
How sweet his slumbers are!"

The tears of all followed, and the room was again silent, until standing by the foot of the open coffin, he commenced the services of the occasion with reading an appropriate hymn. Faintly the song ascended from that sad company, and readily did they bow in prayer, even those most unaccustomed to kneel before, as the minister in solemn,

heartfelt expressions presented their petitions to the Throne of mercy.

When the prayer was concluded, the gloomy moment came to seal up in its long sleep the lifeless body. O, the unutterable bitterness of that moment to the stricken heart! As two men approached with the coffin lid and screws to perform that duty, they again stood back while the mother, throwing her arm over the cold bosom of her son, wrapped him once more in the last embrace of yearning love; and laying her face by the side of that head she had so often cherished upon her own breast, sobbingly bathed the still hair with tears. William wept aloud; and each of that little family, taking their last kiss, yielded themselves up to tears afresh.

Violent had been the mother's struggle with grief, but it passed — calmly she saw them securing the lid which for ever hid him from her sight; and as they bore him through the narrow passage to the stairs, her eyes followed them, and pressing her hands together upon her knee, while her lips grew very pale, she slightly moved her person back-

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ward and forward, and still gazing through the now vacant door-way, her heart uttered its agony in low, simple ejaculations — “Gone! gone! — Robert — *my* Robert! my *good* son Robert!”

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A few months only have gone by since that worthily beloved boy has slept the sleep of death. Grief and poverty are still pressing upon the little family who remain; but in daily intercourse with God, they find that His love and care, for which they covenanted in giving their hearts to Him, are now their strong hope.

“Earth has *no* sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.”

In prayer and faith they know, as all shall know who seek, that God, even the mighty God, spreads his tabernacle of mercy above their heads; and asking refuge there, they are able to rejoice, though sorrowful; to trust unfearefully that His providence will supply them, when unable to tell where they shall get their daily bread. Doubts will not live within their hearts, for they know that God does not forget nor forsake those who put

their trust in Him; and they lean upon that Gracious One who has assured his trembling children, that when every earthly comfort is apparently failing, He will not fail them. It is His word; and though "the grass withereth—the flower fadeth—the word of our God shall stand for ever."

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STORY II.—DENNIS BROOKS.



CHAPTER I.

THERE is among the northern hills and valleys of New England a small village, so retired from the more busy part of the world, containing so few inhabitants, and offering so little show or noise to interest a stranger, that one would scarcely wish to pause upon his journey long enough for a glance upon its scenery, unless its very simplicity and quiet should attract his notice. It is an old town, and within the memory of its citizens scarcely a change has occurred in its appearance worthy of record. The road runs straight along by the green hill side, and between the meadows, just where it did perhaps seventy or eighty years ago, when the

first of these little brown farm houses was built by its margin.

The same small church in which the earliest residents of the village assembled to worship from Sabbath to Sabbath, still stands upon "the green," its square pews and sloping galleries occupied by the children and grand-children who have gradually passed into the places of those former members now gathered to the upper glorious sanctuary in the skies. Then the rocks, and groves, and streams, and trees, how little have they changed, while childhood and manhood have changed so much! There too is the very school house beneath whose roof they have each, in turn, spent hours of childish pleasures and trials. That little red school house, I seem to see it now, upon the very edge of the lonely road it stands, with but a grassy bank between. An old stone wall, gray with moss and time, leads away from each side of the building, though here and there nearly levelled to the ground by the generations of children who have quickly scrambled over it during the short recess of school hours, in their haste to secure a few

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moments of precious delight in the bright woodland standing so freshly and quietly close behind it.

O how dear to the children was that small woodland; in sunshine and in storm it always had a pleasant aspect. There in cool and balmly solitude grew the blackberries and checkerberries, furnishing to the young seekers so palatable and seasonable a supply, that no abundance of luxuries could ever afterward equal in enjoyment that scanty but welcome treat. There too the wild birds poured on the still air their sweetest songs, while the tall, thick trees echoed round the liquid notes; and there, low in the deep shade, a little streamlet wound its clear, dark waters along, gurgling softly among the mossy roots and branches in its way, or flowing more broadly and thinly on over its pebbly bed. Nor useless was its scarcely observed existence there; for well it paid its little passage on, by the brighter tints it sent up to the high tree tops near it, and by the richer fragrance and fairer hues it gave to the flowery bank. Moreover, it was a kind friend to the thirsty children, when,

loosed a few moments from the warm school room, they hastened to its border, and supplied themselves with the temperance blessing; making drinking cups of the large glossy leaves which leant over it, or eagerly stooping until their lips met the cool surface.

I must hasten on to the story; yet I love to let my thoughts visit that place again, and bring up their faithful picture of it, though so many years have passed since last I gazed upon the remembered scene.

Across the little stony road, opposite to the school house, there were here and there many bold gray rocks rising from the grass, on which the children used to sit in groups, relating stories and rehearsing plans, to which the very sheep and cows that were feeding together in the pasture beyond seemed pleased to listen. Daily would they come up to the straggling fence which separated them from the chatting company, and slowly chewing their food, as they stood under the shade of the close beech trees, look considerably upon them in their merry mood, as if in their sober years they yet loved to hear those voices of careless human happiness,

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and, gratified, turn their heads to gaze approvingly after the less dignified lambs that leaped and gambolled off when loud shouts of laughter rang among the trees.

This road-side resort was, above all, a favorite meeting place with the boys of that village school, and often did they assemble here at the end of its confinement, to complete the council so unformally interrupted at recess, by the signal rap upon the window, summoning them again to their strait-backed seats.

I wish that I could now look back, and trace the history of the lads once met together in that small school. As time has rolled on, they have left those infantile councils, and have taken their places in the busy scenes of active life, to struggle through the trials and duties of its appointed season, and then go to receive the reward according to their deeds. Some of the number have doubtless gone to the grave in childhood, having sooner finished their errand into the world. In the hearts of those who loved them, there is some record of the course of each, and in the journal of the skies there is

of all a strict account. Of many of them I could almost determine what has so far been their character in life, from the words and acts of their boyhood. So much we can learn of what this character will be from those daily incidents in which they take a part, indulging or overcoming those dispositions and habits which will render them useful or otherwise.

CHAPTER II.

Of this little circle of village boys, Dennis Brooks was, I think, the most beautiful in person, and interesting in manner. If you had seen him as he used to come into school, with his bright black eyes glancing smilingly around, his dark hair smoothly brushed to one side, his fair round cheeks and full white throat, from which his neat shirt collar turned back, leaving it open to view, you would have thought him as handsome a lad as ever

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pleased a mother's eye — then he was so kind and gentle to all, none could be more beloved throughout the town. Every body knew him as the favorite playmate, the bright persevering scholar, and affectionate son.

