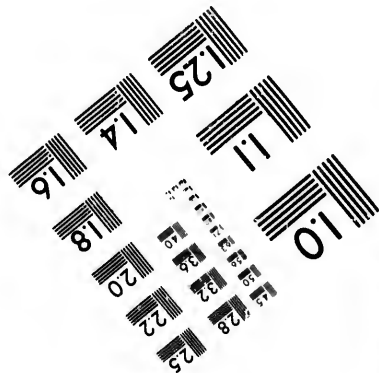
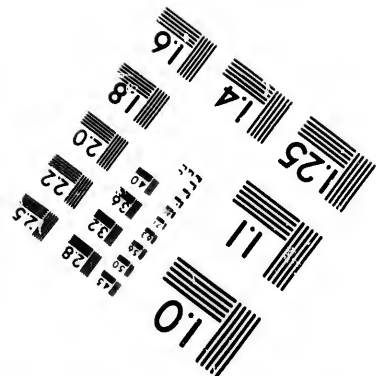
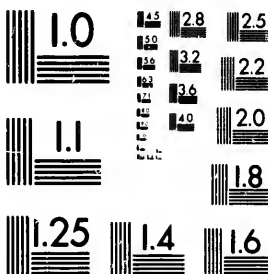


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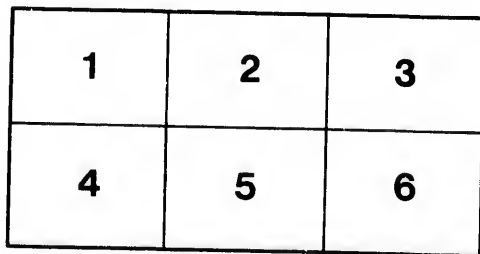
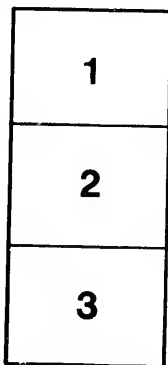
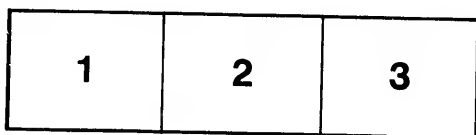
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WALDO.





WALDO.

BY

N. D. BAGWELL,

Author of "Breakers Broken."



TORONTO:

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WESLEY BUILDINGS.

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THESE PAGES
ARE
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WALDO.

CHAPTER I.

“**H**E has never even seen a Bible!” said Mr. York, raising himself up in his bed and pointing triumphantly toward a little boy in a corner of the room, engrossed in a fairy tale. “If you should speak to him of one, he would not know what you were talking about.”

The minister addressed remained silent. The boy read on.

“I have two brothers,” continued the sick man, “one an infidel, and one a preacher; I am dying—dying! I am going to send Waldo to my infidel brother to show that I think he is right, however others may differ with him and his doctrines. I can show my approbation of him in no other way. I have very little money, and no friends, but I have a son!”

The boy turned a leaf, unheeding what passed.

“My boy,” continued Mr. York, “is named after his uncle, to whom I shall send him. He will enlighten him—place him in the atmosphere of free thought. Waldo and little Fan shall go together; old Maria, their nurse, is to carry them after I am gone. They don’t know anything about it, except that they are going to an uncle whom they have not yet seen, while I go on a little trip. Ha! No, sir; if you please; I don’t want to hear any expostulations. As for me, let me go out quietly; I’ll have none of your noisy friends about me, no epitaphs written over me, no sermon, no foolish emblematic flowers placed over a heart that has already beat too long in its misery. Let no one mourn for me; let the children be told I have been called away by a friend—ha! a friend!”

The good minister looked over at the boy, absorbed in his book of fairy tales. What manliness there was already in the young, compactly built frame! What hope there was in the flashing smile! What eagerness and brightness in the attractive boyish face! How like a pall would the teaching of the infidel uncle fall over that young spirit, and hide all the bright and beautiful, all the real, for as a dream when one awaketh shall the present and mutable appear in the light of the future. The minister, Mr. Cooke, had

long known the sick man, and, like a faithful watchman, had warned him of the terrible gulf into which his error would plunge him at last. He had portrayed the glory of heaven, but he was only laughed at. Of course it was all a delusion! What simpleton would not shun perdition, and go to heaven if the Bible were true? It was the old story. To Mr. York no facts were sacred. He rejected the scheme of salvation principally because he did not understand how God had conducted the plan of creation.

While they were talking, Fan, Waldo's sister, sat at the boy's feet deeply interested in her doll. But it was upon the boy that the minister's gaze dwelt.

He watched him as he read on.

"His is not a nature that can be content without love," he said to the father, "don't send him where he can't get it." Then he added under his breath, "Poor little fellow!"

He was startled by a voice rising with passion.

"Maria! did you hurt Fan?" cried the boy, turning a frowning face on the woman.

"No!" said Maria, "I jist sorter walked over her a little—her so small and still, and me a studyin'."

Well, you've hurt her!" said Waldo, as his sister held up one little finger, with tears in her eyes. "What makes you study so much?"

"Fan air wonderful small a-settin' down," remarked the wily Maria, pleasantly, for in truth she had been listening to the gentlemen. "Yet she's as peart as a robin redbreast when you notice her, an' pritty as a picture!"

Waldo softened at this, and returned to his reading. "I should think," said Maria, "she'd bother you a follerin' you about, an' a settin' in front of you so constant, an' a-twitterin' to herself so regular, an' a-cryin' the land over if you leave her! It's always, 'Stan' back thar, Fan!' for fear she'll be killed, a patterin' after you. Your father says she ain't to go scourin' the woods no more with you; he looks to see her a-drownded or shot some day. You may go on a-readin', but you hear, den! Thar ain't a boy in New Orleans ez rare an' proud o' his sister ez you!"

No one could see the two children together without noticing their marked affection for each other. Waldo would run at Fan's beck and call, for flowers, fruits, grasses or stray kittens. He would drag her across brambly fields, over shallow brooks, sometimes very hurriedly, but with the greatest tenderness, and with the sole desire that she might share his boyish joys. And Fan understood him very well. She knew, though so young, what it was that beamed in his eyes for her! And if he happened to hurt her, his atoning kiss was a sufficient panacea.

“ He ain’t pritty like Fan,” soliloquized Maria, “ but he is powerful smart. A reg’lar little man. His forrid is as smooth as a marble slab, an’ his lips has a way o’ settin’ ’emselves together like a growed up person’s.”

“ My brother Waldo,” said Mr. York, to the minister, “ is a stimulating and successful writer. His arguments are convincing. He will teach my children no cant. He may be an infidel, but he is an honest one.” The minister looked down at the speaker, and pitied, the joyless, cynical nature which gave an almost forbidding look to the regular features.

“ Well, you’ve done your best for me,” said the sick man, “ I exonerate you from all blame; my blood be upon my own skirts. . . . And I am already too deep in the tide to discuss any more. I feel the touch of the phantom breakers. Strange, that soon I shall see nothing, hear nothing, feel nothing! I am like my brother Waldo, who says his soul is not worth saving anyhow—if he has got one—about which fact he admits that other people are much better informed than himself.”

The speaker’s voice was stopped by a hemorrhage brought on by intense excitement, as he thought of his approaching dissolution, though he attempted to be cool, and even sneering.

"Sir," he began again, presently, "justice is not postponed. A perfect equity adjusts its balance in all parts of life. You believe I have an immortal soul, and fear that I am going to hell? It is a part of your creed; I know you do!"

The strong hand was laid upon the weak one.

"I tell you it is all a monstrous fable—a dream! and I will not be humbugged."

The preacher tried to speak further, but was not heard; and, burdened with grief, he left, determined to call the next day, when he should find Mr. York calmer.

Old Maria, bustling about from room to room, overheard the conversation. She was a privileged character in the household. Since the death of the children's mother, she had taken the poor lady's place as far as possible. She had lived many years with the three brothers, and one sister, who had died. Mr. David York, Waldo's father, was the youngest. They had all settled in New Orleans. Then there had been changes and separations, but the old nurse had remained with these children. Mr. York knew that she loved them, and he trusted her entirely.

"Dell lor!" exclaimed Maria, "s'posen thar is a hell after all, and Waldo happened to go to it, reliable an' steady just like a man though he is! An' Mr. York

hisself don't seem none too shore, only he won't own it. He's mis'rable enough, if that's what he gets by bein' a infidel."

An unhappy, misanthropic man, Mr. David York had lived apart from his relatives and as exclusively as possible in every way; but he felt confident that either of his brothers would be willing to take care of his orphans. He wished to die as he had lived, and he did not write to them to come and take a final leave of him. He shrank from such an interview. It would harrow up his feelings and shake his stubborn calm. The physician had told him that his days were numbered, and stolidly he had determined to face the fact—the inevitable which had been boldly faced before by weaker minds than his, he thought. He could die without having any of the delights of heaven pictured to him.

"Leave that," he said, "to women and preachers. It is a part of their existence. They smile and brighten at the thought of heaven without a reason."

His smiles, when he could raise any, were reserved for those who claimed to argue such things out of existence.

The good minister called again next day, and he saw that Mr. York's hours were numbered. Again the sick man's good angel pleaded with him, but in vain, and he was left

“ Lord of himself, that heritage of woe—
That fearful empire which the human breast
But holds to rob the heart within of rest.”

“ Is oo naughty, papa ? ” asked little Fan, stealing up to the bedside, and gazing at the angry tears the sick man thought were unobserved.

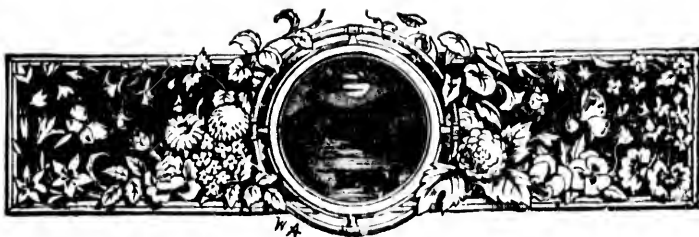
“ Naughty ? ”

He set his teeth hard. He looked at the innocent face ; and, perhaps, in that moment he thought that a pure heart was worth all the wisdom in the world.

“ Naughty ? Sinful ? Ay. Oh, my wrecked life ! Pshaw ! I am weak. This puerile mood will pass—”

“ Maria won't shut oo up in a dark place ! ” cried Fan, jubilantly, laying her staring, fine doll on the pillow. “ not if oo *is* naughty ! ”

‘ Shut me up in a dark place ! ’ He shuddered, then gently brushed the scattered ringlets of the child back from her face, and kissed her. The children did not know that their father was critically ill. He was often sick, and in the habit of lying down. He had spoken of travelling for his health. Clinging now to that slight spar, little Fan's fairy form, he fell asleep.



CHAPTER II.

“WALDO,” said Maria, entering the room in which the children were sitting, some hours later, “you stay in here and take care of Fan. I mus’ leave you fur a while, so, to keep you safe from harm, I’ll jes’ lock the door—”

“Don’t lock the door!—”

Waldo called after Maria with the keen despair of childhood, but she quickly locked him and his sister in, and disappeared. Fortunately their dog and cat and some books were locked in with them, and there was some cake upon the table.

The cat jumped up on the window-sill with her usual agile self-possession, and regarded the pleasant landscape with a lenient eye.

The dog, Watch, went and looked up into Waldo’s face, one yellow ear lapping gracefully near a watchful eye, the other raised alertly.

Waldo's "Hello, there!" at the keyhole, brought no response.

"Oh, Fan!" cried the boy, "Maria says papa has a friend who has called him away on important business, and we are to stay at our uncle's for awhile. Oh, if my uncle will only let me have a gun, and let me be free to go where I please! I'll be so gay you won't know me! You shall have a handsome collar for the first bird you stand, Watch! Come, let's dance! No, we'll form a regiment. Bring up the rear, Fan!"

Fan and Watch brought up the rear with so much gusto that there was remonstrance without. A knock was heard at the door.

"Waldo!—keep quiet!" said Maria, in a husky voice.

"Why?" demanded Waldo. "Is father with his friend?"

There was a long pause, then a faint "Yes!"

"Then why can't we see his friend, too?"

"He—said you were not to."

"Oh, well! We will keep quiet if he wants us to."

But Waldo was a wild little fellow, a fiery little bolt of life, and he could not help being restless. "What if Maria should forget that she had locked them up? What if he and Fan should get no supper?"

Such were the questions which tormented him, as he kicked forgetfully against the sides of the house,

unconscious that the sound of those vigorous little feet sent a stab to his father's failing heart.

Ordinarily, Maria's words would have made no difference with Waldo, for he had a way of doing as he pleased, but a sense of mystery possessed him now.

He sat thinking about his father's friend. The word, the mystery held some spell that touched his imagination. It suggested to his mind kindness and protection, another home somewhere, perhaps with children, and with deep, enchanted waters, where his father would get well, and about which he would have much to tell when he came back. He crossed the room, and placed himself companionably beside Fan and kitty. Keeping still meant physical effort to him. All was still without. Presently he grew so uneasy at the silence that he could not bear it.

"Whoop, there!" he called. "Ma-r-i-a-a!"

"Thought you was goin' to keep quiet!" remonstrated Maria, at the key-hole.

"Only let us bid papa good-bye!" said Waldo.

"He—he can't stop—now!"

"Is his friend in a hurry?"

There was no answer.

"When will he be back?—Open the door! I will bid him good-bye!—Well! I say, when will he be back?"

"I don't know—exac'ly—"

"Good-bye, papa!" yelled Waldo, frightened—hurt.

"Dood-bye, papa!" echoed little Fan softly, at the key-hole.

"What was that?"

"Is anybody crying?" demanded Waldo. "Let me out! I won't disturb the gentleman."

"No, hush!"

"Isn't papa crying?"

"Oh, God! no, no!"

"What is the sound I hear?"

Maria was gone.

Waldo stood with his hand on the knob. A vague forboding filled his heart. It was touching to notice the effort he made to be quiet; the sob swallowed, lest it should disturb his father, the trembling lips forced into a smile, and the heavy eyelids lifted bravely. At this moment the branches of a tree tapped suddenly against the window, and Watch, instead of barking, gave a long howl. Waldo peeped through the key-hole. Nothing was to be seen. Outside the window the light showed the placid landscape on both sides of the house softly tinted by the setting sun. Waldo walked about. Alas! it seemed to him no jail was ever more secure.

"Mebbe," muttered Maria, "thar's a world about us

we can't see. Waldo, he mus' be fotch up right—Oh, Lord! take care o' Waldo, I pray dis day!"

It was night. The children were asleep in their beds. Maria stood looking at them. She had consoled them with tales, and plans for the future when their father should come back. "I'm glad it's over!" she said to herself, "though it was awful, an', after all, sudden. Him a-walkin' 'round one Wednesday, an' dead the next. It can't come but once, even to a sinful man. But I ain't to tell that he's in God's hands. I ain't to make no mention o' angels nor heaven! But I didn't promise about them uncles, an' I've got a plan o' my own. It's the last thing I can do—I've got to leave 'em anyhow!" A sort of divinely born fear had awakened within her. Other children might sing

"All night, all night
The angels are looking at me."

but not these. Other loving little hands might plant flowers on papa's grave, with blissful hopes of meeting again, but not these. Other little palms might meet in prayer at night, but not Fan's and Waldo's. These children were not to be talked to about death until they were old enough to understand it. Thoughts of the grave were not to be pressed upon them until they neared its tremendous verge.

"I'm mortal myself!" Maria declared. "I am

ailin' an like to die at any time. The minister says thar's help in the Bible, but I dunno! But what good is it a goin' to do *him* now to have Waldo jailed up with a infidel stid o' goin' round the woods learnin' o' God?"

She looked at the delicately cut, happy face of little Fan, at the ruddy face of Waldo, expressive even in sleep, and wrung her hands. She had seen their father wrestle blindly with his "friend." She knew, by some instinct, that he was a man of one idea, and that that was a wrong one. She had been commanded by the stern but failing voice to leave the room, and had not been unwilling. She had knelt down outside the door, and tried to pray. When she rose, the figure on the bed within was motionless; the voice was hushed.

She could still see the drawn face and hopeless eyes.

The sceptic had pressed the thorny shackles of his unbelief deeper and deeper into his heart, and had gone—where?

Then Maria had hastily burned the letter given her to take with the children to the sceptical brother. It could not affect the dead man now. And did she not love the children, and did she not know what was for their good?

"Eh!—he had a hard heart!" she said. "Thar's no denyin' that! Not to listen to a word the good man

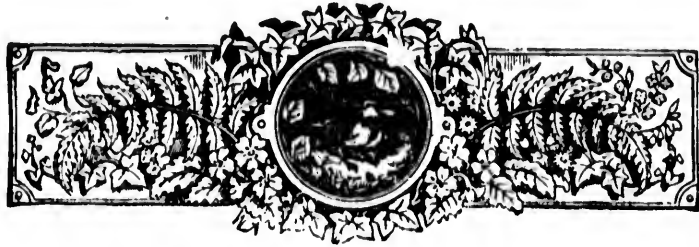
had to say! Fur my part, I'd ruther be a Christian like I heard the preacher tell about one day—shut my eyes here an' open 'em in heaven! It's hard to fool Waldo; him so wise at figurin', an' tall an' upright as a poplar tree. I'll set him on the right path."