Thus well prepared, so far as such circumstances could avail, to win his way pleasantly through life, and in situation raised much above the fear of poverty, he was nevertheless in danger from other sources, of failing in the success which these advantages seemed to promise. Generous and warm hearted in his feelings towards others, he was careless in matters concerning himself, fond of new, adventurous exploits, and quite thoughtless of any consequences which might result from his actions. If the boys of less courage wished to launch a boat upon the pond, but were suspicious of its unsteady motions or open cracks, Dennis, fearing no evil, was always ready to take an oar, and lead the way far out upon the water. If a tree was to be climbed, he was always on the alert, and soon to be seen upon the highest branch, or out upon the farthest limb, perhaps then dry and decayed, ready to break beneath his weight.

Deprived of his father at an early age, he had grown, up to the present time, an object of great anxiety to his mother, and carefully restrained by his elder, more cautious brother. Mrs. Brooks had but these two children, and while she leaned with happy confidence upon the goodness and discretion of Frederic, the very anxiety she endured for Dennis, but bound him more closely to the affections of her heart. And well he loved his mother too; her voice could check him when most bent upon his favorite course, or reproof from her cause him at once to abandon his most desired pursuit.

His mother felt and rejoiced in the influence of her love upon him, and relied much upon its aid to keep him in the path of peace and rectitude — but she knew there must be a stronger bond than this to preserve him safely amid the temptations of a world of sin. Like some fair plant growing by her side, he was lovely in character, but in after years, exposed to these many temptations, he might lose that early charm of innocence, as the delicate leaves and flowers of the frail plant fade and perish by the chill frosts of winter.

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But one remedy could save him; and morn and evening did the voice of Mrs. Brooks ascend to God in prayer, that He would keep Dennis from the evil that is in the world. O, she thought, could she but see him giving his young heart in perpetual covenant to Him, her anxiety would cease—knowing that though hereafter his feet might be wandering far from her side, or her restraining voice become silent in death, he would yet be safe, shielded by love which would guard him amidst dangers, and save him from the ways of sin.

CHAPTER III.

FREDERIC, the sedate and prudent Frederic, who had attained the age of fifteen years beneath his mother's roof—her friend and wise counsellor as well as dutiful son, having made choice of the house-carpenter's trade for his future employment in life, was removed

a few miles from his home, and placed under the care of a pious, industrious mechanic in a neighboring village. But distant from the presence of his mother, the words of her affectionate advice were still in his memory, and her constant prayers uttered in secret to the ear of her Heavenly Father, were not to remain unanswered.

A few weeks after he had left them, Mrs. Brooks received from him a letter, containing words of the most cheering intelligence.

At the close of the day she was sitting in the little piazza before their cottage door, holding in her hand the valuable letter; again and again she had read it, and now, as her thoughts were calmly dwelling upon its contents, her face was so illumined by the pleasure they imparted, that the rich light beaming upon it from the setting sun, could scarcely add to its brightness.

She looked around her upon the unhewn pillars of the piazza, and upward to the slight roof they supported, all of Frederic's own construction for her comfort; then, as her hopes arose in dependence upon his future success, she looked abroad upon the beauti-

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ful scenery surrounding her abode—the meadows, hills and woodlands formed by the Hand Divine — and fonder, holier hopes arose within her breast; God was there — to Him she could now with renewed confidence offer up the son He had given her, for that son had become a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

Dennis was at a little distance, employed among the flowers and shrubbery of their garden, which he loved so well to dress and keep. Mrs. Brooks beckoned to him, and he came and took his seat upon the bench by her side.

“I have received a letter from Frederic, which gives me so much delight that I want you to enjoy it with me,” said Mrs. Brooks.

“A letter, O good, good!” exclaimed Dennis, jumping up and clapping his hands. “Now for it! I have been so lonesome that I am glad of even a letter — it will seem almost to bring the dear fellow back again. I wonder if he says any thing about the little mill-wheel down in the brook? Don’t you think, mother, Jack Robinson and I can’t make the great one turn the two little ones

yet; Frederic said he would tell me in his letter how to manage them, after he had found out more about wheels in Mr. Carter's shop."

"Well, he does not mention them now, Dennis, he had not time to write a long letter, and his mind is so much occupied with a very important subject, that I suppose he forgot it this time."

"And what in the world can that be, I wonder," said Dennis, drawing nearer to his mother, with a countenance expressing both curiosity and disappointment.

"You would hardly suppose what it is, I imagine," said Mrs. Brooks; and she paused a few moments ere she proceeded. Dennis would gladly have interrupted her with a multitude of impatient questions, but there was in her manner a certain calmness and apparent depth of thought which awed him, though he understood not its cause, and without raising his eyes to hers, sat whipping his little willow stick around the corner post of the piazza.

"Since Frederic left us," said Mrs. Brooks, "he has become acquainted with a

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friend of ours, whom you do not know, Dennis, who has very kindly adopted him into his family, and not only gives him all he needs *now* from day to day, but has willed to him beside a large fortune! ”

“ Why, Mother! ” exclaimed Dennis, starting from the seat with astonishment — “ You don’t *mean* so, Mother! a fortune did you say? a large fortune! is it true? ” and he reached his hand to take the letter — “ a *fortune!* what in the name of goodness will he do with it? *Who* gave it to him, did you say? ”

“ Be quiet, Dennis, sit down again and let me see you calm. ”

“ But I am in such a hurry, Mother — I wonder — what — who gave it to him? — who is that *friend?* I can’t think of *any* body who has *fortunes* to give away; ” and again he jumped upon his feet, and rattled the little green stick swiftly round the knotted pillar.

“ I wish to see you calm, Dennis, ” said his mother, and she softly stroked his cheek with her hand.

“ But *isn’t* it *prime*, Mother? ” said he, taking a long breath, and again seating himself — “ I wonder what he intends to do with

all his money. Do you think he will come home to us soon?"

"No, he will not come home at present," said Mrs. Brooks, seriously; "and the '*fortune*,' as I called it, Dennis, which has been promised him, is not money; *that* you know he might lose in a short time, were it ever so much; but it is some thing far better than money — it will last him as long as he shall live, and be always increasing, too. The friend who gave it loved him too well to give him *only money*."

"Dear me, how strange!" said Dennis, musingly — "and is he to go and stay in that family? Who did you say the gentleman is?"

"He who has done so much for Frederic, Dennis, is the oldest and best friend of our family; when I tell you his name you will remember that I have spoken to you of him sometimes. Although I have never seen him, yet I have long known him by his kind gifts to us. I love to think of him."

"So shall I, I am sure;" said Dennis, eagerly; "but will he never come to see us? or is he so rich and noble that he would not like to visit us in our cottage?"

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“He is noble indeed, Dennis, and so rich that he gives to all liberally, and though he would not disdain to visit us in our humble home, yet we shall never *see him here* — sometime I hope you and I shall go to him.”

“But how about Frederic? do tell me that.”

“Frederic has long known that this friend wished to make him as his child, for he has sent him repeated invitations, accompanied always with the same valuable promises; but Frederic was thinking about the school, and about his little garden, and then he wanted time for his plays, and all together, he never was *quite ready* to attend to *him*.”

“Never ready! will he not have larger gardens, richer and better friends now! I guess I should have been ready in a moment if he had sent for me.”

“Yes; he is to have ‘a hundred fold more,’ even now, of land and friends, besides that beautiful inheritance hereafter.”

“But do tell me, mother, *who* is this friend? I suppose he lives very splendidly himself.”

“Yes; your eye never gazed upon a place

of so much beauty as is his abode, your ear never heard of riches so vast as he possesses, and in your heart you never conceived of any thing so delightful and so desirable as his favor. Frederic, I know, had thought much about it, yet he says in his letter, that little as he yet knows of this friend, the half was never told him."

"Dear me, how strange it *does* seem!" again exclaimed Dennis; "I dare say he wishes now he had not staid away so long."

"That he does, Dennis. After leaving us here he was very lonesome at first, and almost felt as if none cared for him, when he received another invitation from his kind Benefactor. He had sent so many to him before, and Frederic had treated them all so carelessly, that he feared justly, if he should not attend to this one, our good friend would never favor him with another, deciding in wrath, that he should never enter his happy dwelling place. Accordingly, covered with shame for his past neglect, and trembling with fear lest he should meet the reproof he so much deserved, or at least be but coldly received, he presented himself before our

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friend, offering to devote his life to him, would he but receive him graciously; and O, Dennis! this kind One met him not in anger or coldness, but with a smile of love, he cheered him, calling him 'Son,' and bidding him welcome to every thing he can desire from day to day; promising, should he continue seeking to please him, after a short time, to bring him into possession of that delightful place He is preparing for him—nor for him alone."

"O, Mother," said Dennis, while a flush of emotion covered his cheeks, "I *wish I* could go; does Frederic say *nothing* about *that*?"

"Yes, my dear," said Mrs. Brooks, laying her hand impressively upon his head, and looking steadily into his full bright eyes—"Frederic *did* say he wished you too would join him; he has asked this friend to receive you, and is delighted to know that He wishes to do so. Next Sabbath he is to be formally adopted into his family, and will be called by His name."

"You have not yet told me what that name is."

"Frederic will be called a *Christian* now, Dennis; Jesus Christ is, you know, one of

the names of our '*Best Friend.*' He it is who has been all our lives long doing us good: who, though surpassingly rich and glorious, yet will condescend *spiritually* to visit *us* in our little cottage, owning us as children of His family — the family of angels and saints, prophets and martyrs — promising us happiness now, and when this life shall end, He it is who has promised to receive us, if prepared, into His own glorious kingdom. *There* are those rich estates, those choice friends, those glad scenes which pass not away — spiritual — holy — eternal.

“Now, Dennis, think — a moment think. Remember what I have said, and tell me — will you continue to refuse the many invitations which God is sending you to inherit these. Think whether you can in any other way gain as much happiness, even in this world. Just now you would, as you said, have been ‘ready in a moment’ to accept an earthly fortune, could such be offered you — how much rather than be ready to receive this incomparably more valuable portion, though you may have to deny yourself of some small things sinful in themselves.

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Then you will have all these delightful hopes secured to you, and as you grow up in life, or may be called suddenly to death, you will enjoy the protection and blessing of One, who, above all others, 'best deserves the name of Friend.'"

Dennis' head drooped upon his bosom — he wept, but answered not; and as soon as possible, taking a moment of silence to steal away from his mother's side, sought, in the sports of the following hour, to drive from his mind thoughts of God and of his duty towards him. Day after day he neglected to yield his heart to Him; a year came thus around, and then another, and another came and went, and he was still not 'ready' to choose the better part which Frederic was enjoying. Heedless of the preciousness of the invitations of the Holy Spirit, he continued to slight them, until they were becoming few and far between; and he, daily wandering farther from the flowery paths of Christian joy, was, in after life, abroad, alone in the world, without the restraining voice of a mother's cautions, and without the love of God.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER a very cold day in the winter of 1835, the winds were risen violently, and the snow was drifted along by them with swift-ness and force which added keenness to the freezing air, and increased gloom to that chill evening. Twilight deepened into darkest night; a stage coach drew wearily up before the door of one of the hotels in the city of B——, and an aged woman alighted alone, so benumbed with cold, fatigue, and infirmity, that it was with much difficulty she could follow the quick steps of the servant-man, through the hall into an apartment assigned to strangers. The room was brilliantly lighted, and cheerily warm, but several were there, ladies and children, and without laying aside her cloak and hood, as she seated herself in a remote corner of the room, she would gladly have shrunk from the bright light which discovered to her at once the in-

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quiring glance of the travellers, now associated with her for a short time. Their busy conversation was however scarcely interrupted by her entrance, and the old lady in her seat, removed from their cheerful circle, turned her face toward the window, and was so occupied with the train of her own reflections as to be totally unobservant of the words and smiles of those around her.

The many stores of that usually busy street were now closed for the night, and the darkness was but faintly penetrated by the lamps which, here and there stationed along the sidewalks, now glimmered through the storm. All within that stranger's room was forgotten by her; all without was indeed gloomy, but it was like the state of her own mind, darkened by sorrow, agitated by stormy fears, yet with some rays of hope to cheer a little the cold scene. O! who knows the wearying anxiety, the bitter disappointment which presses upon a mother's heart when the child of her early love and early care, of her fondest and long hoping prayer, is apparently regardless of every admonition, pursuing his own way steadily on to evil! Such a son had Dennis

Brooks now become, and such was the sorrow of that old lady, his mother, as she sat, without a friend, in one of the public rooms of that city inn.

No wonder that her heart was bleeding, as looking out upon the solitary street, she was calling up before her mind the image of that still beloved son, as he used to look when standing, an affectionate and happy boy, by her side. She remembered how she had talked to him of God, and warned him to seek his favor, that he might be kept from sin; and she remembered how he would turn his head away, though tears were in his eyes, and in a few minutes seem to forget all she had said to him; and she remembered how anxious then she felt, lest, if he lived to be a man, his life would be like those who have no fear of God; and then she remembered, too—and there was comfort in the thought, sweet as words dropped from some angel's sympathetic lips—she remembered the earnestness of the prayers which she had ever daily offered before the throne, that the Spirit of God might not depart from him, even though he should forget the dear home

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of his boyhood, the mother who watched him there, and the God whose hand, unseen, supplied every want,—that still he might not be forgotten of God — that not *then*, nor till the end, might the ever blessed Spirit depart from him. Ay, she *rested* by this remembrance. Like a light shining amid a dark place, it still imparted hope, for she knew that God *does* hear a mother's prayer, and silently now she added yet another petition, that He would strengthen her faith, soothe her sorrow, and if it might please Him, restore to her eyes and home that wayward son whom she was now seeking.

While these thoughts were passing through her mind, tears had frequently traced their way downward from wrinkle to wrinkle o'er her cheeks, and with a handkerchief already moistened at the same source, she noiselessly wiped them away. The company whose voices were mingling together in merry conversation around the cheerful fire, gradually became silent, as their hearts were touched by the sorrow of the old lady, and feeling that words offered from their mixed circle to her, would be but

obtruding upon her grief, soon one by one withdrew to rest.