How anxiously Waldo wished for the morning to come! He loved to travel on the water, on the cars or behind almost any kind of a horse. He loved nature in her wildest aspects. Waldo was a boy of whom any father might have been proud. The instruction of his father, who was a highly-cultivated man, had rendered him unusually intelligent for a boy. He thought much, and could always content himself with a book. As for his looks, Maria was right in regard to them. His face had no peculiar beauty except that of expression. The large, clear, gray-blue eyes were remarkable only for tremendous force of character.

He was now full of enthusiasm over his trip. He dreamed all night of the home of his uncle, which Maria told him was cradled in trees.

Through quiet dells and groves his happy spirit roamed. Hand-in-hand he and Fan trod sunny fields, and rested beside babbling streams.

He thought he had never seen so beautiful a day as when he woke from his happy dreams, and saw that the sun was shining on his face.



CHAPTER III.

WHEN Maria went to the children the next morning, a new light beamed in her haggard face. She was going to do a good deed she thought.

Her heart warmed at the sight of the children. The boy's eyes were wide with fancies, conjectures, inquiries. His questions fairly frightened her. She cowered before his bright, earnest gaze, as he asked about his father. Wherever she turned he followed her, hurling at her the same questions. The tears started to her eyes.

"They can't harm little gells so much—they infidels!" she soliloquized. "It's the boys!—boys like this here! Waldo, you must go to the good man. Little Fan, you must make out with the bad one!"

Waldo noticed his father's every-day clothes.

"Maria!" he called, "did father wear his best suit? And here are his shoes! did he wear his slippers?"

She had hard work to answer his questions, and she hastened their departure before the funeral, fearing that some one would inform the children of their great loss. The home of their uncle was the main theme discussed, for she had not told them that they were to be separated.

“Maria,” said Waldo, “what flows all around the world? What is outside the earth holding it?”

“Jes’ air, honey, I reckon!” said Maria, lightly.

“You are a fool,” said Waldo.

Presently he asked, “What is father’s friend named?”

“Your pa was right!” exclaimed Maria. “You want to know too much! I got to do something else besides grab up every word or name I hear, same as it was gold. Is I a Christophus Columbia?”

“Where has my father gone?”

“Oh, it’s a long ways off!”

“As far as India?”

“Fu’ther, I reckon!”

“Does Geography tell about all the places that there are?”

“Lors!—come? You make me right dizzy. You must behave good at your uncle’s, Waldo, an’ not be too inquisitive; for he might turn against you if you set up to do nothin’ but vex him!”

“Is my uncle a quick-tempered man, Maria?” asked Waldo, leaning on his elbows to argue the question.

“To be shore.”

The morning was magnificent. The trees, with the dew still upon their branches, seemed greener than usual to the boy. Life seemed to him good, and he was determined to do all in his power to spend it happily.

“We will, of course, take Watch with us!” he said, “and Polly, who thinks every boy and girl are Fan and Waldo! Watch would be useful on a farm, and we couldn’t leave them, you know, for there would be nobody to feed them. Is it not a farm, Maria?—you are not listening!” This was true. She was not; but the peremptory accent in which Waldo uttered the last words, and which called to her mind her many duties, made her realize the danger of not seeming to take an interest in the conversation. But with his young arms now folded on his chest, and his face turned to the morning sun, Waldo was thinking. Maria looked at him, recognizing the authority with which he had already begun to invest himself in his father’s absence.

The fact that she had not sometimes in the past tried to tell him of heavenly things caused her piercing remorse, for she saw in the determined boy-face a

will and an appropriation of opinion not easily to be displaced.

“You’ll make a fine man, Waldo,” she said, “and be able to walk a matter o’ thirty mile a day with them long legs, when you air grown. But you must’nt be peppery, ar’ lifted up with them Methodises—”

“What are they?”

“Eh! I could wish you was both gells—you an’ Fan! See how she takes what you give her, an’ is satisfied! Never axin’ questions, like boys! I’ll be bound when she’s growed, she’ll have a great lot o’ beaux wantin’ to marry her, with her hair shinin’ as fur as you can see her, and the mischieviousest ways!”

“But she’ll be my little sister!” said Waldo, rather hastily. “She’ll be nobody else’s!”

“For cert’ing! Yes, indeed! Your ondy sister! You’ll have a right to her if you’ll act right by her, an’ let her go an’ learn what gells has to be taught, an’ do your duty by her. She’ll need to be sent whar she can improve herself; and that’s what you must do, Mr. Waldo, if you’d do the right thing by your orphaned sister!”

“Orphaned!”

“Well, motherless!”

Waldo’s pale face reddened wildy under a new anxiety.

"I want to do everything I can for her," he said, "but papa—"

"To be shore! an' your uncle will learn you that there's good ways an' good sayin's to keep us from harm, an' you tell Fan about it. Mind you tell her everything—"

"She needs to be told about the microscope that makes everything, even an ant, look big!"

Rather startled by Waldo's knowledge, old Maria looked yearningly at the boy's face.

"It's a pity to part 'em," she thought, "but if he went any ways wrong, an' was on the wrong side at the last, an' I hadn't done my part by him, it 'ud be a thorn in my dyin' piller."

"Here's your little purse, Waldo," she said; "all there is fur you; I've got Fan's. Put your trust in Providence, but don't forget to hold on to your money—"

"Providence! That's a place!"

"No, it ain't!" declared Maria, "no place! Your uncle will tell you. I hope you'll get along well, an' take care o' your health. We are all in the hands o' Providence. Take care o' your health an' your money, an' don't let nobody treat you bad, though you don't 'croach on nobody, and you don't let nobody 'croach on you."

She lifted her eyes with a look that sorely tried Waldo's patience.

"Maria must be half-crazy," he thought; and, indeed, she felt very much troubled, having determined to leave Waldo with his uncle who was a preacher, and was not a very great distance off; then to take Fan, on some pretext, to the other brother in the city.

"What's that 'bout 'Suffer little children,' I once heard?" muttered Maria to herself.

"Fan and I are not suffering children!" said Waldo.

It was late in the afternoon when they arrived at the Methodist parsonage. The last pale beam of even rested upon a gray head reclining in an easy chair. Maria, peeping in at the window, saw it.

"A good face!" she said, and smiled complacently, as she knocked at the front door. Upon its being opened, she asked for Mr. ——, whom she desired to speak to in private. She soon satisfied the good man as to the truth of her statements. She saw that he was poor, but he was glad to receive Waldo. He was used to burdens, hardships, emergencies; indeed, he would hardly have known himself without them, but Waldo saw "Welcome" written in every benevolent feature.

The boy looked criticisingly at his uncle. The Rev. Mr. York was about fifty, though he seemed older;

but there was not a cloud on his earnest, open countenance. He was tall, and well built; his wide, projecting chest and broad shoulders denoted great vigor, and, though there were silver threads in his hair, his eyes had a brilliancy full of intelligence and steadfastness, and in their blackness there dwelt the very heart of youth.

At the sight of this man Waldo felt an emotion for which he could in no wise account. The more he regarded the Christian warrior before him, the more there seemed to rise the memory of features he loved. But where his father's face had held defiance, this held hope! Where that other had been attenuated and mirthless, this was beaming and joyful!

The door was opened softly and a fair girl entered.

"Margaret!" said the minister, "come and speak to Waldo—my own nephew, yet a stranger. God bless him!"

Waldo returned her kind greeting, and felt a load lifted from his heart as he saw that, though a stranger, he was taken in—taken into their hearts and lives, to be treated as one of themselves. Margaret's face was unclouded, too. There was a look, gentle, chastened, such as he had seen in the countenances of older people, but seemed to him out of place in one so young. Next there came in twin girls—tiny, lovely,

and dimpled—with open arms for everybody; last a blusterer of four, trying to get his waggon in at the door—a waggon with the ark on it—that Noah might be introduced immediately, with all his numerous interests and belongings. He was accompanied by an elderly servant with a baby.

“How many are there?” Waldo wondered, dismayed.

They all went to supper, and though the meal was plain, it was the merriest meal Waldo had ever sat down to in his life. “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.” The smallest child at the table, Robin, said grace. He never minded Waldo’s mighty stare. Poor Waldo could eat nothing.

“Take out, help yourself, an’ don’t make no ways strange!” whispered the old black servant, Hepsey, encouragingly.

Having told Waldo that she would take his sister with her on a visit to another uncle, while he stayed with this one, Maria left with little Fan hastily, before Waldo had time to consider, taking it for granted that the visit was to be short.



CHAPTER IV.

WHEN the door was flung open, and a young man strode into the room, Waldo's eyes brightened with interest.

At sight of the boy the new-comer paused, and dropping the game he carried and leaning on his gun, he asked, with a look that Waldo did not like, "Whom have we here?"

"Hill," said the minister, looking up, "I am so glad you are back again. I was getting somewhat uneasy at your long stay. This is my nephew, Waldo York. I was in hopes you would come in, for I want to speak to you."

"All right."

The minister sighed, but linked his arm in Waldo's older nephew's, and drew him out of the room.

Ah! here was the black sheep, the skeleton in the closet! The good man had not been able to curb, to

lead, to lift Hilary out of the evil influences that had surrounded him before he came to live here. The handsome, piercing eyes of Hilary had sent a painful thrill through Waldo. How he envied the young man the spurred boots—damp, muddy and uncomfortable—the great, dangerous gun, the hunter's far-seeing eye! But Hill was surly, and Waldo thought he would like to fight him for that look, if he had been big enough.

Hilary York was the son of the sister who had died. He had seen too much of such men as Waldo's father had been, and had conceived the idea that his "preacher uncle" was bigoted; that there were many pleasures, for which he had capacity, which were kept from him, he being held in a state of slavery. Just to test the fact he had joined some gay friends. They went to a saloon one night, and did not return until one o'clock. It was not long before his "shackles" were broken, and at the time of Waldo's arrival his "emancipation" was so complete that signs of dissipation were about his eyes, deterioration was palpable. Hilary took his stand by a window in the next room, Mr. York sat in an arm-chair.

"Hill, you will find a place in your heart for the orphan boy. Heaven will bless you for it. We are straightened, but the Lord will provide."

"If you were not so good to me," thought Hilary, "I should say you were sometimes ridiculous—demented. Providence, indeed!"

"He has had a lonely time, poor little fellow," said Mr. York. "Ah, my brother was well-to do once, but failed in business, grew bitter, and buried himself and his family in the country. I would not have believed that he would send the boy to me, after our quarrel, at least, his quarrel with me; poor, poor fellow! Oh, I thank God the boy came to me. He must be taught the right. We can manage," said the minister, rubbing his hands beamingly. "And then, our consciences, Hill—"

"I thought it was not a question of consciences, but of pocket-books!"

"He is all alone, poor little fellow—and we have something for him, too. Oh, yes! we are not capitalists—not quite—but we are never left with nothing. We must not be selfish. God will reward us."

"No doubt; only God's rewards sometimes assume a very peculiar shape. I'd want the reward to be current coin sometimes, if I were you."

"How often have I found my reward in doing my duty!"

"No doubt you will believe it to be your duty to tell this youngster that if he don't walk straight he'll go to hell!"

"I shall teach him his duty according to the Bible—his duty to his Maker and his fellow-men."

"Then he will lecture me the first time he hears me speak—trying to do his duty!"

"I hope you will not find him meddlesome; at least, I shall teach him to consider other people's feelings."

"Hill, at least, don't speak against religion before him!" said Margaret, who had entered the room."

A slight laugh was the only answer.

"Waldo," said the minister, a little later, "come into this room, we are going to have prayers now."

The other members of the family entered and took seats, as the minister reverently opened a book and began to read. Waldo was startled by the words, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth!" Strange words! Was it a new book of fairy tales? He would ask his uncle. The other small children were sleepy, but Waldo listened to that chapter in Revelations as to a revelation indeed. But his thoughts kept returning to little Fan. His hands had a curious feeling, as if they missed the clasp of a lost treasure. The boy, thinking only of a short visit with the old nurse, had raised no serious objection, though he bade his sister good-bye and hoped she would have a pleasant trip, with a quivering face, for he did not like even the shortest partings from those he loved.

“Bring her back soon, Maria!” he had said. “Don’t stay long.”

But Maria was gone.

The next night came on. Waldo strained his eyes looking. No Maria came. But he had much confidence in her. He was sure she would take good care of Fan.

After breakfast the next day, when Waldo found himself alone with his uncle, he began telling about his father’s trip.

“Perhaps he will come back next week!” said the boy.

“No, Waldo.”

“Surely in the fall—when the nuts ripen, he will come to take us to the woods!”

“Not then, my son.”

“Then when?”

The boy turned and looked fiercely at his uncle. The clutch of anguish was on his little heart. For a moment there was silence.

“Waldo! look up!” said his uncle. “Look up to heaven! There is some One up there who made you—loves you, died for you, and will descend from heaven again through the clouds—”

“What an awful story!” said Waldo. “How can you tell such a falsehood?”

“Waldo! that is wicked—”

The boy looked up at his uncle’s face steadily. His

young eyes were cool and searching as those of a man; but in that face, looking back, all was frank, pure and just.

The man drew closer, passed his arm around the small stiff neck, and stroked the head of soft hair, saying, "Poor little fellow," in the tenderest tones. But the boy drew himself away.

"Waldo, this world and all that you see is passing away. Death has been called a 'friend' and 'deliverer' by many, because it takes from a world of woe. There is another to which you and I and all may go. That is, by some—the great Shakespeare and others—called going on a 'journey'; and your father has gone. None have ever returned, and when our friends go we call them dead."

"It is not true!" cried Waldo, "my father will come back; he has only gone travelling!"

"Waldo—yes; he will rise again at the last day."

But the boy was rolling over and over on the floor. Oh! it was a desolating, intolerable idea! Not coming back! Over the childish spirit there swept a whirlwind of distress. Then he was suddenly conscious of the tall figure, stooping shoulders, bent forward, of kindly, tear-dimmed eyes.

"Go away!" he cried, "I don't want you. I want my own papa. He is not dead. He is coming back again. I hate you!"



CHAPTER V.

SOME days passed. Maria had not returned with Fan, and Waldo began to believe that what his uncle said was true—that his father was dead, and would never come back. Sometimes he thought Fan and Maria were dead, too.

One morning he did not go downstairs and take his seat as usual, when the family assembled for prayers. His uncle, upon going to his room, found him unable to get up.

“Uncle, will you write and inquire about Fan?” he asked, feverishly. “Surely your brother will send her back if you ask him to!”

There had been no intercourse between the brothers for years, but to please the boy Mr. York wrote and asked that the children might correspond, and occasionally see each other, as the double bereavement had made Waldo ill; but Fan’s guardian uncle wrote that

he considered it best, inasmuch as they were so far apart, and would be reared so differently, just to let each other drop. They were young and would soon forget each other.

Mr. York broke the news to Waldo as gently as possible, but the boy's grief was sad to witness, and it increased his fever. However, he learned that Fan was not dead; and determined to find her some day.

"Uncle, will you look in my trunk, and find a little parcel at the bottom in blue paper?" he asked, one day.

"Yes," said Mr. York.

He went to the trunk, found the small bundle done up carefully, and gave it to the boy.

"I wished," said Waldo, "to have this by me! It is a picture of my little sister Fan. She—she is the only thing that I have to think about." He paused, and held the picture up. "I look at it often, and I like to have it by me when I'm sick. When I see it, I always say, 'Why, of course, I shall have you again! It seems so natural, you know, when I see the blue ribbon and the smile!'"

His uncle nodded, encouragingly; his eyes were dim.

"You must trust her with God, Waldo," he said. "She will be taken care of by —"

“Yes! my uncle is rich, I know!”

The realization that his father was dead could not come to the boy at once—only anguish, and the eager effort to put an end to the anguish, only terror and the search for some one to relieve it.

His had been an eager life, a clinging life. Suddenly the fence about it was broken down, the support had vanished in a night; and no matter how beautiful the day, no matter how kind his uncle's family, his thoughts were always wheeling around to the sudden chasm in his life, to the empty twilight. Oh, for the past! One day; one hour, of the past, that he might ask his father questions he had always meant to ask, and tell him how very much he loved him! Oh, for the poor little home, its poverty, its loneliness!

With a choking, gasping sensation, he stood one day, holding fast to the railings of the fence in front of him. He was just recovering from his sickness, and had walked out. Jake, the stable-boy, looked at him, wondering, and winking with sympathy. He was moved to offer the orphan boy some comfort.

“You'll be better on Easter Sunday,” he said, consolingly. “Den you'll go to church an' sing the carols, an' see the cedars an' white jessamines an' immortalities! An' hear the anthem an' take the

sacramen', mebbly, wid yo' uncle—who knows? You'll be a deal cheerfuller, an' you'd know where you stand, an' could put yo'self in the hands o' Him that's more careful an' partic'lar o' you than father or mother, Mr. York says. An' you wouldn't want to conterdick everybody so much, nur throw things away that is brung to comfort you! You say you ain't been to church befo'? Didn't they have no church thar whar you liv'd?"

"I believe so," said Waldo; "but I never went."

"Well," said Jake, "you air as good as got a father in yo' uncle! He took me up. I couldn't 'a' been no wagabonder than I was. He gimme this here hymn-book. Listen!"

Jake read slowly, every last word of a line going off like a shot:

"A charge to keep I *have*,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to *save*,
And fit it for the *sky!*"

Finding this to fail in cheering the wretched, restless boy, Jake began to philosophize.

"What a many dead people there are!" he said. "An' if they could only tell what they see! I was sorry enough for you when you didn't understand the reason why no letters come from yo' father."

There was the sound of a mighty sob; mighty, though only a boy's; mighty with grief, yes, with anger! and Waldo tore down the path to hide his quivering face.

Wringing his hands, he cried in a passionate whisper:

“No letter! There will be no letter! Nor any message! Nothing! Nothing!”





CHAPTER VI.

IT was Easter.

The Rev. Mr. York was standing with his nephew, Waldo, watching the sunshine as it streamed down the blue April skies. The family, ready for church, assembled in the parlor. All were going. Margaret had asked Waldo to walk with her. He did not wish to go, but hated to be left alone. When alone, nothing sustained him, and he abandoned himself to grief. And thus it came about that Waldo's bright head, crowned with a black hat, bound round with crape, might have been seen beside Margaret's, as she walked to church, "the harnsomet sight" she ever did see, Hepsy averred. It was early when they entered the sacred place, and Waldo felt abashed before all those strangers.

What crowds of people! How cheerful they looked! Must all those people die? He had never thought of

it. Every one? Even he? He felt his little stout hands. They must go under the ground; and they would not move at his will when he was dead.

Why were all those beautiful white flowers up there at the altar? He was glad; it took his mind off.

There was music, too—not like Maria's voice; not like his father's violin, whose sounds were like a wail in the wilderness. This was a shout as from a fortress. How it cheered him! Then there was silence; not a sound in the place!

Outside, the bright, windy, sun-shot April; inside, a standing figure in the pulpit. Without, things he had been used to all his life; within,—what? Indefinable as the oxygen in the air was the emotion that possessed him.

The thing that touched Waldo most was a hymn, a simple, pathetic hymn, sung by a child—a boy like himself:

“Some one shall walk the golden street;
Shall you? Shall I?
Some one the lost again shall meet;
Shall you? Shall I?
Some one shall hear the great ‘Well done!’
When there's no need of moon nor sun,
And lay the cross down for the crown;
Shall you? Shall I?”

CHO.—“Some one the blessed name shall wear
 On brows forever free from care;
 Some one bright, golden sheaves shall bear;
 Shall you? Shall I?”

“Some one shall join that blood-washed throng,
 Some one take up the angels’ song,
 And rest—afar from grief and wrong;
 Shall you? Shall I?
 Some one shall wave the palms of light,
 And lift the harps with glory bright;
 Some one shall walk with Him in white;
 Shall you? Shall I?”

Waldo felt a strange thrill creep over him, and every nerve quiver, as he listened to the words, “Shall you? Shall I?”

He could have wept aloud. He would have given anything to have been alone, that he might have let the tears come. He kept whispering, “*Shall I?*”

Mr. York preached on the resurrection: “*Will he rise?*” Horror at his father’s death, and dread of a like experience for himself, were being lifted from the child’s mind. His uncle’s figure assumed something of authority and majesty, as the story—how simply told! with eyes every now and then turned on the boy—of the risen Christ.

It seemed as if there was suddenly a breath of June

passing through the chill streets outside—yes, within the man, the boy! The speaker's manner, which seemed at first strangely calm, was, in reality, singularly full of nervous meaning, decision and purpose. He spoke as if the sainted dead were the only creatures who really lived. And as he pictured heaven, as described by St. John, the imaginative boy became absorbed in the theme.

The preacher soon ceased. The crowd swayed gently, and moved forward. Smiles and bows, jewels and cheery voices, jests, some little scorn, too, at the old-fashioned preaching, surrounded Waldo. Some had not bent the head in prayer. Some seemed to have come for the music.

"Pshaw!" said the boy, "it can't be true! They are not in the least afraid or glad!"

As they left the church the birds were about, and delicate little flowers were pushing into the world out of the brown sod, and covering the graves with a golden, blue and crimson glory. Waldo's uncle looked extraordinarily young and happy. Waldo thought, "I am glad I heard about the resurrection to-day. My papa is somewhere, though he is dead, and I will find him."

That day was a new era in the boy's life. He hurried along, thinking of the wondrous story he had

heard of Jesus' birth and death, asking innumerable questions about the holy Child. Was He cold in the manger? Did it snow? And was He afraid of the animals there, or did even they keep quiet beside him? When it came to asking if God really could hear everything, and would give him what he wanted or asked for, his uncle only told him he had better try it.

So the forlorn little fellow knelt down when he got home, and tried to pray. "O God!" he whispered, "if you are our Father—Fan's and mine—and were once a little boy like me, bring Fan back to me, and don't let anything harm her, forever and ever. Amen."

And surely the Good Shepherd, who is so kind and pitiful to His lambs, heard that prayer of the ignorant boy, and would, in His own righteous time and way, answer it.

After that, the boy Waldo was almost always with his uncle. He witnessed the good man's ministrations. He heard his talks with the toiling countrymen, saw his still face beside death-beds, glorious with the Gospel message.

Waldo grieved much because he could not see his sister. Oh, if he had only clung to her, and not let her go!

"Fan!" he cried, "I have lost you! but when I am a man I will find you."

How he longed to tell her about the Resurrection! He wrote several letters, telling her she need not be afraid to die, for she would rise again, just as the beautiful flowers returned in spring. But she never read the letters. No word nor line passed between them. So the old nurse had said, "Waldo was with the good man, but Fan must make out with the bad one."

A change had come over the boy so great as to escape no observant eye. His uncle marked it, and thanked God. There was more consideration for others, and the crossness and disagreement of his fellow-pupils at school was met by an indifference, which, however difficult to maintain, was imposing even in a boy.

Sometimes the terrific rudeness of some rough fellow roused his late spirit of pugnacity, but his fierceness usually resulted now in a flash of the strong young eyes, and a curl of the quiet lip.

He was not naturally a good child, in the usual acceptation of the term, but was fast becoming so. One could see that he was the stuff of which gentlemen are made.

Months rolled by, and peace, like a river, flowed in the hearts of the minister's family.

Waldo felt the sweet influences around him. His

uncle had presented him with a beautifully bound Bible.

It was a calm, bright winter's eve. The boy was alone in his room. His school books had been laid aside, and he was reading his Bible aloud; uttering words which, from his heart, he believed.

Assurances of love unutterable rang in his ears. In even his ignorant young eyes the page blazed with truth.

How could One so almighty trouble Himself to deceive one so small and simple as he?

He knelt down, trembling with an emotion mysterious to himself—at something unknown dawning on his life.

“My son, give me thy heart.”

These words recur and recur to him. Is any one really uttering them? Ah, is he giving that young heart to its great Creator? . . . He is! and God accepts it. Else why that joy and peace? Whence that unburdened care-free feeling?

Rising, he went to the window and threw up the sash. Below lay the town with its lights; in the distance gleamed the water and the boats, and above him shone the wonderful heavens—tabernacle for the sun.

To his now worshipful gaze they seemed tokens of

God's forgiveness to man. Ah, it is at such times that "the soul is in her native realm, and it is wider than space, older than time, wide as hope, rich as love, Pusillanimity and fear she refuses with a beautiful scorn. They are not for her who putteth on her coronation robes, and goes through universal love to universal power."

He believed now that God was his heavenly Father.

"Father"—a charmed word! Through that one word thrill untold melodies, the laughter of children, the fall of familiar footsteps, the voice of deathless affection.

"Father!"—I hear in that word the ripple of waters, "clear as crystal," the sound of singing, the opening of the gate! Upon that word there drops the sunshine of boyhood, the shadow of sorrows bravely sustained, and the reflection of fond memories stored by angels in vials of gold.

"Father!"—when I see it written, that word seems to rise, and sparkle, and thrill, and caress, whisper and chant, and weep and pray and call! It towers like a rock in a weary land. It clasps like a shield. It thrills like a hymn. It springs like a fountain. It beckons like a star. It sings like an angel. No other name would answer!

So Waldo thought. All the consolation of religion depends on how we can utter that name—

“Father!”

He stood still, and felt his heart beat to the sense of precious possession in those bright skies. Would he ever see that tree of life, and could he bathe his tearful eyes in that river clear as crystal?”

“Oh, yes! there I shall be!” he uttered. “Wouldn’t Fan be pleased to have no nights to be frightened in?”

In his case the name Waldo was another word for constancy and fearlessness.

He had put his hand to the plough; a small but faithful hand, and would never turn back.

Oh, to tell Fan all about it! His heart ran out more than ever to his precious little sister; but there was never a hint, never an allusion, never a syllable, that gave him a clue to her history.

The months that followed were such as only come once in a lifetime. A true, pure faith was growing up in his heart, fostered by the happy faces around him, and the daily evidences of a protecting Providence.

It seemed as if some mighty magician had stepped from his boyish dreams and transformed life and him. Everything was changed. No wonderland was ever

fuller of interest than that which the great God had opened before him. Every day abounded in hope and happy suggestions. He compared this dear home afterwards to the Happy Valley which is hunted for in vain so often.

The morning prayer, the evening hymn, the innocent children; the lovely, patient mother; the candid, martial, fearless father! They sat around the table, chatting over their joys, perplexities, wishes, regrets; opening their hearts to each other with the greatest confidence, so that it was scarcely to be called table-talk so much as thinking aloud.

Waldo was a general favorite in the neighborhood. He was sure to be found at church on Sunday, rain or shine, and even in a storm. The neighbors would often stop to have a chat with him; and ask him if Fan had not come yet. Then he would glance up involuntarily, and say that he expected some day to meet her.

Oh, the peaceful quiet of those autumn days! How the hours made sweet to Waldo fled away.

Oh, the beautiful Christian lives about him, that neither cross nor thorn nor daily cares could make dreary!

And what a reckless way Waldo had of growing as the burning fall days slipped by, and the asters

and golden rod gave place to frosts, which found nothing but leaves to fall upon. Then he enjoyed, with a kind of passion, the glory of the winter landscape, the bare, wind-moved trees, and the fairy frost-work. But how soon the orchards were gay again with color! And he was almost tall enough to reach the lower branches!

His uncle watched him at work with deep interest, approving of his light step and busy hands; for he was seldom idle, and his bearing had a new elasticity. Hilary had become less arbitrary than formerly, and was forced to acknowledge the change in the lad. A love for books was not only hereditary in Waldo, but the result of circumstances.

Three years passed quickly, and during all these years Waldo always bought a birthday present for the sister he loved; but as he never could give it to her, the little gift was laid away in a drawer and carefully locked up. Oh, could he but have seen as others did, the slight, spare child watching at twilight with earnest eyes from the window of a palatial home, wishing—wishing for her brother!

Waldo made fine progress at school. At the close of one session, when he brought home his certificates of promotion, his uncle threw himself back in his chair and looked long at him.

"It is a good thing when a man can be proud that he has got a nephew. I have that blessing," he said.

Waldo never tasted a moment more sweet than that.

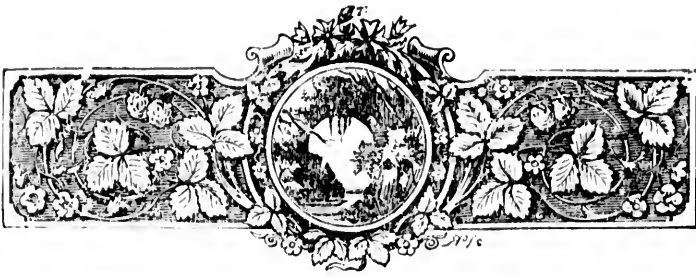
"Well, my boy, how would you like to go to college next year?"

Waldo's flashing smile answered for him. He trembled with sudden delight. Only that day he had longed to go to college, and learn what the wisest men knew. Millionaires and politicians had never interested the boy like sages and philosophers. And there had never been anything to arouse his curiosity like the tree of knowledge now vanished, but once actually existed in this world in the garden of Eden. In the severity of his virgin faith and early resolutions, he had studied as few boys do, and had, therefore, the deeper thirst for more wisdom.

"You want to go, then?"

"Oh, yes, sir! Fan would be glad for me to go, I am sure. I hope uncle will have her well educated."

"I hope so, but be anxious, Waldo, about only one thing. You are a bird of passage. Your life here is but a pilgrimage. You are flying to another sphere."



CHAPTER VII.

THE next year Waldo went to college. His uncle loved him as his own son, and made sacrifices to educate him. Waldo formed many friendships, but the one most intimate was with a sort of third cousin, years older than himself—handsome, gifted, popular, but erratic.

Being a man, and a scholar whose bright mind, even the grim, fastidious professors acknowledged, young Sargent's manner was somewhat patronizing to good, plain cousinly Waldo. He was a person of considerable feeling, but it pleased him to assume on all questions of sentiment an exasperating coldness, yet he often managed to be with Waldo, who was just the opposite. If the youth played ball, a tall, lazy figure slouched up within speaking distance, and watched the game. If Waldo was in trouble about

a lesson, and appealed to him, Sargent would feign the utmost forgetfulness and not help him a whit, but he never took his eyes from him until the boy had conquered.

They got on famously, for all that. Waldo's analytical mind interested Sargent. His religion amused him. Sargent was sceptical. He watched the boy very closely, almost hoping that he should find some inconsistency in his conduct which would sanction his unbelief. He was continually on the look out for faults, slips, that he might cast contempt on the religion the boy professed, and bring him out of fanaticism! He did not expect him to prove thorough, pure-hearted and unselfish, as he found him. Waldo's excellences almost irritated him.

"We shall quarrel some day, Waldo," he said nonchalantly, as they sat together one night. "This Jonathan and David business will burst up."

"Never!" said Waldo, his blithe, direct gaze fixed on his kinsman. "Though all forsake thee, yet will not I."

Sargent frowned.

"You are fond of quoting the Bible," he said. "Not that I recognize the passage, but I know by the way in which you flash out all over that it is the Bible, as if that settled anything."

“And so it does! Come, answer me one question. Take away from the world the teachings of the Bible, and what have you left? Now you must take it or reject it just as it is. The Book has borne the investigation of the proudest intellects. It was good enough for Shakespeare, Milton, Dante. On the other hand, millions of the poorest Christians, whose lights seem, no doubt, very faint—such as mine—would die to-night rather than part with the hope that lies *there.*”

He pointed to his Bible lying on the table.

“You will find only here and there a half-hearted doubter,” he continued, “while the great voice of the people pronounce the Bible, the Word of God.”

“I assure you I think most highly of the Christ of the New Testament,” said Sargent.

“Most highly!”

“By the way,” said Sargent, with a yawn, “here is another letter from your uncle.”

Waldo read it, and grew pale.

“My uncle is in trouble!” he exclaimed. “He has been found fault with by some of his members. He is one of the noblest of men. He has nearly starved to give to their poor. He has taken their children into the Church. He has buried their fathers and mothers. He has lost himself in their cause, and they

are bored by him. A fashionable lady arrived at the place in which he preaches, lived the life of a worldling. He called and remonstrated. He preached plainly, and they say he is old-fashioned, warped, narrow, that times are changing, and we must change with them. They want to get rid of him. The best man that ever lived. There is a popular prejudice against him. It will injure him. He is growing old."

"But they are right," said Sargent, coolly.

"Right!"

"Look about you a little, man! Views are broadening every year. One must not be too dictatorial."

"But he simply stuck to the Bible—added nothing, took nothing away. Foolish, giddy girls, and sceptical novels, are they to undertake the elevation of the people? Are they to lead the world, be the trainers for pulpit work? Some of the members were finding fault with him when I was there. One actually argued with him because he said that God made the world in six days."

"How do you know it did not mean six weeks, six months?"

"Because the time is specified—as, 'the evening and the morning were the first day,' and so on to the sixth. You don't speak of the evening or the morning of a week, or a month, or a year."

“And how did he propose that the butterfly girls should spend their days?”

“With some reference to a future existence.”

“You surely do not agree with the chuckle-headed old fellow?”

“Sir!”

Sargent had always been so gentlemanly that Waldo felt a shock at this.

“I see, you agree with him. You will probably be an estimable, whining divine yourself, preaching about the incarnation and hell, before you are five years older.”

Waldo, who had been standing, subsided white and weak into his chair, and remained silent for several minutes.

Sargent yawned.

“Mad?” he asked at last.

“No.”

“Ill?”

“No.”

“What, then?”

“I am going to my room. Good night.”

He stumbled out.

After midnight Sargent heard a knock.

“Waldo?” he said.

“Yes.”

The door was opened.

"I could not wait till morning," said Waldo.

"What for? What's up? Haven't you been to bed?"

"No."

"What have you been doing?"

"Praying. Oh, bless you, Sam!"

"Praying for three mortal hours?" said Sargent.

"And at last I am sure," said Waldo.

"Sure?"

"I am going to preach! Bless you for suggesting it, even in fun. The idea fell like a thunderbolt into my mind—"

"Waldo, go to bed. It may be that by morning this dream will have passed."

"No, no, Sam! Forty years could not fix me more firmly!"

"Good night."

"Heaven bless you, Sam!"

"A-h-h-h-men!" said Sargent, laughing.

"What are you going to preach?" asked Sargent the next day.

"Why, the Gospel," said Waldo.

Sargent puffed at his cigar.

"Those jubilant dogmas are worn thread-bare," he said. "If you must preach, follow some bright, guid-

ing star, like Mr. Powell, who holds large crowds entranced—”

“Yes, I’ve chosen the Star of Bethlehem. God give me strength to follow it! Sam, I’ve often heard my uncle sing :

‘No matter which my thoughts employ,
A moment’s happiness or joy,
But, oh, when both shall end!’”