A lady who had felt deeply for her unknown companion, and who had tenderly offered her the comfortable seat she was herself occupying, now tarried behind the others, resolved if possible to relieve her sadness ere she should sleep. When all were gone, she went kindly up to Mrs. Brooks, and taking her hand with the affectionateness of a daughter, again begged her to accept the soft rocking-chair she had placed for her in a shaded corner by the fire. The old lady yielded; this point gained, her young friend volunteered to procure for her a dish of tea, or bowl of gruel, seeing that in the grief of her heart she had declined supper. Won by the unexpected kindness, Mrs. Brooks consented that some gruel should be prepared for her. After partaking more freely of it than an hour before she would have thought it possible to do, her heart seemed cheered, and the young lady, already more interested by the efforts she had made for her comfort, now drew her chair closer, and with conversation, though on indifferent subjects, yet

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pleasing, through the goodness of her motive, soon led her into more social mood, till, with that comfortable freedom which the bestowment of kindness and sympathy ever creates, Mrs. Brooks soon gave her new friend a general relation of circumstances in her history, reserving until the last the causes of the grief now weighing upon her, and which had caused her to leave the quiet of her retired home, and expose herself to the fatigues of so long a journey at that inclement season.

“I suppose you have perhaps thought it strange,” began the old lady, with all the frankness of long acquaintance, “that I should allow myself in so much manifestation of my troubles before strangers, as you and others must have observed to-night. Once I should have thought so, too, and should have concealed my tears more successfully; but I am old now, and old age cannot always bear up under the touch of sorrow as cheerful, hoping youth can do. A widow of seventy winters must be pardoned for tears which *will* sometimes flow in their long accustomed track. I do not mean that I have had more trouble than the most of folk; no, I

think I have had less, far less, certainly, than many who have made better returns for their daily comforts; but yet I have had my trials; this life is all along a scene of trials, great and small; there is scarcely any one who has come to my years, who has not reason to say, with the good old patriarch, 'Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.'

"I had a kind husband once, but when I seemed to love him best, and most to value his care and council, he was taken from me; many long years he has been with the dead — yet I trust, with the glorious company of the '*living*.' Two little sons were left me. I used to think, as I looked upon them after my husband's death, that it would be a hard n. . . for me to bring them up aright, and take care of them *alone*, but I found that after all I did not have to do it *alone*. Standing by the coffin of their father, I renewedly gave them up to their Heavenly Guardian, and whenever I was afterwards in doubt what course to take, some thing seemed always to whisper out the best way. Remember, my dear young friend, God gives to prayerful mothers the right to ask of Him the grace

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they need; O yes," said she, tears again filling her eyes — "the grace they need in every trying circumstance. He knows the end from the beginning; I know, I *feel* that He will forsake none who put their trust in Him.

"My home was a comfortable one — it was plain but comfortable, and my two little boys were such a stock of happiness to me, that I thought myself unusually blessed; but, as I said before, this is a world of trials — though our path may for a time appear to be free from them, yet there is, after all, but a *few smooth steps in a place*.

"My little sons were always affectionate and attentive to me, but as they grew in years, they became somewhat restless, and did not like the thought of spending their days upon our small farm, or within the quiet little village where we lived. I was unwilling to bind down the spirit of enterprise which they manifested, and thought it not wise to cross their reasonable inclinations respecting their future employment in life; I therefore concluded to yield to them cautiously as to their *situations*, hoving still, that after

some experience amid the agitations and perplexities of a busy world, they might be glad to return to the calm scenes of their early days.

“Frederic was my eldest, and a thoughtful, judicious lad he always was. I used to calculate upon his judgment almost as much as if he were a man, for he never did things like many boys — without care whether it would turn out well or ill in the end, or whether any one else would be favored or troubled by it, whatever it might be; but industrious, planning and kind, he went about every thing soberly, and kept steadily at it till it was done, and then it was always *well* done. I had very little anxiety but that he would do well in the world, and so far he has; for what he was in his business life, that he has ever been in his Christian character, and now he lives in ———. He is an industrious carpenter—has been prospered much in his trade, though he has kept clear of speculations and ‘money chances.’ He is moreover much loved by his apprentices, of which he has several, and by all who know him. He is one of the Selectmen

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of the town — Chairman of the School Committee — Treasurer of the Mechanics' Association — and President of their Temperance Society, from whose meetings he is never absent; and so frequent have been his visits to their Hall, that the neighbors say, when his dog gets off his master's track, he is often to be seen trotting alone up over the hill towards the building, wagging his tail, and pricking his ears in certain expectation of finding him there.

“Then, too, the poor and the orphan love him and seek his advice; and his word given in promise is, they say, as good as a note of hand. Every year he comes and makes me a good visit, and tries to prevail upon me to leave my farm and go to live with him; but old people love their old homesteads, and I could never yet be willing to think of leaving to strangers the rooms where my husband and I sat together in our youth — where our children were born, and from which he went up to our better home; no, it is still to me like a little place of sunny evergreens in winter time. It is true I feel that seventy miles is a great ways for Frederic to live

from me, but I do not complain, he is with his rising family around him — a good son still, and, though distant, a great comfort to me. For he is useful there, I think, just where Providence would have him be — and I believe he is a faithful Christian, which is a source of more joy to me than all the praises and titles that man can bestow upon him. He is one of the deacons in the church, and his minister, who is an excellent man, told me when I was there last, that he depended almost as much upon Frederic's prayers and good example among his people, as he did upon his own efforts, and he thought that really he accomplished about as much good as *he* did, he is so consistent, and persevering, and active. You may be sure, my young friend, such words are no small comfort to a *Mother's* heart."



CHAPTER V.

WHILE the old lady was thus humbly setting forth the praises of Frederic, her heart

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seemed more and more to warm towards him in its affections and interests, by the picture of his goodness which dwelt so vividly in her own mind; she for the moment forgot the circumstances of anxiety which often made her life bitter and desolate; and sitting smilingly in the rocking chair, her spectacles raised in her enthusiasm, and resting above her cap-border, her eye brightening with the honest pride and gratitude of her heart; and her countenance in brief cheerfulness reflecting doubly back the light of the glowing fire, her stranger companion thought she had never looked upon a more pleasing exemplification of the power which a dutiful son possesses, to fill the cup of a mother's existence with cordial blessings.

“But,” continued she, looking down and sighing deeply, “such circumstances, my dear friend, are the ‘*smooth steps*’ in my path, which sometimes make me forget the wearisomeness of my long pilgrimage. I had yet another son, a very Joseph to my heart; O he *was* a noble boy — and I loved him as earnestly, and hoped as strongly in him as ever mother's love could do, though

withal I feared the more, the more I watched and loved. O Dennis! Dennis!"

The old lady's chin quivered, and turning away her head, struggling with her emotion, she compressed her lips, and swallowing repeatedly, as if she would thus fain check the risings of o'er-mastering sorrow, she was silent a moment, then calmly returned to her relation of the past, though frequently pausing with the remembrance of troubles which it was hard for her to bring into words. Often when she spoke his name, the furrows upon her brow would for an instant approach nearer to each other, for its very sound vibrated upon her soul with a keenness of feeling which cannot be uttered.