“You are too young to have your mind filled with such thoughts. Why, I should never feel like laughing if I allowed my mind to dwell on such subjects.”

“But is it not wise to look the future in the face, and prepare to meet it?”

Waldo stood there before him a glowing statue of resolute manhood, while his eyes sparkled with joy.

Sargent was vexed. His own hand had suddenly given this interesting companion the *rôle* of a minister.

“Old fellow!”

“Well,” said Waldo.

“I will take you to hear the man I was speaking of—Powell. He has engaged, I believe, publicly, with a noted infidel. He is new.”

They went and heard Mr. Powell.

In an elegant church stood this modern minister, preaching a modern sermon. His hair was turning

gray, and a passionate love of popularity burned in his fine eyes. He had a crowd to hear him. He said he was changing his views somewhat. He was no longer bigoted. In short, he found several passages in the Bible that he had to take out. Science, he affirmed, would soon do as much as the miracles of Christ ever did. The animals had not fallen with man. Where would justice come in, then? He was open to conviction. Sin existed, but as to its origin, he would as soon set out to find the grave of Cain.

Some shook their heads, but others said he was quite an attractive preacher—so lenient, and his arguments were worth considering.

Sargent introduced Waldo to the famous orator, but the youth felt the man's imperfections.

Waldo mounted to his room that night with new fire in his heart, and prayed in his own way—a different way from the great Powell's, but effective in its own fashion. He seemed to penetrate very near an omniscient Being, and his soul rushed out in gratitude at His feet. He lay down unscathed—enlightened rather, eager but for the future.

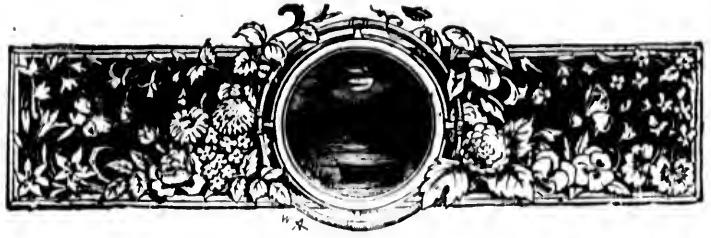
In two years from that memorable night, Waldo's college days were over. His heart seemed touched as with a live coal from God's altar. He longed to begin to tell others of the balm of Gilead which can heal the

sorest heart. But most of all he thought of Fan. Even since he had been at college she had been in Paris, Milan, Germany. When would she come back?

“She has forgotten us, Watch,” he said to his old dog. “She has forgotten and forsaken her two old playmates who miss her so much. Oh, Watch! she has surely forgotten us!” he cried, almost despairingly, on reaching home and hearing no news from Fan. But in a few moments, after he had turned his thoughts heavenward, it seemed impossible to doubt, impossible to despair, and he exclaimed:

“But I shall have her again! God will answer me when He sees fit. And I can wait on Him. ‘Wait on the Lord. . . Be of good cheer. Wait, I say, on the Lord. . . My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.’”





CHAPTER VIII.

FAN had never known what it was to want for anything that money could buy; but as she sat on her uncle's lawn one evening, the leaves falling from the trees around her, a storm brewing in the west, there was something settling upon her heart more oppressive than the heaviness in the atmosphere.

Something somewhere must be worth living for. Oh, to find it! There must be something somewhere to claim the interest for more than a miserable half-hour! Sometimes she looked with yearning at the little, distant, dark cottages, at the smoke and dim lights of the wayside home, wondering if *there* there might be found contentment.

"If I could only be in earnest about something!" she murmured. "Why does the whole of life—all the exhilaration of learning, all the advantages of society, the charm of beautiful surroundings, music,

entertainments—seem but like things seen in a dream? Of no real value.”

Everything about her was elegant and costly—her embroidered drapery, the jewels at her throat, the book in her hand, her own person and bearing. Happy!—if the world can make us so—she ought to have been. Yes, the marks of training, thought, and experience on her fair countenance spoke of anything but neglect.

Her belongings spoke of affection. She arose, and walked through the beautiful grounds. The cloud had passed while she sat there, and the sloping sun tipped with golden fire the western windows of the house, while a yellow atmosphere lay, rich and dusky in the shady lawn.

Before others Fan bore up, haughtily patient under her inward pangs. Now no one could see her; no one. For she did believe that there were beings who looked down on this rocking, reeling world. “Oh, heart of hearts!” she said, twisting her solitaire ring till it hurt her fingers, “I thought you could be sufficient unto yourself, but time and experience have taught me that you are not.”

Suddenly a bush was pressed aside, and her uncle stood before her. He had the sarcastic, indulgent eyes of one trying to subdue a provoking child; the smil-

ing, half contemptuous, severity of one who knows he can break the will opposing him.

“What a faculty for worship you women always have,” he said, impatiently. “You make too much of feeling in a life whose chief object should be education and utility. Only the heathen and the superstitious wish to worship.”

“It must be a happy feeling,” said Fan, “even to conceive of any being worthy to be worshipped. I have been educated,” she said, “but what then? Give me something to keep back the terror of life, something to defend me from the dread of death. I feel sick of all that I have ever known.”

“Wise men tell us that employment is the remedy. Now, why will you not be satisfied with learning more and more?”

“The more I read the more miserable I am; for I learn that no man has ever yet found life worth living. This that I speak of is more than mere girl-ish sentimentality! It sometimes besets me so that I seem to hear an inward voice calling me, urging me to be something. I look around and ask myself, ‘What?’”

He looked at her with his cold, quiet, reasonable eye. She knew there was something hopeless and oppressive in arguing with her uncle. He was so

calm. She, too, must be calm. But her very effort to quell her "foolish" unhappiness made her tremble. She was ashamed of her idle, purposeless life, yet she did not say so. Her eyes had a look in them that he knew too well—something of blind, dumb yearning; something that wanted words to tell how the young imprisoned spirit, ignorant of its glorious heritage, was awaiting—it knew not what.

"Oh, Uncle, if you knew how I feel, you would be lenient; you would not judge me harshly," she whispered.

"I think I know how you feel. There is nothing to be done that I have left undone," he answered.

He breathed a little quickly, but stood as erect and still as she had seen him in the grandest company,

"It is life!" he exclaimed. "As Napoleon once said, 'To live is to suffer.'"

"The task of tasks had been to fill her mind with the new doctrines, broad views, liberal opinions, cultivated ideals, so that when in her meandering she came across the word of Revelation it would be incapable of finding a foothold. She was like the blind Iolanthe, kept ignorant of her own blindness, striving to grasp the idea of color.

She was as one wrestling unconsciously with the powers of darkness. She held out her hands.

"Give me something to live for!" she whispered
"Give me something to break this horrible ennui."

"He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst," a Voice had once said; but she had never heard that Voice.

Her uncle looked at her curiously; she had a worn, exhausted look. But he had determined that she should not be burdened with those old doctrines about hell and lost spirits, and he could not cheer her with dreams of heaven.

"Here is another life of Hume," he said, holding out to her a nicely bound volume.

"I can't read any more of them!" she cried.
"Those awful lives! those melancholy deaths!"

"Well, I have here what you crave."

He held up a complete Bible, Old and New Testament. It was not very well bound. The sinking sun darted rays of splendor down upon its pages as he flippantly turned them.

"Suppose I should put it up at auction," he said; "how much do you think it would bring?"

"I have read so much against it," she said, "it would at least be entertaining to me to read it."

"It can no longer be suicidal to you. You are capable of reasoning. You are forestalled with arguments. You have obeyed me by not reading this book, waiting until I should give it to you."

He bent and looked at her.

"I have always thought that I saw something of myself in you," he murmured, affectionately. "How many times have I said, 'she is all truth, all candor. Your mother was all fire, warmth, intensity. She was soft, lustrous night. But you are daylight. I always knew you would give me trouble, as you have done, but you are not silly. Perhaps it will give you pleasure to know that we leave for home next week.'"

"Home!"

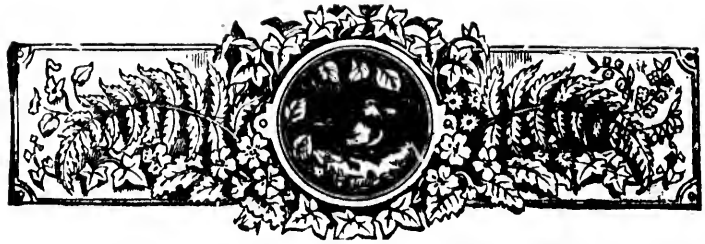
"Ah, you have lived abroad so long, and have travelled so much, you scarcely feel as if you have a home! I shall go to my old home in New Orleans."

He turned, and left her standing in the twilight, with a face suddenly flushed.

"Home!" she said softly, "my brother is there somewhere!"

She had often asked her uncle about him, but he had seemed to wish to tell her as little as possible, or he really knew nothing about him. Some mystery seemed to be connected with him. But she had a brother! Perhaps he might help to make life happier, if she could meet him. She wondered if he felt lonely as she did, in the midst of company and plenty.

"Waldo! you are the only bright side I have to look to!" she murmured. "Sometimes I think we shall never meet."



CHAPTER IX.

IT was a beautiful Sabbath morning in the city of New Orleans. The Methodist church was crowded, for many people had come, even from a distance, to witness the imposing ceremony of the ordination of preachers, and to hear the bishop's sermon, which was full of thought and fervor, preached from the text: "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain."

As the hour approached, and Waldo, the son of an infidel, arose, and, with others, stood before the altar for ordination as a minister of Jesus Christ, there was a stir of curiosity in the crowd.

When the bishop stood up, and the organ music rolled through the aisles, making the floor seem to tremble under his feet, Waldo bowed his head in prayer, asking God's blessing.

As he thought of the coming years, consecrated to

the Saviour of the world, and passed peacefully in endeavoring to do good, he thanked God, and felt that he would rather be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. His heart echoed the words :

“All is calm—all is bright—
Glories stream from heaven afar!”

But one face should have been there to complete his joy; one dear face far away, not permitted to see this holy act of consecration, looking, perhaps, on scenes of worldly amusement and unsatisfying splendor.

When the sermon was ended, and Waldo presented himself as a candidate, he felt his loneliness. He had not a relative there; his uncle was dead, and his family was broken up and scattered. The young candidate's heart ached for one look of love. He was doing the right. He was joining, under the inspiration of a call from heaven, the grandest army this world ever saw, only there was no one to care, only there was no one to be proud of him. Only! But his youth, and the light in his face, his deep, energetic responses, won the hearts of those assembled about him.

Before the dark, shining pulpit, with its open Book,

he stood realizing the solemnity of the occasion; and the people looked with pride at the erect, powerful form, the brave, earnest face, and noble head.

Never did Crusader look more determined and devout. He knew that if he had never found Christ, his little heart, once so wild and wicked, would have remained as empty of happiness as the winter tree of leaves, and as full of bitter disappointment as the church was of people.

There was no mother to sob in prayerful thanksgiving over him, no father waiting to grasp his hand, as only a father can, but surely his beloved sister might have been there rejoicing in his act!

“Take thou authority to preach the Word of God!”

The Bible—the great old Bible, searched by eyes now dust, was placed in his strong young hands.

After the benediction was pronounced, the church was filled with triumphant music.

Save for the color on his lips, Waldo's face was as pale as a marble image, but standing there as if loath to leave, consecrated to preach, he looked so good, so happy, so inspired, that many who had known him as a boy pressed forward to grasp his hand and bid him God-speed.

They saw promise in his already sharply outlined character. The mass of reddish hair rising up all over

his square-built head, his high-featured face, lighted by steady blue eyes, presented such a contrast to the silver-haired bishop who was nearing the goal!

Hill had come in at the last in a handsome suit, but he did not treat the matter very seriously. He told Waldo he would rather hear him sing than preach.

Waldo's first regular appointment was to a small church in the suburbs of the city.

He had been poor all his life. He had grown poorer instead of richer, and this was not a very bright prospect; but he felt it an honor to be sent even to that small charge.

"Send me," he prayed, "far out of sight of all the rich, and great, and high. Only give me souls for my hire."

That night the spiritual world seemed to him not only real, but almost visible. As he went home to his lodgings, he fancied himself not alone; and, instead of going to his room, he lay down on the grass and gazed.

"*How glorious is our God!*" the stars seemed to cry out. "Oh, I know it! I feel it!" he said, aloud. "Henceforth there is for me a life in which angels may sympathize. It is only the film of earthliness and sin that prevents my seeing them. O blessed ones, 'encamp' about me!"

The air was balmy, and Waldo was tired. He fell asleep and dreamed.

He thought that he saw, through the white moonlit clouds, a pillar descend slowly and rest upon his breast, and on it was written in large letters, "Preach the Word!"

He awoke strengthened in spirit, and felt that power had been given him to stand firm by God's Word; and he went on his way rejoicing.





CHAPTER X.

OUT in the suburbs of New Orleans there was a stately house, into which misery had lately entered in the shape of three people. They were just from Germany. The heavy, beating, dreary rain seemed to add to their sadness. The lightning flashed down from the great, crawling black clouds.

Suddenly there was a knock at the door. At this the host stared in amazement. Then an old waiting-woman ushered in a fine looking, half-drowned young man, who presented himself with a smile on his lips, but a grave inclination of the head before the host, Mr. Waldo York.

"The storm has driven me in, sir," said the new-comer, hesitatingly.

"Say no more. Be seated, sir. The night is beastly. It is well you stopped. You are drenched. Fan!" he called, and seating himself by a little table, he poured

out some wine, and handed it to the stranger. It was declined with thanks.

Mr. York turned suddenly. Something in the voice, in the height, in the turn of the head, reminded him of some one.

“Allow me to introduce myself,” said the young man. “My name is Waldo York, I am a minister. I was just on my way—”

The look in the face before him stopped him.

“My name is York also,” said the host, with cold self-possession, as the door opened. “I have the honor, sir, to introduce you to your sister, I think.”

Then, with a sudden, secret prayer darted up to heaven, Waldo turned, looked an instant, and sprang forward, holding out his arms, with a joyful cry.

“Fan! At last! Oh, thank God! Come at last!”

His face was radiant, his eyes burned. There was a sob, a long embrace.

Brother and sister had met. What a contrast to his mental pictures! Gone forever was his loving, blue-eyed little sister.

This tall, well-dressed lady, standing beside his scholarly uncle, *this* was the being of whom he had dreamed, for whom he had vowed to labor lovingly while life should last. This was the little, fairy sister.

for whose return he had prayed—never imagining that she could change toward him.

He had often imagined how he would meet her, how the rod of faith should smite, like the prophet's of old, upon their uncle's rocky heart, and they would be divided no more.

But no matter! It was Fan. That was enough.

"I knew I should find you again!" he said.

"How did you know it?" asked his uncle.

"Because for long years I have prayed for it."

Mr. York smiled, and the smile jarred upon Waldo's sensitive heart, especially as there was a faint reflection of it in Fan's face.

"She's all I've got!" he said, almost appealingly, to his uncle. "If you only knew how I have looked forward to this meeting."

"Well," said his uncle, with a singular smile, "your prayers are answered."

How well Waldo recalled that picture afterwards. Fan, standing there, tall and stately and elegant, a very queen in beauty and grace of mien. He remembered the costly, purple cloth suit, so becoming to her style. He could see afterwards, as he saw then, the proud smile of her guardian uncle as he presented her.

The storm soon died away. The parlors were like fairy-land that night. From the windows could be

seen the fitful moonlight on the water, and the motionless trees. Within, the book-cases represented a silent, ghostly, scholarly crowd of witnesses to what might take place there. There on the wall, in irreproachable binding, was Buckle, just waiting to let you become acquainted with him. Solemn, pencilled heads looked out from the shadows—Kant, Strauss, Renan, Voltaire, Paine, smiled out of gilded frames upon humanity which they claimed to have set right. Here was art, culture, quiet, beauty, luxury. Even the clock in the back parlor ticked in a musical, reasonable manner. Here was a clock representing a little ship moving back and forth, with the minutes for waves. The very fire-place was a work of art in brass. Into all this splendor had burst Waldo, plain in dress, jaded from hard study and overwork and exposure, but gloriously youthful with it all, and the happiest looking man Fan thought she had ever seen.

“You can’t be Fan!” he said, catching her up enthusiastically in one encircling arm. “Darling sister! should you know me?”

“Let her look first!” said his uncle, moving toward them with his arms outstretched. “Stand still.”

“Fan is living,” Waldo had often said, “and prays, perhaps, for my safety!”

He now stood looking at the fair, frail girl, almost

serpentine in her slenderness—almost ghastly in her pallor—his beautiful sister, and letting her look at him. Fan's voice seemed lost, and he, watching her, could not tell whether she was disappointed in him or not. He felt a little confused, and wished he could see her alone. Mr. York said something intended to be funny, and Waldo laughed musically, seated himself in a chair and stared up at Mr. Darwin, whose pictured eyes looked down into the young minister's with a gaze of warning.

Something in the face of his sister stimulated Waldo to reveal himself more fully. Had she understood that he was a minister of the Gospel?

"How unlike my room!" he said, glancing around. "I am accustomed to having my Bible open before me, Wesley on my right, Milton on my left. I warn you that John Stuart Mill's attenuated face over there will give you the blues."

Fan was a little puzzled to reply.

"You do not look like a reverend, sir," said his uncle, encircling his wine-glass with his hand and gazing deliberately at him.

"My outward man may not show it, but my thoughts and ideas are of the oldest possible cut," said Waldo, glancing at the girl. Fan! Fan! he really saw nothing else. She must know how he stood.

But she was bewildered. Her heart was throbbing so because he had called her "darling sister," and yet he really believed in the Bible and Christ, and was old foggyish!

"Waldo," said his uncle, "you know my views! Fan thinks with me, and we must agree to differ. Every man has a right to his own opinion. It was my purpose to prevent this meeting until Fan's views were entirely established, and I have done so. My brother, who raised you, was doubtless a good man; but, of course, he could not rear you with liberal views and be consistent to his Church, and now you think as he did. I am an Agnostic, and Fan thinks as I do. There let it rest. Now that you have found each other, I can see no reason why you should not simply accept the situation, and enjoy each other's society. As your work is near, come and get acquainted—only don't expect to find us all singing psalms every time you come."

Waldo thanked his uncle, and consented, at his invitation, to remain till Saturday evening with them.

An overwhelming pain had come upon him during his uncle's little speech—a pain more searching, more terrible, than any he had ever known. But he told himself he would save his sister through her love for him.

And Fan was saying to herself, "He is here! he is here!"

For so many years she had hoped for his coming. She had never seen a strange young man with her uncle, without thinking it might be Waldo. She had never seen a letter with an unusual postmark but she dreamed it might say that they were to meet soon. She never travelled without wondering if she might not meet him in some unexpected way. If she had prayed at all when she was a little girl, she would have prayed that every little boyish figure she met might be his.

"You have, after all, missed your calling, Waldo," said his uncle. "What do you want with the muscles of a gladiator in the pulpit?"

"They are especially needed by ministers," said Waldo. "A preacher's work is not all done behind a desk; he must go into highways, and hedges, and garrets."

Mr. York made a grimace.

It grew more and more galling to Waldo to have to see his uncle in possession of—and with so tight a hold upon what he had always regarded as his own. He rebelled against the thought, and once more, as in younger days, but stronger than ever before, the desire rushed over him to win his sister from this

usurper. And once more came the recoil—the wretched sense of youth and impotence.

“Strange,” said his uncle, “that your father should have sent you to be brought up by a preacher. I doubt if he kept his mind! And, Waldo, I don’t want to hear any of St. John’s and St. Paul’s views. Attend, if you will, to your own ‘salvation.’ Don’t interest yourself about mine.”

His nephew’s appearance had caused him quite a shock. Waldo was so different from what he had thought him to be. This young man was sharp-witted! What a solicitor he would have made! What a statesman! actor! Now he was thrown away upon the Christian Church! Waldo might have been artistic, literary, musical—unlike himself, who was nothing in particular.

He was perplexed, and not overpleased, for he hated excitement, tragedy, and he had been living on the verge of tragedy for two months past with Fan, she had become so dissatisfied with everything; and now he told himself that its culmination in human form stood before him in the presence of his nephew, who would probably drive Fan to suicide, with his doctrines.



CHAPTER XI.

WALDO would have been blind, indeed, not to have recognized the fact that his uncle liked him little. Not a word of welcome, not a question as to how he had fared—nothing but a confused silence, broken by attempts at hospitality.

Waldo was bewildered at first, but gradually the meaning of it all grew plain to him. Fan had been weaned from him, the canting Christian, by their uncle, whose hard, common-sense governed her. His longing to be confronted with Mr. York was satisfied at last! His dread had been only of Fan's unhappiness. No shadow of a doubt of her love had ever crossed his mind. And to find her an infidel!

He felt a keen pang when he addressed the beautiful, reserved creature, who he kept trying to convince himself was really his sister Fan. Having made his speech, Mr. York was standing before the

fire-place, silently regarding the two. There was power, a terrible sort of power in that tall attenuated frame of his. A crushing sense of his ability to rasp, wound and censure was conveyed to Waldo in the smooth voice, in the keen eyes which seemed to say: "Behold your sister! she is all that art, science and fashion can make her! Regard her again, you who have spent the years in praying to 'Our Father!'"

Waldo almost held his breath, and looked. There was the being who had been his little idol, wrapped in the icy desolation of scepticism. The bright wavy hair still crowned the snowy forehead, the delicately chiselled lips wore the same fulness and flexibility. But if he had seen her in the marble arms of death he would not have suffered more than he did.

He had imagined her dead, long ago; the tiny waxen fingers clasped together, and the long hair playing like sunlight over the lily neck and shoulders, but not like this—cold, proud, unapproachable—looking with a certain condescension upon a preacher of the Gospel. The fair casing—the beautiful form was charming, and he, intensely fond of the beautiful, delighted in her loveliness, in her graceful manner, in the smooth high-bred calm of her voice. He delighted in listening to her talk, hearing her play on the harp, and sing (which she did at her uncle's request), in

sitting near her; but the *diamond* was gone, the treasure was stolen away, her heart was no longer his.

In all the great cold world there was not one living soul to whom he could turn, outside of his uncle David's family, and they had broken up and moved away. Could there never be any more sunshine, any more cheery, loving words for him from *his own*?

After supper Waldo and his uncle were alone in the parlor for a short while.

"The only thing I have neglected in Fan's education is drawing," said Mr. York, showing Waldo some sketches.

Waldo seized his uncle's arm. A raving anguish was in his heart. He exclaimed:

"You have neglected something of infinitely more importance than that, uncle! You have starved her soul. You have separated us indeed. You refused my prayer—a little boy's heart-broken prayer—that I might write to my sister. You thought best not to allow it. She was carried abroad *to live*, while my heart broke over my little Fan—my all!"

He spoke rapidly, thickly.

"God have mercy upon me! Is it a crime to kill the body, and a lawful thing to ruin the soul? Oh, may you not live to have your heart trampled, crushed, and finally raised to be crushed again, as mine is."

His arm, which he had raised, sank to his side. Mr. York kept his seat quietly. Waldo put his arms upon the table in front of him, bowed his head upon them, and mourned as for the dead. His uncle, with tightly compressed lips, watched him.

"I knew how it would be," he muttered to himself. "You live in darkness. The spiritual atmosphere is higher, healthier here, where we feel the liberalizing influences of the age: but you will not admit it; oh, no."

"It is a sad, unnatural life for a young girl," said Waldo, trying to be gentle.

"Sad! Unnatural! To learn wisdom, to associate with the learned."

Waldo's deep eyes burned upon his uncle from under his heavy brows.

"And this is your wisdom!" said Waldo. "To be as the corpse whose ears are closed to the call of God, whose eyes are sealed; who sees no glory in anything. What has your dead wisdom done for my sister? How has Darwin helped her? By-and-by, when life is hard, she will cry out, 'I cannot bear my sorrow!' The 'new' school of morality, materialism, and no-Christ will extract no thorn from her path."

He glanced up at the authors. "Which one has made the idea of death endurable for her? None of

them have approached the grave to lift the pall. They dare not do it!"

He saw the traces of a worldly, uncomfortable life on his uncle's countenance. This was the man who had trailed the poison of his views across Fan's sunny path.

"Oh, God!" he cried out, "it is hard, after so much waiting and hope. It is hard to think that she does not acknowledge her Maker. *This* is the moment of unmixed pleasure to which I have looked forward for years, little dreaming it would be the loneliest of my life!"

He was not shedding tears. No! His eyes were dry, his mouth set.

Mr. York said nothing. Indeed, the sight of Waldo, with that look of sudden age which sometimes grows up in an hour; the sight of that strong, firm, noble man, shattered by the stroke of a heavy disappointment was enough to touch him.

"Fan would be happy, if there was such a state as happiness. But there is not."

Suddenly some one was heard cursing and swearing without, the door was thrown open violently, and a boy of fifteen, with oaths still upon his lips, confronted Waldo.

This was Mr. York's only son, "Foxy," lame from

his childhood. He was a homely, but interesting, lad. He tyrannized over Fan, who was accustomed to yield to him to preserve a show of peace in the family. Tutors he abjured at twelve. From eight o'clock in the morning till ten at night he did what he pleased.

"You were using violent and improper language," said his father to him.

"If I do it, it is because I've heard you do it. I have better manners than to do it in company."

"Hush! This is your cousin Waldo, Fan's brother. My son, Waldo."

"That?" queried Foxy, with undisguised disapprobation. Then he offered his hand. But Foxy felt his superiority to a parson, and showed it.

"I wish I could hear Edwin Booth to-night in Hamlet!" he said.

"You have, instead, your reverend cousin," said his father. "He will soften you down and keep you in order."

"I don't want to be softened down and kept in order!" said Foxy, leaving the room.

"I see you are sympathizing with Foxy," said Mr. York. "Yes, my son is lame; I had so many delights in life," he added, with a bitter smile, "the Good Being you speak of, I suppose, decided to soften me by means of a little cross. I was to content

myself with storing his mind with lovely New Testament riddles, while he limped about and snarled. Noble idea! This is what you preachers call a dispensation of Providence, a blessing in disguise. I am not orthodox, and I call it the destruction of the last small hope I had, for Foxy is violently unhappy. In fact, he is not what is technically known as a good boy. He and Fan will brook little, Waldo; they will not bear reproof."

"Uncle," said Waldo, in a firm but respectful tone, "I should be unworthy of my calling if I remained dumb or intimidated before them."

"Something tells me in awful tones that the time is coming when I shall be judged," continued Waldo, "judged as Christ said, according to the deeds done in the body. O sir! the pitying Christ is still a Saviour. Turn to Him and live! He will be a Judge. When a man dies, it is not true that he may have no hope of resurrection. We shall rise. The good Christian shall join his loved ones, and spend eternity in pleasure at the right hand of God. What do you live for if you do not believe in a future existence? What is your aim in life?"

"To get all I can out of it," said Mr. York.

"Judging from your looks, I should imagine that is not much," said Waldo.

This pale, sinewy youth was terribly in earnest. He kept walking up and down, occasionally addressing his uncle directly, at other times glancing out at the dark river and the city lights. He begged his uncle to throw aside his pride of learning, and judge for himself.

There was nothing in human form that Waldo could not face, so he did not tremble when he stood face to face with his sneering kinsman. He had taken that slight, nervous hand, in a grip close and powerful, as he made his appeal to him, when the door was opened by the pugnacious looking old butler, Joins, and visitors were announced. Waldo excused himself, and went to his room, piloted by Joins. There he seemed unable to sit still, and he paced the floor. Finally, his one refuge, prayer, somewhat relieved him. He repeated a favorite verse :

“In darkest shades, if Thou appear,
My dawning is begun !”

And again :

“When Thou comest to make up Thy jewels.”

Joins, listening without, was frightened, and went down stairs; and, before he retired, hid the silver plate first under a corner of the carpet, then over his bed canopy, and at last sewed it up for the night at the foot of the mattress.

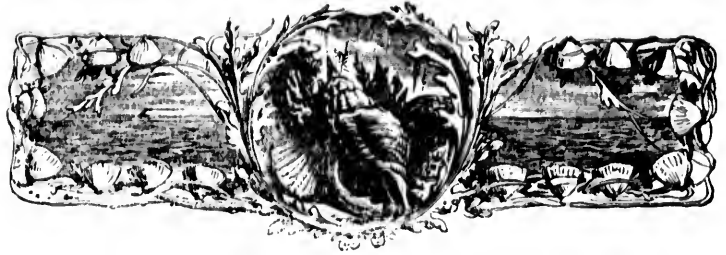
“He’s too darned perlite ter be honest!” said Joins.

For the faithful preacher had not failed to speak a word for the Master, even to that lost sheep.

Joins talked the matter over with the cook, and they came to the conclusion that Mr. York was not entertaining an angel unawares.

“Preachers!” said Joins, suspiciously, “I’ve seen preachers before, an’ they ain’t what they orter be! Joy go wid ’em an’ their sp’eres! They jest go along on smilin’ and talkin’ about this waste howlin’ wilder-ness an’ the bounds of iniquity. Now, some folks is folks’ nefies, an’ some ain’t; an’ this man don’t look like nobody’s nefy. He jest looks like he’s all by hisself. But he looks bright an’ rajiant all the same. Now I take it a reg’lar parson don’t never look like that. Some things is fac’s, and some ain’t. A parson! Miss Fan’s brother is somethin’ higher than that!”





CHAPTER XII.

WALDO walked out the next day. On the street he saw husbands and fathers hastening to wives and children; mothers returning from shopping tours, whose chief burdens were presents for dear ones at home; brothers and sisters playing in the sunshine.

"I only seem left out alone!" he thought. But when he returned to his uncle's, he found Foxy awaiting him, to ask more questions, which Waldo answered to the boy's satisfaction, and Fan thawed a little.

Evening drew on.

"Waldo," said his uncle, "I've got a challenge for you. Are you fond of duels?"

Who could want to fight him? Whom had he offended? Who was his enemy? Waldo wondered.

"No, I am not," he said. "My cause inspires courage, and promises glory without fighting or plunder!"

His uncle laughed.

"A man desires to take your life, or—it amounts to the same to you—your faith. He is a young neighbor of mine, a Mr. Edmondstone. I invited him and a Miss Roland to come over. They will be here to tea. I said it would be fine fun to see you two college boys sparring at each other with mental boxing-gloves."

He treated it all as a joke.

"You will just talk a little, you know," said Mr. York; "but from entirely different standpoints. Fred Edmondstone is as gentlemanly as possible."

"I have no objection to talking with any one on the subject of religion," said Waldo. "It is to me an all-absorbing topic."

"Have you ever met an infidel in controversy?"

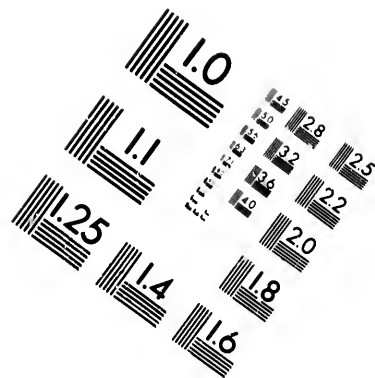
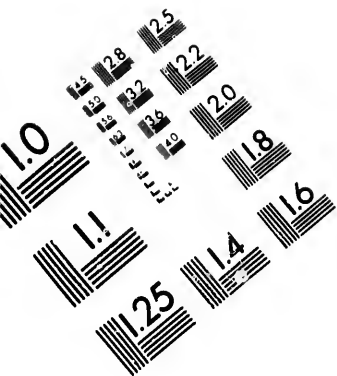
"I met at college a third cousin on my mother's side, who believed he was an infidel," said Waldo.

His uncle looked at him quickly, keenly.

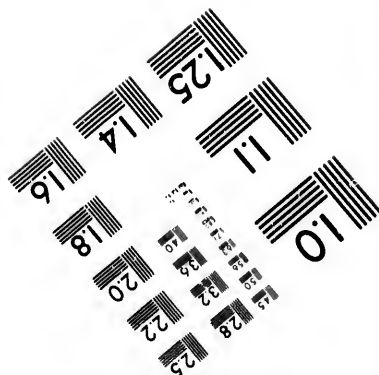
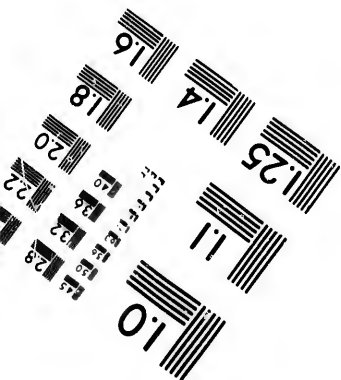
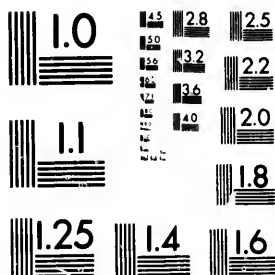
"Ah, I must lend you some books, Waldo, that will convince you"—

"Miss Roland and Mr. Edmondstone!" announced Joins.

The new-comers were introduced, and supper was announced soon after. Mr. Edmondstone was a lawyer, some years older than Waldo. When they returned to the parlors, he made a remark about "Robert Elsmere," and asked Waldo if he had read its arguments.



**IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)**



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Waldo said he had not.

“Not read ‘Robert Elsmere!’”

“Yes; but I did not find any arguments,” said Waldo. “I found some statements.”

“The book can’t be refuted!”

“There is no need to try. It refutes itself,” said Waldo.

Edmondstone flushed. His lips grew unsteady.

“It seals its own doom,” said Waldo, coolly. “It covers its own characters with confusion. It ridicules its own sophistry unwittingly.”

“How, pray?”

“The writer first wrecks her ships, then, after trying in vain to set them sailing again, closes the book with the assumption that the reader is satisfied with the happy thought, that those sinking men who could not save themselves, have discovered a new plan for saving others, and guiding ships aright, for all time. The writer is a woman whose notion of a hero is that he should be like a weathercock.”

“What do you think of Goethe?” asked his uncle, in a teasing tone.

“What do you think of him, sir? Would it be well to imitate his life?”

“But his writings?”

“I cannot separate the two.”

"He was a grand, fearless, capable being!"