"He was good, a very good boy generally," continued she, "and grieved to give me pain, but yet he always loved to have his own way. When a little boy he would readily yield this to any command or wish of mine, but when he became older, he appeared to have a pride about doing as *he* thought best, which made me afraid that he would not always get along well, for he was not the most careful or wise in his proceedings; and I

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feared his hasty, proud judgment would lead him into many difficulties, in a world where every body must sometimes give place to another's wish.

“Yet he was truly warm hearted and affectionate, and so kind to the aged, that the oldest and poorest inhabitants in our village used to call him ‘Son Dennis.’ He was generous, and would gladly give the last penny in his pocket to any one in want. He was attentive to all meetings, and particularly respectful to the minister, and to any one who appeared to love the Lord Jesus — but he would not give his own heart to His service. Therefore I had a great many fears on his account, and many a sleepless night I passed, both before and after I had given my consent to his going from home.

“It had been my aim to keep him with me, to be my company, and to take care of the farm; for though he had some faults, I so loved to see him come in, his face ever bright and smiling, his voice and words kind and cheerful, and his ready ‘yes, mother,’ to all I had to say, were so pleasant, that I thought certainly we should be very happy

with each other. Then, too, I thought I could watch over him so carefully, that, with the blessing of God, he would be kept from the evils he might be led into, should he go out into a world of temptation with these just commencing faults.

“But he was ever delighted with the thought of some thing new; and the idea of standing behind the counter and selling a variety of goods to a variety of people, was so captivating to his mind, that when I attempted to dissuade him from it, he became sad and disappointed, and so disheartened at what he regarded as my want of confidence in him, that I was much troubled. The little garden and orchard he had once loved so well, seemed really to have changed to him, with every thing else; each duty was a task, and each day an unpleasant one.

“At last I gave reluctant consent that he should go into the store of a neighboring village, and then every thing changed again — he was so happy, and the world appeared so bright before him, that he danced from house to barn and from barn to house until the morning of his departure. That was a fair

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morning; he was then fifteen years old, and delighted beyond measure with being so much a man for himself.

“O, how well I now remember his appearance then, while he waited the arrival of the tardy stage coach, when standing as straight before the looking-glass, and appearing as tall as possible, for the twentieth time in an hour, he would arrange his cravat, or straighten down and smooth his nice new clothes, then walking with longer, heavier steps than usual, pace about the room so proudly — ah, he little knew the anxiety I felt at the very thoughts which were affording him so much pleasure. But while I looked upon him, handsome and interesting as he was, I thought how many lads, who had thus left their homes with innocent and happy hearts, had yielded little by little to bad and sinful habits, until they had brought themselves to early ruin, and their parents and friends to sorrow which could not be comforted.

“With repeated and varied warnings and advice, I had filled up the hours of our intercourse during the days previous, and he had filled up every pause I left with promises.

But this morning I could say nothing, do nothing, only look upon him, and in silent communing with Him who is every where present, continually commend him to His care.

“From time to time I had the satisfaction of hearing that he was doing well for his employer, and was very attentive to the cautions he had received from me. His pleasing looks and cheerful manners won the favor of customers, and he was becoming quite a valuable assistant to his kind master; but only a few months were passed when some thing else offered, which he considered far more desirable, and without staying to consult me upon a point to which he trusted to gain my approval afterward, he removed himself from the place of his first engagement, to a more extensive establishment in the large town of ——, about thirty miles distant. When I was made acquainted with this, it was too late to remedy it, and it was but doubling my anxiety for him, by doubling his exposure to evil.

“But I have already detained you too long with these particulars; I will hasten

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over the ground of my cares and sorrows. From year to year his visits home became less and less frequent, not so much that business detained him, as that, which I had feared, the strong influences and temptations presented by such intercourse with the world, unguarded by love to God, had destroyed gradually in his susceptible heart his attachments to home, and love for its sure restraints: these I knew were first to yield, and too fatally and too surely foretell the destructive spread of vice, which then, with small beginnings, breaks in upon the soul."



CHAPTER VI.

"Although Dennis has often quenched in his bosom the tender strivings of the Spirit, which I know have been there, yet God has not been unfaithful to His promise or unmindful of my prayers, in that His hand has been stretched out still, restraining him from heavy

sins. *He* knows, *I* do not, the amount of guilt which may be resting upon his spirit in His sight — but from out breaking wickedness He has preserved him. Never has he utterly fallen; though, O, the last time I saw him, but for the whispered voice, ‘trust thou in God,’ my faith would have failed concerning him.

“Often he has removed from place to place, and changed from plan to plan, as fancy inclined; and now upwards of two years have passed away since his last visit to my home. During that time I have received but one letter from him, nor have I been in any way informed by him of his employment or place of residence. A thousand fears, which it was torture to indulge, have arisen in my mind, but I can only say, though often, as now, with tears — ‘God is my portion! and there is no unrighteousness in HIM.’ In his early infancy, my departed husband and I presented him in baptism, to receive the covenant mercy of God. Our prayers at that hour are on record for him, and *one* glorified spirit, I doubt not, now watches about him; above all — the ministrations of the

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Holy Ghost, and the intercessions of Christ are, I must hope, still his, and if with all these he perish—he will perish—God is just.’

“And now,” added Mrs. Brooks, after a pause in which great composure rested upon her, “You look so friendly, and have taken so much interest in an old stranger woman’s troubles, I wish to ask another favor of you; I expect a trying scene to-night, and perhaps I may be glad of some kind attention when—Will you please to remain with me a little longer, until it is passed?”

“Most certainly,” responded the young lady, grieved that another sorrow awaited the aged, pious woman.

“Three days ago,” continued she, “I accidentally, rather I would say *providentially*, heard that Dennis was in B——, where he has enlisted in the service of the United States, as a soldier during the war now going on against the Indians in Florida; and that he is waiting here a few days until the expedition shall be made up, when they expect to leave at once.

“I feel, my young friend,” said she, “that I cannot, cannot bear it. I could consent to the separation from him, I could become reconciled to the prospect of danger to him, even that he should there fall into an unknown grave, if it were necessary, if it were for the purpose of doing good, but that he should thus go away in sin, to sin and danger, takes away my courage indeed!

“I have therefore come that I may see him once more, and yet too, secretly hoping that he *may* consent to abandon the design. I scarcely dared admit the expectation of finding him in this large city, where so many are daily coming and going — but I could not content myself without making this one, perhaps *last* effort, for my dear son. I looked upward to the great Watchman of the city — the Shepherd of His people, and trusted He would direct me.

“The kind, good man who called a while ago and spoke with me, was one of the passengers with us to-day; I never saw him before, but he has been a good son to some body, no doubt. I liked him well; and when

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I found he belonged here, I inquired of him what would be my best course to find a young man by the name of Brooks, who had enlisted, and was waiting here to go to Florida. I think he felt as if I were in trouble, and said, in words so pleasant to my ears, that *he* could doubtless very soon ascertain for me about him, on application at their place of 'rendezvous,' in some street he mentioned, and that if I wished him to do so, he would go at once on our arrival in town, and bring me word again of whatever he could learn concerning him. I thanked him in the best manner I could, but *words* were nothing — he little knew the value to me of that offer. May God do by him as he has done by me — be his friend in an hour of trouble!