"Fearless? He would not allow the subject of death to be mentioned in his presence. When his dearest friend, Charlotte Von Stein, died, he ordered that the funeral procession should not pass his door. When his son died, he spoke of it as the 'going away' of his son. Grand? He wounded, by unreasonable coldness, loving Schiller. Voltaire was his ideal character. Capable? Of what? Poetry? 'Faust' is founded on the book of Job. Besides, poetry will not be a sufficient thing to hand up, bound, at the last day. I usually read a man's life first. If, afterwards, I desire to read his writings, I hold his own lamp in my hand to read them by, and am influenced according as the light falls on the page."

"And a man whom you considered not 'good,' could not influence you?"

"Not at all," said Waldo.

"You are foolish," said his uncle.

"Then the best thing I can do is to associate with the wise," said Waldo, bowing to both men. "It doesn't matter to me with what pretty words the Christless men write. I would rather have the food of the gods served to me in plain and homely dishes, than indigestible viands in silver."

"Was Voltaire a fool, sir?" asked his uncle, with mock meekness:

"I think so. God called a better man one once. The great French sceptic lived a wicked life and died a dreary death; therefore, his opinions could in no possible way affect me. 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good,' is my motto."

"But you read 'Robert Elsmere.' What particular fault do you find with it?" said his young antagonist.

"I find mistakes, aside from its faults."

"Kindly correct them."

"It gives one to understand that the Gospels are a kind of mythology."

"Yes."

"Mythology," said Waldo, "was written by cultivated Greeks. They were men capable of personifying experiences. But it is said that the plain fishermen of Galilee were unlettered men. Then how could they have produced anything so magnificent as the history of Christ? So wonderful, that a Danté draws from them, a Raphael paints according to them; Churches, powerful and eternal, lift themselves up on the shoulders of the four Gospels, and you yourselves to-night, owe the peace surrounding you to that unacknowledged source. Why has nobody 'imagined,' or 'concocted,' such a story before or since? Why has no other *good man* claimed to be the Christ, that he might be the shining human example the book

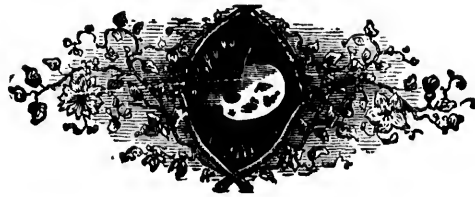
'Robert Elsmere' declares He was. If the book tells us He was human altogether, let it substantiate that saying by *finding a fault* in Christ's character. I think it was to Talleyrand a man went and said he wanted to set himself up as Christ. 'All you have to do is to be *crucified and rise from the dead!*' said the great man. Why has no one come? It seems, according to that book, 'Robert Elsmere,' a very simple way of doing good. It seems strange that all the laws in the civilized world should hang upon such things as this—'mistakes of Moses,' and the 'fancies' of four poor ignorant fishermen. This story, 'badly told,' we are informed, and its great central forms, are to dwindle before some 'Robert Elsmere.'"

"Now, sir, convinced of your ability," said Edmondstone, with veiled sarcasm, "I should like, some future day, to introduce you to a few of my infidel friends. I know one Buddhist, two Pantheists, one Agnostic and several Universalists. Learn from the mistakes of 'Robert Elsmere.' Convert instead of being converted. It is a little more difficult, it is true. I tell you, you will not find it a May game, this standing teeth to teeth with the enemy. Wait till you meet our grand old Pagan, Dr. Roland!"

Waldo went on earnestly.

"The book, 'Robert Elsmere,' asks, 'How do we

know the things told in the New Testament to be facts?' I answer, that the mind of man is *not original*. It cannot create. It imitates—draws from—builds upon facts *somewhere*. The writers of the New Testament had them. Where are the infidels' facts? They have none. A denial is nothing. They form no isolated history. They give us a bundle of negatives. They are not consistent. They contradict to-day what they asserted yesterday. They take away the Messiah, and give us—a 'Robert Elsmere!' All they attempt is a demand for facts. They want us to prove a certain thing—the Incarnation—has happened. We say it has. Let them, then, prove that it has not."





CHAPTER XIII.

“YOU need not rise, young men!” said Mr. York, somewhat sharply, as they both rose instantaneously to their feet; “you can sit down and glare at each other just as well.”

Miss Roland was leaning back in her chair, laughing softly. Fan’s face was blanched. She tormented herself for one moment with the possibility that her brother was right, and the next with the probability that he was wrong.

“The author,” said Waldo, “of the book, ‘Robert Elsmere,’ wants a God we can understand intellectually, when, if one was furnished her to-night, she would be the first to reject such a monstrosity. They cry for evidence! Why, who but a Christian ever shouted, smiled, and sang at the stake? Who but a Christian ever bore poverty cheerfully? Who but a Christian can tell of marvellous answers to

prayer? Very substantial answers, too! Who but a Christian keeps a peaceful heart and face with the dragon care at his heels, the young lion of temptation buffeting him, and the adder of illness coiling at his heart? Who but a Christian can walk the world and feel no fear, sleep like an infant, die as a child puts its arms around its mother's neck? Whom do you trust like a Christian? I have yet to see the first happy man out of Christ."

"Waldo! don't preach!" said his uncle.

"Let him go on," said Edmondstone, with lenient scorn.

"You have never been conscious, while you were denying the Saviour," said Waldo, drawing nearer to Edmondstone—*never* of something speaking to you? Did you listen? Did you hear no voice? Be honest! No inner voice?"

Edmondstone laughed, but grew paler.

"I didn't—I can't, of course, analyze every *feeling* I ever had!" he said, "I listen only to my reason. Don't deal in subtleties."

"But you have been out some night, alone! An impulse grew upon you to climb higher—do some noble deed. Your soul mounted to God! You wondered how it got there—fairly into Heaven! You find *no way* in philosophy. Follow faith, and lift

your reason up to it! Do we not love above the mental grasp? The idea of looking upon Christ as a merely good man, whose example we may safely follow, will never receive a substantial foothold.

‘Tis an empty sea-shell, one
Out of which the pearl is gone.’”

Waldo had not had the opportunity to take any particular notice of his uncle during this conversation; but Mr. York had scanned his nephew, and had thought him a little giant, fighting on the wrong side, and he made up his mind not to buffet him, but to set him right. The noble frame, and nobler intellect, attracted him oddly, and along with the most brilliant powers, the young fellow had muscle and nerve concealed under his slimness and clerical robes. He had still that grand-seigneur air of one born to position.

Mr. York had been blessed with two wives, and was now a second time a widower, with one child. He had become dissatisfied with the state of society, and thought marriage a failure, as well as the Gospels a jest.

“Waldo,” he said, “I wouldn’t believe that a man like you would let a set of whining preachers and shouting old women get the upper hand of you, so that you throw away all your chances in life! Don’t stand in the old ruts croaking your ‘Never more!’”

Come with the enlightened ones. Don't be so ready to believe all those stories about Jesus Christ."

"May I ask," said Waldo, "how it will benefit me or the human race to bereave us of a Saviour? Will we be more gentle, more loving, more hopeful and helpful *without Him*? Will a man's life be better because the Lord's Prayer is stricken out of its daily routine. Chisel the promises off of the tombstones, and take from a dying beggar the story of Lazarus, who is benefited? And if a man dies believing Christ has saved him, whom does it harm? You? Most of us are not so fortunate as Goethe. He said, 'When I need a God, I can find Him.' We need Him always, and must get to Him, as best we can, at all hours. It is certainly a blessing to no one that the laborious infidels have come to their wise decisions."

There was something alert and impressive in Waldo's mode of speaking. He found no difficulty in looking any one straight in the eye.

"Proof?" he whispered with intensity, his eye flashing with immortal fires. "Don't ask man for it. Ask God—to-night! Give Him your heart, and see what He will do with it!"

This made lawyer Edmondstone angry. Was he commanded to "get religion," and by this stripling? He who knew Spinoza, Shelley and Heine almost by

heart? Tears of rage rushed to his eyes, and presently the conversation, led by the host, slipped into other channels. Anecdotes were told, and it came out by degrees, that for years Mr. Edmondstone had drunk rather immoderately, gambled, dragged younger men down; but was no worse than the ordinary society man. It also drifted out, that the same period had been an heroic one with Waldo—when he had wrestled with poverty, giving out of his small purse to those in need. “He is poorer than I!” was the sentence that well-nigh impoverished him during the ten years’ struggle of a poor preacher’s nephew. Ten years of suffering and self-sacrifice, and love to God and man. Fan noted it. Her brother was purer and grander than that Edmondstone. *Whatever* made the difference, it was there. And yet, she felt ashamed of his zeal. It was foolish excitement.

“You must meet Dr. Roland,” said his uncle, looking curiously at him. “The Doctor is exclusive, and vastly learned, but he may talk with you, though, as a rule, he scorns lesser lights, and don’t want to waste his time with boys. But when he finds you narrow, look out. He likes broad, liberal views. As for me, I am not concerned with views; but I object to narrowness, as I object to a cramped apartment. Dr. Roland is a lion—who sometimes roars.”

“You would not like for the laws of your land to be too lenient? We insist on the enforcement of our own laws. ‘Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way’”—

“The world is getting wiser, every day, sir!” said his uncle.

“Do you think we have a man to-day of Shakespeare’s calibre?” asked Waldo.

“Well, n—no; but”—

“He believed in hell. He saw God, heaven, salvation, redemption and the Cross, on one side; and hell, Satan and remorse, evils we know not of, on the other. He makes a narrow path between—as narrow as St. Matthew does! He did not consider the soul a mere bagatelle, and the right a mere alternative, nor death oblivion—

“‘To die, to sleep—to sleep! perchance to dream; ay, there’s the rub;

For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause!’”

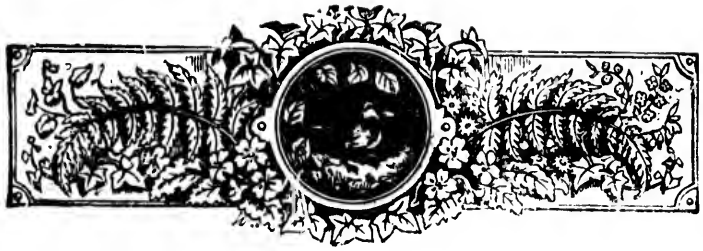
“The Doctor is an author, sir,” said his uncle. “He will put you in a book. I confess I wouldn’t take the trouble to do it. You will hate him in one hour after you know him.”

“I think not.”

“He will tell you you have no reason for saying that Christ rose from the dead.”

“As much reason as he has for saying that Augustus Cæsar ever reigned, or that Homer was blind, or that Socrates took poison—even from his standpoint!”





CHAPTER XIV.

“DOCTOR ROLAND!” said the butler, opening the door and letting in a dark Hercules, with great, far-seeing eyes, and an intolerant air.

“Well! we were just speaking of you,” said Mr. York, presenting him; “sit down.”

“Can’t stop.” said the good-looking widower and sceptic, taking no particular notice of any one, after a careless “Happy to meet you,” to Waldo, and frowning on the young lady beside Fan.

“Clarie,” he said to Miss Roland, who was his younger sister, and lived with him, “why will you take away every key in the land, just as the servants are off on a tremendous jollification? You are a monomaniac on the subject of keys. You’ll lock me up one of these days, and take the keys with you visiting!”

Laughing, she gave him a bunch of keys. He then

ganced up hungrily at Mr. York's host of authors. He took a new book down from the shelves, and Waldo saw that his hand shook as with the palsy. He saw the blue veins stand out on his forehead. What terrible black eyes he had, and what masses of black hair ; how eagerly his glance scanned the worthless page !

"Another," said Waldo to himself, "whose prized anti-Christ authors are eating the very heart out of him. Another being prepared for a dreary death. Another triumphantly wrong."

"In regard to women," said the Doctor, turning the leaves of the book with the most remarkable agility, as an adept handles cards, "I have remained in a state of absolute idiocy. Nature, man, revelation, have all been satisfactorily explained ; but woman"—

They all laughed.

"Eve—conundrum of the universe—I bow my knees in the dust before you !"

He bent gracefully toward Fan and his sister.

"We are poor." He looked at Waldo. "In vain I ask myself, what there is to steal, who there is to steal, and how anything is to be stolen? Clarie is in this like she is about the man under the bed. You know, she insists there is a man secreted under the bed every night, only waiting till the lights are out to play the

burglar, and have our blood. One night your boy, Foxy, was over at our house, and I persuaded him to get under the bed. When she found his feet protruding, I thought Clarie would faint; but the 'man' hasn't been mentioned since. Fearless Fan, now, is a heroine. Do you know, sir, that your sister is hunting after truth?" he asked Waldo; "dares to follow the boldest thinkers—has for some years done so? But what truth is, fearless Fan at eighteen, when pushed to the wall, cannot say!"

They little dreamed that even then Waldo's suffering heart was uplifted to the throne of grace, praying that Fan, amid so many temptations, might come to love and trust the Word of God, which his clear insight told him she now despised.

"She is hard-headed!" said Dr. Roland. "I hope, sir, you are not like her, though her brother!" This with much despair.

"If she is afraid of error, I am like her," said Waldo.

"Afraid?"

What a sneer on the handsome lips!

"Yes, I think I am—terribly afraid of sin."

"You are in the chain-gangs of Christianity. These knees of mine, sir, once bowed at your Cross. I passed days without sitting down; many nights with eyes wide open. I received the Saviour with cries of passion-

ate joy at twenty-four, and at forty-four found that no such Being had ever existed."

"How?"

"By the use of common sense."

And your common sense has prepared you to die and meet this Saviour—in case there should be one?"

"Certainly."

"Have you ever known a Christian on his death-bed to declare that he had been mistaken?"

"That doesn't prove anything!"

"Have you ever known of infidels asserting on their death-beds that they were mistaken and lost?"

"Old, sir! old as the hills, all that twaddle!"

"Answer."

"My answer is that Christianity is failing. Men are becoming wiser," said the Doctor.

"I deny positively the correctness of that statement," said Waldo. "It is a mistake."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"The Church is growing every year," said Waldo. "Its growth from the first has been marvellous. It started, as you say, with four ignorant men. Look at its members now. You have had, according to all appearances, men wiser and better qualified. Where are your numbers? What have you accomplished?"

"I have no patience with youth; hot-headed,

sanguine, ridiculous youth!" broke out the physician, with half-suppressed vehemence. "Study. Read Goethe."

"And die, like he did, crying, 'More light!' I would rather be like that Christian painter who, when dying, asked, 'Where does all this light come from?' or like one of my own people, who said, 'Open the doors and windows! Let heaven and glory in!' The sceptic boasts great liberality. He will bear all; Spinoza and St. John, Voltaire and Moses, prophets, atheists, pagans, Confucius and Christ. This is his peculiar glory. But he does not care to hear of the Christian's triumph over death. He is so liberal, he informs the world, that he changes his God now and then. With a hundred keys he opens a hundred boxes, each enclosing a box; the last enclosing a box which, without revealing its secret, shuts him in, and all is dark. The man whose religion is beauty, whose worship is of nature, and whose aim is culture, is not the highest type of man."

"You are going to teach men how to reach the highest form?"

"God helping me!"

"Hadn't you better not attempt too much at once? It is not customary to teach men to walk before they can crawl. Fool's errand. Waste of time!" muttered

the Doctor. "You are still in the nursery yourself—an 'Illuminatus Minor!'" He turned again to the book-case. Then he looked furtively at Waldo, and was surprised, disappointed, to find in his face no sign of anger or perturbation. "You are in the nursery of learning yet, I say!" even sharper than before.

Waldo inclined his head forward, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Then let me remain there."

"Remain!" here the Doctor choked for utterance. "If you were my nephew—I—I must be going!"

The Doctor took out his great watch and made a face at the lateness of the hour, but did not go.

"You haven't even gone far enough to doubt the miracles?" he asked, turning again to Waldo.

"Not even far enough for that, inasmuch as I acknowledge my own existence to be one worked to-day, before my eyes, in my very being. I have a test for what I believe—a standard."

"What is it?"

"I simply take the New Testament to the Old. They agree in spirit. They agree in characterization. They utter the same truths."

"Waldo," said his uncle, "You believe that little anecdote about Jonah—believe that it all happened

in that absurd way? And you think God has a hell somewhere? Ha! ha! ha!"

Then Mr. York repeated some of Heine's sayings, and laughed lightly.

Waldo rose from his chair and exclaimed, in a voice hoarse with feeling, "O awful, awful name of God! Light unbearable! mystery unfathomable! vastness immeasurable! Who are these who come forward to explain the mystery, and gaze unblinkingly into the depths of the light, and measure the immeasurable vastness to a hair's breadth? O Name, that God's people of old did fear to utter! O light, that God's prophet would have perished had he seen! Who are these now so familiar with it?"

The men were silent. Fan felt a thrill of pleasure that was half pain. Waldo looked so noble.

What a pity it was that he was all wrong!

* * * * *

"Well, Waldo," said Mr. York, when the visitors were gone, "you were going to prove a great deal; but you didn't, you know. Come, tell me why the four Gospels do not agree?"

"They do agree perfectly."

"Ah! one tells more than another, and differently."

"One night," said Waldo, "I was sick. A large fire broke out very near us; but I saw nothing of it.

After it was over, several people told us about it. Each one gave a different version, in minor details, of the fire, though all were there together."

Mr. York made no reply.

"One said the fire was caused by one thing, another by another," continued Waldo. "One said it broke out in one place, one said at another. They did not at all agree in their version; but it did not occur to me to doubt that the fire had taken place, on that account. The amazing thing is that the Gospels absolutely agree in the main parts, though written by four different men."

"Go on."

Mr. York had glanced furtively at Fan. He was not uneasy.

"Another proof of the divine inspiration of the New Testament is that the Apostles easily convinced many. But my main argument is that too much is not claimed. Everybody who saw miracles was not convinced. And at the Cross—supreme moment—only two are said to have been converted, the thief and the centurion; the first in heart, the last in reason. 'Lord, remember me!' was a prayer. 'Surely this was the Son of God!' was merely the mind's consent to a fact."

"Ah! I've seen the great pictures, 'Christ before

Pilate,' and the 'Crucifixion,' that so many thousands have looked upon. Well?"

"Shouldn't you have thought they would have run to Him—those people who saw His miracles? Shouldn't you have thought they would all have believed and loved Him? They did not. The sceptics think they are getting up something new; but they are not. What other book ever told man *what his own heart* tells him, that he is guilty, and that he is immortal, that he must be delivered from guilt, or his immortality will be insupportable?"

"What need of a Christ at all?"

Waldo took his uncle's questions and let God answer them by His own great acts.

"God waited four thousand years, as if to give man the opportunity to climb heavenward without a Christ. God Himself has proved what the sceptics ask. He proved that man, in the midst of the highest culture (remember the Greeks, and the broken marbles dug out of the earth for modern palaces), in the midst of growing cities, great armies, the law, the prophets; with it all, man went backward, not forward! So that when Christ came the world could go on no longer in its spiritual ruin and darkness. The world had its Jewish Church, its established rulers, its moral men, and yet had reached iniquity's exquisite ex-

tremity. A Herod wore the purple. The Jews had killed their prophets. Socrates had been poisoned for wishing to teach the youth of Athens. Above the expiring light a star arose, and, moved by the finger of God, pointed a Helper for the world. The star is so small as to be almost sinister to the Unitarians. They laugh at this small signal—a March star. Some poor ignoramus made up, dreamed the whole august vision, they tell us, kindly. Why, sir, Christ gave us one commandment which has lifted man more than all the common laws combined with all the philosophy of the sages: ‘A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.’”

His voice sank to tenderness.

His uncle, though armed with defiant scepticism, was conscious of an unusual interest and expectation; but there was Fan! A sneer curved his lips.

“Go, Fan!” said he, “go child; you are tired. You are listening; but it is possible that your thoughts are elsewhere—with the Doctor, for instance.”

“No, uncle.”

When Waldo got in earnest, he was very much in earnest indeed, excited, in fact.

“The New Testament,” said he, “stands out in authenticity better than the classical writings of antiquity. Why don’t the infidels question the

orations of Cicero, and the histories of Polybius and Livy? How do we know that we have the veritable 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey'? Bentley says, in speaking of the Gospels, 'Even put them into the hands of a knave or fool, and yet, with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of one chapter, nor so disguise Christianity, but that every feature of it will be the same.'"

"Even the devil," said Mr. York, "and his characteristics have always interested me. Milton drew a rather magnificent Satan, to tell the truth. I should really like to meet him in some of my travels; but he is about as real as your other phenomena. Come, it is too late for further discussion. Let's go to bed."

Fan was either tired, or indifferent, or sleepy. Waldo could not tell which.





CHAPTER XV.

“PERHAPS if I too could pray, it would ease my burdened heart!”

These words fell from the lips of Fan, stealing through the twilight, as day came to its close. She sat by the window wrapped in a shawl, looking at the stars coming out by the million.

“But there is no God,” she murmured; “at least, none such as Waldo preaches and prays to certainly. There can’t be such a Christ as the Bible pretends to reveal. How often has my intellect declared this to me! And yet I can’t get rid of questionings and wonderings. It was settled long ago that the Christians were mistaken. Why do Waldo’s words haunt me? Oh, can the dead feel? Dawns any sunbeam on the night of dissolution? Waldo believes it all, and lives up to what he believes. And it is such a joy to him. If he thinks of death, it is with peace,

yes, happiness; while I am so afraid and wretched. I find that in the midst of plenty I have nothing. And uncle—has he not always pleased himself? Yet what a life! He hides his keen disappointments, but they rankle. He used to seem greater to me than he does now.”

She bowed her head and wept, with her clasped hands pressed over her heart.

Her uncle must be right. He always knew so well what he was about. The sarcastic, bitter, intellectual face had become as an oracle to her. Her uncle had been exceedingly generous toward her, and she knew he was very fond of her, though he had never mentioned it.

She had seen him growing year by year stiller, graver, colder, sadder.

“I am a severe, sarcastic, disagreeable creature,” he had once said to her, “but so is truth. Truth is seldom young, beautiful and joyous. It is just the reverse. And all that about ‘Infinite Time,’ and ‘infinite space,’ fundamental conceptions.”

She had asked, when she was younger, about these phrases, and he had said, “I don’t quite understand, child. There is much we cannot understand. But I am sure it must be as we think. *Darwin and Hegel have looked into it.*”

And Hegel trusted that somebody else had looked into it, no doubt.

Thus tossed on the dead sea of unbelief, Fan, in darkness and despair handled those questions which Waldo had settled at ten years of age, and settled finally, for he had gone to Him who alone has said :

“If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”

“Lor’,” said black Regina, who nightly combed out Fan’s rich, wavy hair, “you an’ yo’ brother don’t favor none. Seems like you air kinder disappointed in each other—both on you.”

Alas! the most ignorant, humble hand can inflict a sting.

While Fan slept that night, dreaming not of heaven, but of the things of time, in another part of the house by a high window, a tall, motionless figure stood, dimly outlined, and through the silence Waldo’s prayers went forth into the night, up to the throne. Tenderly he drew from his pocket an old locket, and Fan’s dimpled face smiled back. Oh, to see it shine on him like that again.

“I’se dot Waldo’s hand,” she used to say proudly. Now—

A tear fell on the cold, englassed face.

Now she only saw him as a ranting talker, as safe

to trust for guidance as a will-o'-the-wisp. Lost were the loving eyes, loving lips, loving heart of beautiful little Fan.

"We can endure death. It is not the saddest parting. Quit of this weary world—sheltered in heaven—oh, Fan, I can but wish we were all there."

He had thought she would be glad to rest her tired soul in his arms and hear all he had to say. Oh, if she might be saved at last. Never mind the slights. Never mind the pangs. Only to have her with him when the fitful fever of life was over. She was more beautiful than the picture now; but love is so much dearer than beauty.

To his warm, loyal heart he pressed the cold and senseless thing, then, holding it up, he whispered in a deep voice:

"My Jesus—as Thou wilt,
Oh, let my will be Thine."

"Lord, I am not lowly—only heavy-laden. I am not Christ-like, only struggling up. Make me as one of Thine hired servants. Only use me, oh, use me for Thy glory."

A voice from within seemed to sing sweetly to him as he sank to rest.

"At the river's crystal brink,
Some sweet day, by-and-by,
We shall find each broken link,
Some sweet day, by-and-by."

The early breakfast was over, and brother and sister walked out to enjoy the pleasant air.

Fan knew that she was fair; it could not be otherwise; but she cared little now for the marvellous loveliness of that sad face of hers.

"You have been to Germany, Fan?" said Waldo.

"Yes, several times. I think we've been nearly everywhere."

"A beautiful spot this."

"Everybody says so."

She slightly turned her graceful head.

"You play, sing, and have many resources against ennui."

"My uncle has arranged for many, whatever their efficacy may be."

He drew from his pocket a picture.

"Do you know this?"

She laughed musically, heartily.

"Oh, dear! what an odd little girl I was. But then I am odd now. Am I like you expected me to be?"

"No, Fan."

There was a slight trembling of his lip.

"You are far more beautiful. Do you know, Fan, the Bible says of man, 'He cometh up as a flower and is cut down?' Your beauty will fade; what then?"

"There's the mind, Waldo; that should grow brighter. Uncle is very intelligent. You ought to appreciate *that*."

"I do. Real ignorance I almost fear. But there is something worse. Even ignorance is not so dense a thing as impudence! The impudence of intellect is about to do more harm than all the ignorance the earth ever saw. I know that the new religion is a farrago of a hundred incompatible ideas, about as applicable to God's ordinances, as buckets to the emptiness of an ocean. I confess I am not deep enough to know what they mean. Their speech is a fine sounding polyglot of uncertain interpretation. They are anxious to give us a new religion. That soothing occupation of taking immense trouble to produce what neither they nor any one else wants, is the final resource of many a subtle, humane scholar! They fill up their books with a kind of twaddle that is neither here nor there, all to prove that a man may be inconceivably wretched and irremediably helpless—if he wants to be. I'll keep a little happiness, if you please."

Fan smiled.

"To be sure," said Waldo, sarcastically, "what would the world be without its infidelity? How many humane institutions, homes for the poor, hospitals,

orphan asylums there used to be before this objectionable, unneeded Christianity and these cruel doctrines of ours appeared? Why, you know, Fan, there never was one of these heard of before the Christian religion came.

"Search history for it. I almost laughed myself to scorn at first, to think of turning preacher, but I have made up my mind not to be half preacher and half doubter, part sanctified and part traitor. They tell me I can't revolutionize the world. Well, the world shall not revolutionize me. *With the heart* man believeth unto righteousness. Reasoning follows love, Fan. It does not precede it. Those men who love knowledge more than holiness will never find both."

There was a long and dreadful silence. Waldo was beseeching God not to let them drift apart.

He looked at her, she was dull, sad. And she might be a happy pilgrim to the better land for the simple asking! He took her hand tenderly. Ah, how gentle and forbearing we are when we have been with Jesus.

"Do I offend, or may I go on?" his eyes seemed to ask.

Fan found this talk tedious, and listened with flagging attention. They walked together through the old churchyard, he reading aloud the promises of resurrection on the tombstones.

“And my uncle would erase all these! and write here simply, ‘The end!’ Those two words seemed written upon his heart. Oh, sister!” Waldo’s voice trembled as if the word brought with it the conviction that he was not welcome to her with his ‘news.’ He spoke the word with an effort like one he was unaccustomed to. “Sister, can you contentedly face the future even in this life? And how can you contemplate the life after death?”

“Contentment is a rare thing, Waldo, but, at least, I shall try not to complain,” she said.

“Fan! Let me know your heart, and whether you think it possible to be happy or not. I think I can promise that you shall be. This is the key to the kingdom of heaven!” he said, drawing from his pocket a small Testament. Fan walked beside him slowly, her eyes fixed on the path.

“I do wish,” she said, but in a hopeless tone, “to lead a different life; not to waste my best years in rounds of frivolity. I have had what is called a good education, and I do not wish to be good for nothing but to laugh in a chorus. Oh, the ambition to do some heroic thing has always burned in my heart! But I don’t—”

She paused, and raised her eyes to her brother’s face.

And this was Waldo, wicked, cursing little Waldo! She could remember his youthful oaths loud and bold. This soldier of duty, this grand young theologian, placed in his childhood at the very centre of a rationalistic struggle, yet never swept from his anchorage of faith, was the same—only, Christ had entered his life! Who could have imagined it would make such a difference? But it was all excitement, and would die out, as her uncle said! And it was a blessing.

Under all her sadness, a sort of satisfaction in being like the wise infidels had flooded her young heart like a touch of madness.

“We shall never think alike, Waldo,” she said decidedly.

Her eyelids trembled an instant, but there was no concession in the blue depths of her eyes, as she said, “I appreciate, Waldo, your interest in me; I am glad you have this happiness you wish me to seek. Believe me, I would not take it from you, and I know I could not. But I am sincere in my doubt. Let us return now.”

When she entered the house she began a brilliant overture on the piano, and soon after Dr. Roland was announced.

Ah, she had lovers, she did not need him—her brother!

The Doctor evidently admired Fan. Waldo looked at him and turned sick, sick at heart, sick with despair. Yes, the Doctor was handsome—terribly, brilliantly, though ruggedly, handsome. His voice was deep and musical, his eyes were like stars of light. Fan worshipped the beautiful, the majestic in all things—and he must leave his sister with this man! What power had Waldo against so powerful a champion?

“Let not your heart be troubled.”

With these words, that distilled like dew on the grass by night, did he comfort himself.





CHAPTER XVI.

DR. ROLAND'S grand, rugged, grim face and handsome artist-eyes were clouded. He arose from his chair by the piano as Waldo left the room.

"You are losing interest in music!" he remarked.

"I am afraid so," replied Fan, standing near him after rising from the piano.

"Fan, you know that I think you gifted. From the moment I first heard you play—you were then fourteen—you have been as my own child to me—my heart's child. I am annoyed by the change in you!"

"Can it be some silly love affair?" he muttered to himself. "Who would have thought it, such a girl as she is?"

He began to tease her with his grim satire.

"You have lost your heart. You don't sleep at night," he said.

"Do you?" she asked.

"With me it is different!" he answered. "For me long winter nights have a peculiar fascination. Summer evenings are nothing to them. Do you know there is nothing I like better than to put on my hat on a sharp, frosty December night and walk?"

"You are like Dickens. I hope you don't walk thirty miles a night?"

"No; I have my favorite haunts. I like to be alone when I am sentimental."

Fan laughed.

"Once more!" he said. "I thought you had forgotten how to smile. Your nature is pitched in a minor key. We have to fight pretty hard for mirth, so don't give up to the blues, or I don't know what would happen. Speaking of night, I imagine that Milton wrote his great poem at night, and even your brother probably writes his sermons after daylight has gone."

"Even!"

"Now, Fan, listen to me. You will be dead in a year if you go on at this rate. Fever, sleeplessness, no appetite, no exercise! Stupid, brooding, maddening thoughts!"

"If I only could do something. I do nothing, but am always tired," she exclaimed. "Oh, when can I turn?"

He raised his hand to his heart, gazing at her wistfully, but she was not looking; and in an instant he was as unsentimental as ever.

She had cast herself on a chair, and was trying not to sob.

“When?” he said. “Not to this young brother of yours. He has nothing but a dream to offer you—a delusion!”

“She bent toward him.

“You have tried it all!” she whispered. “What is there in the world to make life worth living?”

“I have not found it,” said the Doctor. “I am a physician for the physical life; but you women want a physician for your souls. There is none.”

He arose to his feet.

“Fan!”

The Doctor's voice sank.

“I am what they call eccentric. They'll tell you I believe nothing, love nothing; and am, of course, no suitable husband for a beautiful, romantic young girl. I've never seen a woman who could hold me bound like Sampson till now. Singularly enough, your bitter sadness endears you more to me than ever. Fan—*Fan!* I don't promise anything; but old and hard as I seem, I'd love you till death stopped my breath, if you *would* come to me! Dare you do it?”

At this moment Waldo entered to bid his sister good-bye.

"Ah, Mr. Waldo," said Dr. Roland, with his usual lethargy and his sarcastic glance, "I have rescued your sister from an acute attack of philosophical despair. Yes. The immediate cause of her indigestion was her inability to understand evolution, pure and simple."

Dr. Roland tossed back his long, black hair. His father was a Russian, but he was English-bred.

"Your sister was pining to do something for someone! Thought that was, after all, the secret of happiness. She will find peace, she thinks. Peace? There is no such thing. You will find its symbol in the ships at sunset, in the beams of an early morn; but *it* remains a delusion."

Waldo's strong, well-shaped lips set themselves. They curved like a bow bent for shooting. His eyes flashed into the Doctor's.

"Did you ever go to a patient who had an acute pain and tell him, to his face, that it was a delusion? that his consciousness of pain did not give you sufficient evidence? This peace exists!" said Waldo. "I feel it in my heart."

"I can remember the time," said the Doctor, "when I used to go to church and Sunday-school, and the sunshine fell warmly on the name of 'Jesus,' made in

evergreens upon the wall at Christmas time. I used to sing—can you believe it, Fan?—with great gusto :

‘Oh, come, angel band!’

I neglected arithmetic and geography seriously for a long time, to go and sing those tunes. They could not stand the acid of criticism. Mystery?”

“Nature is a mystery!” said Waldo. “We know no more of the essentials of light and electricity than was known at first, when light broke over Eden from a newly created sun. But no man has ever declared that, because we cannot understand these things, we had better not use them! In Munich there is, over a grave, a monument. It represents a mother taking leave of her son, who would fain retain her. But she points to a little babe at her feet. That woman is the Past, to my mind. The mother is leaving; but she leaves the babe, the King. The Mosaic law fleeing before the Christian dispensation! Mighty ethics put to flight by the hand of a Babe! Why, the greatest universities are Christianized. How many men, intelligent, mature men, rest now in the belief that God is with them? This is their hope, but it is a hope that has kept their hearts afire and glad on many a lonely midnight. It has saved some from madness, hundreds from despair. It pacifies the conscience, shoots beams

of hope into the most desolate lives, makes existence bearable to countless numbers to-day."

"Moonshine! nothing but moonshine!"

And this was his sister's lover! One associates sighs, dreaminess, stolen looks, hollow cheeks, with a lover. Was this almost middle-aged sceptic really his sister's lover? Dr. Roland had a look of great honesty and sense as he leaned back, and looked at the two smilingly. But did she care for him? Did she love him?

"You see, Waldo, she found the world to be hollow and barren," said the Doctor, looking banteringly at Fan, "life so very void—"

Fan blushed.

"So I have decided what was the greatest good to the smallest number. Now, sir, I hope you are not going to come upsetting everything in your course, trampling rough-shod over our little romance!"