CHAPTER VII.

The hours since the early darkness of evening came on, had indeed been long ones to Mrs. Brooks; she had been momentarily ex-

pecting the footsteps of her son, and now the evening was near its close and he had not yet appeared. Having completed the relation of her sorrows, she sat in silent waiting, her head leant upon her hand, looking with tearful eyes into the fire. The many city bells rung out their accustomed announcement of the hour of nine — a few moments more, and footsteps were heard approaching through the long avenue towards the apartment, the door was opened by a servant, and two young men, dressed in military uniform, stepped into the room.

They were nearly of the same size and appearance. One, glancing his black eyes quickly around the room, advanced a step or two, throwing back his head as he took off his hat, passed his fingers two or three times hastily through his hair, hemmed and seemed gathering resolution to go through some unpleasant scene carelessly. The other remained still near the door. Mrs. Brooks slowly rose from her seat as she turned towards them, and fixing upon them both an uncertain gaze, for an instant scarcely comprehending their appearance, or recognizing

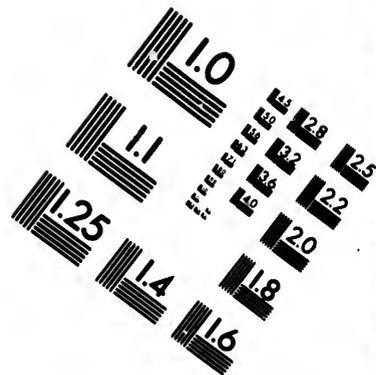
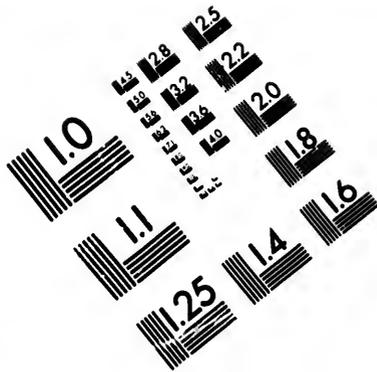
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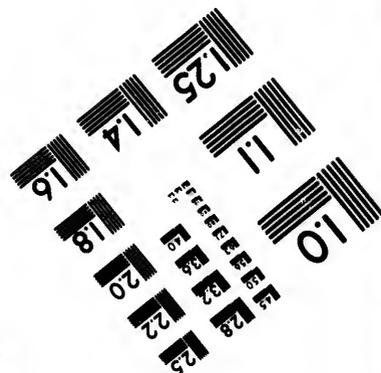
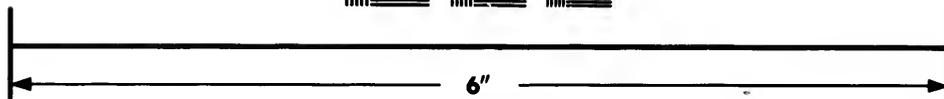
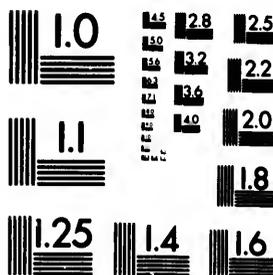
her son in the unexpected costume — threw her arms around his neck, and unable to speak a word, laid her aged head upon his bosom, sobbing and weeping like a child.

Dennis became very pale; the scenes of childhood, and its remembered sweet affections for a moment rushed upon him, like fragrant airs upon the desert — left it desert still. Looking silently down upon her, each tear, as it coursed over her furrowed cheek, was as an arrow piercing his heart, gladly would he have kissed them away; it was an important moment, a turning point in his moral history — he checked himself and yielded to an influence which strangely kept him back from any natural tribute of love. Again hemming, and assuming a careless manner, which seemed to have the effect wholly to freeze over his heart, he said quickly, “Come, come, mother, this is too bad! don’t be so childish! come sit down again in your chair. I suppose you are tired with your long ride. I wonder you should think of coming such a journey; here, let me lead you to your seat.”





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The old lady yielded, as with one arm around her, he supported her back to the chair, then overpowered with emotion, she sank into it, trembling and weeping bitterly. For a short time the stillness of the room was only interrupted by the sobs of the afflicted mother. Dennis drew a chair and sat down beside her; he looked perplexed and annoyed, but not grieved — the strong feelings of affection which had occupied his soul in early life, were now chilled and blighted by a hand whose touch is more fatal than the touch of death — the hand of sin.

“Don’t, mother! do not yield so much to your feelings,” said he, almost impatiently, “I did n’t expect it of *you*. Come don’t, you will make yourself sick, and make me miserable!”

Still agitated, and unable yet to control her emotions, she spoke not, but leaned her head upon his shoulder, as he sat reclined towards her. Dennis was again silent, and tried to look indifferently about, carelessly put back a lock of white hair from his mother’s forehead as it escaped from under her cap, and

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smiled upon his companion, who was still standing by the door, with a nod motioned him towards a seat, raised his eyebrows significantly, and smiled again.

“Come, mother,” said he, “really I thought you would have been like yourself again before this time — it is too bad, now; any body would suppose I am the worst person in the world, to see you crying so over me. Why I thought you would have been glad to see me after so long a time;” and his voice faltered upon the last words of the sentence. The old lady sobbed more deeply, and Dennis rose roughly and walked quickly back and forth through the room, then looked at his watch with increasing vexation. Mrs. Brooks raised her head, and with strong effort recovering herself, said gently, “Come back, my son, come and sit again by my side; I have some things to say to you.”

“You will have to say them quick, then,” replied he with an oath, forgetting himself in his haste and anger; “it is half-past nine now, I must be back at ten to be with our company when the roll is called.”

His mother had cast a look of lofty reproach upon him as he uttered to her the sinful imprecation, but that look of reproach melted away to one of despairing affection and sorrow, at the words with which he had finished the sentence. "Dennis, O Dennis, is it so—have you really"—her tongue could not speak the dreaded word.

"Yes, it *is* so, mother;" said he, forcing a laugh, "I *have really* enlisted. Bless me! I want to know if *that* is what has been troubling you so to-night! Ha, ha—that beats all, now—just because I have *enlisted*—O, ha ha!"

"What *could* induce you to do so, Dennis?" said she emphatically.

"What could induce me?—O I don't know," replied he—"FUN I suppose, or change,—any thing. I am tired every body and every thing. I don't get along well with any thing I undertake but a little while at a time, so I thought I'd try this. Three years isn't a great while; Fred will see to you, I suppose, he hasn't much else to do; and it is not very likely you will care if I do go."

“Come and sit down here, Dennis; I cannot talk with you while you are pacing the floor so. There now, keep quiet, look at me; you shall leave in time to be back at the hour, but I *must* say a few words to you *now*.” Dennis sat down, and Mrs. Brooks proceeded to converse with a mother’s dignity and a mother’s sorrow, blended with a Christian’s calmness.

“It is but three days,” said she, “since I heard any thing of you or your present plan, Dennis, and then I scarcely believed it could be true, yet I feared so much the possibility of it, that I hastened to leave home, and seek to find you, that I might dissuade you from going; O if you could know how my heart is bleeding at the thought!”

“Nonsense, mother, nonsense!” interrupted he again, impatient; “Why *should* your heart *bleed* at thought of that? I did not expect you would feel so, or even take it hard at all when you should come to hear of it. For my part, I am sorry you have given yourself the trouble of two days’ journey for nothing — that’s all. It’s true I am glad

to see you again, but then I can't do any thing about giving it up now. We are to go next week."

Mrs. Brook's heart almost died within her at his decided and indifferent manner. Paleness passed across her brow, and her lips quivered. Dennis gazed at her a moment, and tried to speak playfully.

"Upon my word, mother," said he, "you are very much changed, certainly very much; why, yesterday I was thinking I wished I had a heart as heroic as your's *used to be*; but, fact, I would'nt exchange with you now; a "bleeding heart" would be a bad bargain for me to take to Florida with me. Ha, ha, I suppose you are afraid some tall, old Indian will shoot me, and then I shall never come back to the little farm again; isn't that it, mother?"

"And *you* are very much changed, Dennis," said Mrs. Brooks, repeating his words in a different tone of voice. "Age and sorrow have doubtless added infirmities, and wrought some change in *me* since those happy days when we dwelt together at home; but what, Dennis, has wrought this change in

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you, since the dear time when you used to sit dutifully and affectionately to listen to my wishes. Years have passed, it is true, but I can hardly realize their flight; it seems but yesterday."

"O, *don't* talk about the *past*, mother, that's done and gone; besides, I *hate* to hear about *that*. You need not think *I* am changed much; I love you now, and am very glad you have not forgotten me. So keep up good spirits. To be sure, I can't give up going into the war, but there's no danger, none at all—or not *much*, at any rate. In three years, perhaps, I shall come back, it may be a captain or a general, and then I can settle down with you upon the old farm, as snug as you please."

"Dennis, three years is but little compared with seventy; but when like myself one has lived through seventy years, three more is a long, uncertain space of time; and probably when that is passed, should your life be preserved amid the many dangers to which you go, and you be permitted to return to your native home, I shall have gone to the long home towards which I am now looking with

anticipations of delight. I have always hoped that you, Dennis, whose infant head slumbered last upon my bosom, would be with me in my latest years, and that your hand would be pressed upon my dying eyes;— that hope I can indulge no more. But it is not this which so grieves me now, nor the dread alone, that in a fatal moment you may fall before some deadly shot, or by some fierce disease; no, not these; but, Dennis, it is because you go uncalled by duty; it is because you are entering into the work of sin; that you will be there associated with the lowest and most vicious of society; removed far from the means of grace, forgetting, but, I trust, not forgotten of God. Did he call you, O Dennis; did He who gave you being call you to go forth to distant scenes, to imminent danger or to certain death, how cheerfully could I bid you adieu. We should yet meet again in that near, happy world above; but now it is not so. You go to take up arms against a long wronged and still persecuted people, who have never molested you, and who would gladly have dwelt in Christian peace and love with us, upon soil

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rightfully their own; and God, the righteous Avenger of the oppressed, looks not upon such guilt with indifference. His wrath delays, but it slumbers not; O Dennis, I cannot bear that you should come under its terrible shadow. Can you not return with me to our peaceful home? Can you not, at least, give up the resolution of going? If we separate thus, my son, I fear it will be a separation increasing to all eternity. O Dennis, are you not yet "ready to choose God as your *Friend*, your portion?"

Dennis hesitated, looked at his watch, arose to leave — paused — turned again — promised to meet his mother in the morning, and departed.

That night was a sleepless one to Mrs. Brooks, but its silent watches witnessed her strong intercessions to God on behalf of her son. The next morning was the holy Sabbath. Hour after hour she awaited Dennis' coming, but noon passed away, night came on, and still he disappointed her expectations. In the evening she despatched a messenger for him, who only returned with word that Dennis would remember his promise on the

morrow. And Mrs. Brooks saw him no more. When the morrow came, he with his band of associates were early on their way towards the frontiers of Florida.

Years have since gone by, but Dennis' fate is unknown. Whether he is still some where an outcast wanderer, or whether in that cruel contest he fell a victim to Indian revenge; or in some other way met the punishment of a disregard of God's word and calls, and disobedience to parental advice, cannot be told; no inquiry could ascertain concerning him. He who watches to reward the good, and to visit the evil, knows all his history, and will bring him forth in the morning of the Resurrection — then again to remember the past — then again to meet that pious mother in robes rendered more glorious by her fervent watchings and prayers for him — and the guardian spirit of his father — and God, the Judge of all. O, what then will he answer, when the dutiful and the undutiful are clearly revealed?

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THE DEAD ALIVE:

A TRUE NARRATIVE.

WRITTEN BY MRS. PICKARD, THOUGH NOT DESIGNED
FOR THIS WORK.



At the close of one of the coldest days in the winter of 1835, an old lady called at our house to pass the night. She had come that day from B——, in the southern part of this State,—was cold, fatigued and hungry, having tasted no food since she left her own desolate home.

Upon entering the room, I was attracted by her appearance. Sixty-five years could scarcely have told the length of her life's pilgrimage, yet she seemed afflicted with few of the infirmities usually attendant upon such age. Her dress, somewhat fanciful, was of Scotch plaid, and the large bright checks of scarlet, green and black, made rather an unbecoming contrast with the deep traces that

time had graven on her face; her little starched cap, in full trim, set up daintily; and the high heeled shoes which she had slipped from her feet, were lying, toe to toe, at prudent distance from the fire; all seemed the carefully preserved relics of former taste and years.

As she drew up her small figure more erectly in the chair, and glanced her black eyes familiarly around the apartment, I thought I had never seen the face of years so bright with animation; as if she had either never known the many disappointments allotted for the threescore years and ten — or that such trials had been happily forgotten; her whole countenance, indeed, indicated that she had just set out in life with new hopes — new joys.

After she had taken supper, I drew my seat towards her, and she soon revealed to me the following simple story. I will endeavor to “tell the tale as ’twas told to me.”

* * * * *

“In the northern part of the State of Maine, in the small town of ——, I lived

many years with my husband. We had no family, and hard work enough it was upon a poor farm which scarcely paid for tilling, to get an honest livelihood.

“My husband was always poor, and almost always unfortunate. I would not be ungrateful, but Providence did not smile upon him, so we *almost* thought, as upon those who needed his smiles much less. Yet I can now look back and see it was all for the best. I was not a Christian then, though my husband was. His health was very poor, and with an aching heart I have often watched him from the window of our home, raking the scanty hay, or hoeing the sandy loam. I’ve seen him lean upon some tree, to wipe the sweat from his pale forehead, and his wearied arms would fall heavily beside his trembling body. And sometimes as he came in he would say, ‘If it were not for you, Nelly, and the baby which Heaven has given us, how glad I should be to go to my rest — or, if it might please Him, to call us all together!’

“But such was *not* His will. Ere our baby had passed its first year, my husband did *go to his rest*. He left me peaceful in

God, yet 'sorrowing,' as he said, 'for the lonely walk which might be mine,'—and O, *how lonely* it has been!—'before we should sit down together in our Father's kingdom.'

"Six years I struggled on with my little boy desiring nothing for myself, but much for him; and a brighter lad than John you never saw. But my health failed at last, and unable longer to maintain us both, I concluded to put him out to work as well as he could, (and he was quite *handy*,) to some farmer.

"For some time I heard of no one who would take so young a boy. At length Mr. 'Lijah Baker, a miller, happened in the place on business, who lived about fifteen miles from there; hearing of me, he called where I was, and agreed to take Johnny home with him. As he had never been to school any, Mr. Baker promised to send him three months of the year, till he was ten years old, on condition that till then I would furnish him with a new hat and pair of shoes once a year.

"I could have but little information of the man's character, yet, as it was the only way before me, I consented to let him go.

“Bitter was the hour of our parting. He had always been a good boy, and was all the world to me — my daily companion, my only, affectionate little son. Now in his clean clothes, his light glossy hair parted and brushed one side — though his round blue eyes filled with tears, yet he never looked so well, or seemed so dear to me before. He clasped his little arms tight around my neck; —really, I was more a child than him, for I sobbed and wept — I could hear his little heart beat quickly, as he tried to comfort me. ‘Mother, don’t cry so,’ said he, ‘I will be good. I shall soon be old enough to earn some money, and you shall have it *all*. I will buy you some *glasses*, and then you can sew in the evening. And I will get you a *pound* of tea. Eben Wood loved me; he will hold the thread for you to wind, and pick up chips for you now, sometimes, I guess.’

“But the moment came for him to leave. I looked upon them as the wagon rolled out of the yard and jolted slowly up the hill, and watched them till the top of his little blue cap disappeared, as they descended the other side of the hill; and then I entered the house and wept anew.

“I could not afford to ride, so when the year came round, I walked to Mr. Baker’s to see my boy, with the shoes and hat. My spirits were never lighter, or my steps more nimble, than while on my way; they were less so coming home, perhaps, but I could have gone any distance to meet him — my heart was very tender for him. I found him well, and a good boy still.

“The second year I went, and he was much improved. His kind feelings made him a little gentleman to every body and every thing. He would not give a moment’s pain to bird or chicken, bug or fly. And every body loved John.

“The third year I went. He was ten years old that day — it was the nineteenth of June. It was dark when I came to the house. No person or creature was in the yard — no light gleamed from the windows. I knocked, then opened the door — all was dark and empty; there was no sound, but the crickets chirping in the hearth, and the wind rustling in an apple tree behind the house. Turning away, I came and stood by the stream; the water still poured over the dam, but the

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wheels of the mill were motionless. Sitting down upon a log, I wept.

“It was a mile to any neighbor’s house. Overcome with fatigue, I could scarcely rise, yet the thought that he might be there encouraged me, and I walked on.

“The people seemed kind, pitied my sorrow, but knew nothing of my son. They said Mr. Baker had failed, and left the town suddenly—no one knew where he was gone. I went from place to place, and wore out three pair of new shoes in search of him. Once I traced him to Newport, and learned that a man had there put such a boy on board a vessel to go to France; but could ascertain nothing more, and returned home broken-hearted.

“Two years passed away. Unable to support myself—without money and without friends—but one thing remained for me. I went to B——, and cast myself upon the provision of the State, and became an honest, industrious inmate of the alms house.

“Year after year came and went, without bringing me any tidings of my son. I

learned to live without him, and only thought of him as a spirit in Heaven.

“I became tired of my companions in the *poor house*, and hired of Mr. Ford, our overseer, a little room over his corn house. As it was of no use to him, he let me have it for sixpence a week. The State allowed me but little more than this for my support; however, I managed to get along. I could knit stockings for my neighbors, and used to gather herbs for the sick. Besides, I did not need much — tea, sugar, coffee, butter, and such like, I gave up long ago. Two meals a day was all I allowed myself.

“Cold weather was rather hard upon me, sometimes, it is true; when the sleet covered my window, and the loud winds shook the building around me. At such times, when I was most lonely, the image of my little John was ever present with me, till it almost seemed as if he were *really* there, sitting upon his low stool close by my side, rubbing his thin hands (softly, that I might not hear him) to keep them warm, and instructing me into the plans he had formed for taking care

of me when I should be old. But these thoughts would soon vanish and give place to happiness more abiding. The widow's Friend forgot me not. His smile kindled gladness in my room, till even the rough, knotted boards of my apartment seemed to join in praise with my heart.

“But though I could talk without ceasing of his mercies to me — for such words are ‘honey to my taste’ — yet I will not detain you. I will tell of them in ‘the general assembly, and church of the first born in Heaven.’

“Seventeen years had passed away. It was just a week to-night, two gentlemen came to Mr. Ford's about eleven o'clock at night: they were well dressed, fine looking men as you will see — with a handsome horse and chaise. They asked if Mrs. Leonard was there. Mr. Ford pointed them to where I was, said I was probably asleep, and invited them to stay till morning with him, but one of them replied he must see me then — that he was *my son!*

“Mr. Ford came over with them. They

knocked at my door; I awoke, wondering, and let them in. Wishing to see if I would recognize a son in a stranger, they merely bowed as they passed me, requesting permission to look at the room, talked as if they proposed buying it, occasionally glancing towards me, as I was sitting wrapped in my old cloak, shivering, upon the side of the bed. I thought they had taken a strange time to purchase a building — almost midnight! I had heard of *speculators*, and of their being *about crazy* with business, and concluded these were some of them.

“One came toward me and asked me if I lived there all alone; and if I were not very lonesome. I replied, I had been so at first, but was now accustomed to it. He then asked me if I had no family. I replied, ‘None.’ ‘Have you *never* had any?’ he asked. This was always a *hard question* for me. I paused a moment to control myself, and could only say, ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken *them* away.’ No one spoke. I looked up — suddenly the bargain had been forgotten — tears were in the eyes

of each. One of them turned away and leaned over the fire-place, while the other, (who had not before spoken to me,) throwing his arms around my neck, said 'Mother — mother — *I am your little Johnny!*' "

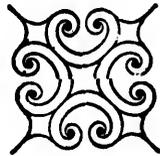
The old lady wept, and said to me, "I tell you what, I felt *pretty sinky.*"

The son, since he was ten years old, had been almost constantly at sea; what little time was allowed him in any New England port, he had employed searching for his mother, but knew not where to find her till now. He had then given up the chances of a life upon the deep, and established himself in business in S**** *****.

"And now," said the old lady, "I am going, and expect to spend my days with John. I think I am not unthankful for this great blessing, nor have forgotten God, whose love and providence protected my boy in a world full of danger, and has made my 'heart sing for joy' because 'my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.'

"If ever you should go to S**** *****,

you may see where he lives. His name is John Newton Leonard—on his sign it is John *N.* Lecnard, but his name is John *Newton* Leonard.”



s name is
sign it is
is John