Dr. Roland had a very kind and loving heart hidden away in his big, proud bosom. Waldo knew this, and he determined to be just and honest first of all.

He saw that nothing escaped the lover's eyes; that he saw his (Waldo's) pain, and the smile that kept wavering about Fan's lips, the heave of her white neck when she looked at her brother, the throb in his throat as he looked back at her.

Waldo arose and went to the Doctor.

"Sir, I wish you happiness," he said.

Then he turned to his sister.

"And you; may the blessing of God—"

He could get no further. He bade her a hurried good-bye, and was gone.

Waldo's spiritual separation from his sister was the greatest grief he had ever known. Around him, as he walked away, alone, the great trees moaned in the wind. He had never dreamed that he would find it impossible to reach her heart and influence it—to awaken the old, sweet love.

"O God!" he exclaimed, in anguish, "must this be, indeed, the end of years of prayer and hope? My longing to lead her to the truth must be right. *Thou* would'st have her walk in the heavenly paths of faith. Oh, take her from those broad, inviting ways that lead to gloom and unrest, and the second death! Put her on a narrow, thorny path, if it will lead her to peace. I have found her, but she is no longer mine. She abhors me as a bigot."

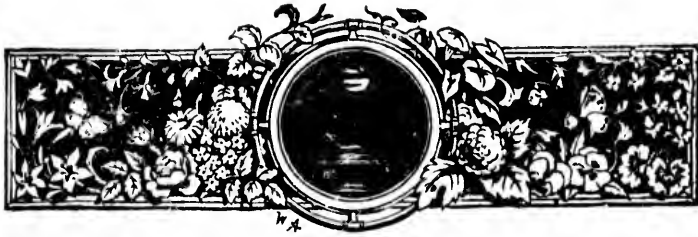
He leaned his head against a tree near, and looked toward the house.

"But, O Lord God! I will believe Thy promises. 'Thou wilt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.'"

His faith was strong in God as he recalled a favorite passage, "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Perhaps God had a great blessing in store for him, in the conversion of them all! For what God has promised He is able also to perform. Fan, with her infidel uncle and her infidel husband, might yet soften and melt under the warm rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

It is written, "They shall praise Thee that seek Thee."

Foxy had a great deal to think about after Waldo was gone. He had to think of Waldo. He could not help it. If he told a story—it was no harm to tell *old Joins* a story—Waldo instantly popped into his head. If he cursed, he seemed to see Waldo's eyes looking earnestly at him. He began to know there was something about his cousin to be honored and trusted in. He had a great deal to think about in association with seeing the brother and sister together once; Waldo with a face so gracious and merciful, that it seemed as if a light ought to be above it, like a picture he had seen of One standing on a hill and pointing upward. He had to think of all Waldo had told him, and wonder, and wonder if it was true.



CHAPTER XVII.

IN her brilliantly-lighted room Fan sat alone. She had locked herself in; but she had not been saying her prayers. Never had a prayer passed her lips.

Open before her was a substantially-bound volume by Strauss. From this precious volume she was not to-night, however, extracting sceptical sayings. She was simply writing in her diary upon it.

"Evening, nine o'clock.—Well, he has come and gone, my brother Waldo. The first moment I saw him I felt a curious thrill shooting through me. I confronted a young man in the dress of an ecclesiastic. His smile—a singularly fascinating one—giving an expression of exceeding youth and graciousness to his face, told me it was Waldo. This polished, high-bred priest kissed me and called me 'Darling sister!' but I wondered how I should ever talk and laugh with him as a brother. For I marked well the stern power of his face. Somehow I felt stunned—reserved. This seemed to greatly affect him. The lines on his manly

face deepened, and a slight, ashy pallor flickered over his brow and eyelids. But I saw in him only *the preacher*, and was dumb. We do not think alike. Oh, which is right? Uncle took my education into his own hands. He intends me to inherit his money with Foxy, like brother and sister. He considers that he has given me the education of a scholar. 'She knows,' he says of me, 'what to do, and if she steps into any pitfalls, it will be with her eyes open.' . . . I am engaged to be married. The Doctor says I am his heaven and earth, and he asks no more of either. What a speech for my proud old darling to make!"

So far this fine girl had made a failure of life, and she knew it, though she had just formed a noble marriage engagement. The golden bowl of bliss, love given and returned, was at her lips. Her uncle's Agnosticism, with which she had wrestled, had got the better of her.

As she sat there she was thinking of her costly education, of her uncle's promise that quiet would come to her heart in time, that there were only reason and waiting needed. But her unrest hung on with the grip of the immortals; and she found it difficult to sustain life, while she waited and waited for a quiet heart. She was at bay.

At first, with Waldo, she had felt a strange, sweet hope. Peace had seemed so near, that it was like the

pain of death to give up the glimmer of its promise. But her mind receded from the Unseen, and again settled itself upon the nettles of facts; though she found again that the pleasures of the world do not avail. Her uncle had reared the great scaffolding of an elaborate materialism that he might erect the colossal edifice of two or three facts. There was the structure, fine, no doubt, but wasted on Fan!

There was a loud knock at the door. Mr. York entered.

"A letter from Waldo!" he said. "But, Fan, make up your mind that you won't go down with him. Stand on the lofty planes of reason! I know what you are undergoing. Give over these alternatives of hope and despair."

She opened Waldo's letter; and he, glancing over her shoulder, said: "Permit me." Then they read on together.

"Ardent!" said Mr. York, "very ardent. How unlike you are, Fan! You fair and cynical; he a sun-burnt Saxon, with all an Italian's fire. He don't notice what I said. He preaches and preaches."

She felt like saying, "My brother is the most sincere man I ever saw," but she forbore.

"He is a handsome youth," said her uncle, slightly; "and, no doubt, a good youth."

“Good? There is not a trace of guilt or fear on his face.”

“While I have both, you think? I knew you would be so; but you won’t, surely—”

“No. I shall never go over to him; but it will break his heart. I know what I am saying. And though I can never think as he does, I know it will break his heart. ‘Fan’s all the sister I’ve got,’ he used to say. Oh, common sense is too inexorable. ‘Understand?’ Why, sir, you do not understand this world—the ground beneath our feet. You cannot understand that magnificent waste of stars above; for this world does not need them, and they are wasted!”

He smiled. “From pebble to planet, from stone to star, from mind to mind, one chain of evolution runs, and the last link in that chain is always the offspring of the former.”

She roused now. “Man, who talk of liberty? Darwin is your master. You are vowed to him as a monk to his pope. I tell you if there is such a thing as grand sacrificial faith, we are too self-centred, gross, obtuse and worldly-minded to hear the rustle of its wings.”

Yes. The young, love-thirsty heart was turning from his cold and dreary one.

“Fan!”

“Let me tell you; I have lived with you, studied you. I have believed in you; but, oh, now I must have something more. Waldo seems to have found something more than a continual round of eating and drinking. Only think, he quotes the Bible, as if he gloried in the very sound of the words and likes to dwell on them!”

Oh, if she could feel her fears and disgusts flying up into the sky and away from her on the wings of prayer as Waldo's seemed to do!

“He says he has help; that it does not originate with himself; it cannot come from beneath; it descends from above.”

“See here, Fan!” said her uncle, turning a shade paler, “I don't want Waldo to air his sanctified notions where I am, or among those with me. You are blest with a ‘pious’ brother, and he's got a mission, and all that sort of thing.”

“Everything wounds and distresses me. Everything!” she said, clasping her hands as her uncle left her. “I am young and absolutely miserable. Youth, that has no to-morrow nor yesterday—that youth will never be mine.”

Something in her brother's look at their parting had affected her deeply, and that night when she retired, she tossed upon her bed.

"But I have done nothing wrong!" she kept saying. "I try to do my duty. No; I have done no wrong."

It had dawned upon her that she had wounded Waldo, and she undertook the task of pardoning herself, and could not do it. This self-pardon is the hardest thing in life to get. God's pardon, a friend's pardon, are possible, but one's own pardon! Was it ever obtained?

Within the stable the next morning, a pair of beautiful horses submitted themselves to the currying of Joins.

On a stump just outside the door, the overseer of it all, the heir of the fair inheritance, Foxy, sat and talked.

Joins' haggard but erect form moved slowly. No hat adorned his tangled locks of iron-gray, and his surly words were for the most part addressed to the horses.

"This cousin Waldo of mine," Foxy was saying, "has been called to preach by that great Being who created and keeps the whole world." Joins stared. "This great God, Joins, comes to him in some way or other, invisibly, and fills his mind with sweet delight—"

"Bah!"

"And my cousin hardly cares for anything except to please Him. My cousin expects after awhile to be

received up where He is; to be taken up out of the world, you understand, Joins, and carried into heaven. Then, my cousin is to dwell with Him, and be happy with Him forever. Therefore, Joins, if you would present all the world before him, with the greatest of its riches, he would disregard it, and care nothing for it; and he is willing to bear any pain and affliction. He has a strange sweetness in his mind, is just, considerate, and conscientious to a hair's breadth; and you could not persuade him to do anything wicked if you would give him all the world, for fear, yes, for *fear* of offending God!"

"I ain't agoin' to persuade the young man into no wickedness, Foxy!" said Joins, "I ben't—"

"I know. You don't understand me."

"An' so the Great Bein', He mus' just take me as He finds me! Though I don't believe in them things. I wants fac's."

"But you know you'll be dead some day, Joins!"

"Yes, sir. As dead as that mole."

He pointed to a defunct object, a mole, over which his dog, Redd, was rejoicing triumphantly. "An' I'll lay just as he does—a little bit o' dust."

Mr. York, passing, smiled. He was beginning to feel out of sorts a little. Nobody suited him. Waldo was a fanatic, and Foxy admired him. Fan was dis-

contented and aggravating. He realized what a grievous thing it was that he should have to be anybody's uncle.

"I am mistaken if I am to turn things topsy-turvy for a slip of a lad like Waldo!" he said.

Then he laughed. "Fan don't know any more than I do what to do when there are preachers on the premises. I never realized you had a brother," he said to her as she entered the front-room just as he did.

"He is very real, though," said Fan.

"But he came too late!" said Mr. York in a triumphant tone. And Fan began to think of him as "Poor Waldo."

Their uncle could see a vague family likeness between brother and sister. But they were strangers to each other. Separation in fact, in thought, in manner of life could divide almost like death. Waldo's air seemed to say he would defy the world to keep them apart, but apart they were.

"I must know her better," Waldo would say; "I must get acquainted with my sister."

Mr. York, looking at his niece, thought, "No wonder you are cold and sad and reserved. All these years you have been waiting for what? To be found fault with?" He was glad to see the coldness in her eyes. His own eyes, which for brilliance and cold-

ness, could not well be surpassed, intensified in expression as they beheld a hardness growing over the velvet depths of Fan's when she looked at her preacher brother. They had met—for what? To discover family points of likeness between them and rejoice, or to fight their differences of opinion.

Waldo only saw Fan occasionally.

His uncle was not unkind, though he opposed his views. He always left Fan with a feeling of uncertainty as to whether she cared for him or not. For sometimes it seemed that she did, on the few occasions when she kissed him and called him "brother." Then again he told himself that she did not love him, that she wished her brother to be a brilliant society man, not an humble preacher. The world did not make her happy, but she still clung to it madly; and when Waldo saw her bedecked in the diamonds her uncle had given her, he almost wished that she was poor, even homely. He imagined her coming to him and saying: "Waldo, I am destitute. All is lost. We have nothing to turn to but each other and heaven."

"Oh, how happy I should be," he said.

She had no wish to see him a good man in a religious sense. She had been taught to honor the free, unlimited liberty of thought, scepticism, and to despise "credulity," and lest any one should imagine her

weak enough to be impressed by Waldo's views, she tried to be gay.

No one expected Mr. York to go to church, even to hear his nephew preach. He might have been seen on Sunday with polished books, resting under a tree, with a cynical gaze at things in general, but especially at the distant church.

Foxy's old nurse would not let him rest in the house, she sighed so constantly.

"What, in the name of reason, is all this sighing about?" he asked at last.

"Ah, sah, it's Foxy. Foxy," she said. "He's lost his pleasures. He has lost as many as five hundred hopes, I suppose, judgin' by the hopes his own cousin's got. He's lost bein' a fine, manly preacher. He's lost—"

"Heavens, you'll drive me mad, woman," said Mr. York. "Can't you learn any sense?"

"Death is a sollum sound," said Foxy's nurse. "An' so I wants to go to church to turn—sinner turn!"

And she went, and heard Waldo preach. Yes, and she faintly understood—poor old black Regina, that the clouds and waves were saying something, like Waldo said of a time when she would be better off, no longer dull, stupid, and good for nothing but to be laughed at.

To Fan, the day of wrath, of which Waldo had been

speaking, loomed so big and near that her now prophetic eye could catch in fancy the vivid light of it; her ear could hear the sound of the clods as the graves should open, her imagination even pictured the size of the mighty Gabriel.

Mr. York was sitting under a tree smoking when Waldo returned from church. As he looked upon his nephew's grave and honorable face, a pang smote his heart. Why was *he* so sad? The same day was bright to one, dull to the other. "Oh, it is because everything is so stale," he said. "The world is so dreary. Pain and bitterness in the autumn wind, and floods of piteous tears dropping everywhere. My heart was so desolate last night that I could have wept my life away. And then the terrible insistence of thought and memory till one could wish he was made of stone. Ah, Waldo need not smile. The arrows are beginning to fly at his hopeful heart. He has begun to drink life's bitter draught. Ah, he will be like me; and yet, one cannot possibly think of him as giving up. Some secret, powerful force seems to impel him forward. His hopes are like strong hands to lift him up. Will doubt snap the mystic thread, and leave him to falter through manhood's decline? He has a very positive mind. It would be easy for him to impose his will upon others."

Then he felt a desire to kill the rosy, passionate light of what he called fanaticism in his nephew's face, and place him, tearless but wretched, in the hard daylight of so-called reason.

As Waldo approached, he said, "I am more than ever convinced that your system is a failure. Do you suppose that by such meetings as you have had to-day the world will be saved?"

"Yes, uncle. 'The foolishness of preaching,' under God's blessing, will do it. Wait, my dear sir, till you have seen some of its fruits—watched a good man die, as I have. Wait till you have seen a soul saved from death."

Waldo, in a kind of trance which seemed to lift him above the earth, stood still, his strange face solemn and wrapt. Presently he caught his uncle by the arm.

"My dear sir, let me—listen to me, though I am so much the younger—my heart aches for you."

The sternness of Mr. York did not soften. He prepared for what was coming, as one prepares for a storm against which he has set his face. But it was the younger man that became commanding and magnetic. The younger spirit seemed to sweep down upon the older in a torrent of tenderness. Words warm from Waldo's heaven-touched heart seemed to dash themselves in pieces against this rock-like man.

"It seems so strange to me, so pathetic," said Waldo, "that any one should care so much to destroy the faith of others."

"We don't like to see them so deluded," said Mr. York.

"Well, has the truth that you profess to have found made you better—happier?"

"Of course, or else I should acknowledge. 'Tis folly to be wise."

And yet there were the restless dark eyes that cried, "dissatisfaction!" There were the small, wrinkled, unwork-worn hands that said the same. There was the slow, languid gait that announced the same. It angered Mr. York to see that Waldo knew this, and he said:

"You have only been rehearsing old sayings in an impetuous manner. Youths are always hot and unreasoning in their ideas."

"I would give a great deal," said Waldo, if you could have seen Uncle John die. It was well with him; he was an honest man."

"To what, sir, do you attribute the fact that he was happy in the swellings of the dark river; that he heard tones of surpassing sweetness?"

"Waldo, am I dying?" he asked. I said I feared so, 'I am so glad,' he said, gently."

“Rant! the outpourings of mere delirium; enthusiasm; delusion! A fit of mental aberration!”

“Redeemer of the world!” said Waldo softly, looking up, “vouchsafe to me when I die—when this mortal soul parts from this body to meet its God—oh, vouchsafe to me such a delusion!”

Mr. York smiled, shrugged his shoulders and changed the subject.

Daily Fan expected to see the “down look” upon Waldo’s face, but it never came. Strength on strength seemed poured into his heart from some hidden source.





CHAPTER XVIII.

WHAT a night it was! Nothing but stars overhead—below mirth, music and laughter.

Mr. York was giving his niece a party. The parlors were now filling rapidly.

Fan was with her friend, Elsie Carmen, selecting some music, when Waldo entered. Elsie saw a gentleman who approached Fan and took her hand, with a tender glance and a tone of inquiry. He was tall, easy, unconscious of himself. His grave eyes expressed calm and keen observation. She felt that his mental atmosphere must be clear and bracing. "Let me introduce you to my brother, the Rev. Mr. York," said Fan, turning mischievously toward Elsie. "This is Miss Carmen, Waldo."

For an instant Elsie could not conceal her astonishment, the sight of that tall, keen-eyed man, with short, red, independent looking hair, and a most remarkable

countenance. She felt herself blush with vexation the next moment. For the first time in her life she felt awkward.

“That uncle of yours has, somehow, managed to give me a wrong impression of you, Mr. York,” said she, arranging her beautiful skirts as she sat down, her bright eyes raised and beaming. Waldo was about to reply, but was called away by his uncle to be introduced to a stranger gentleman, and Elsie hurried to Fan and her companion, Dr. Roland, who made a playful remark about Waldo.

“Were you not speaking of Fan’s brother?” asked Elsie of the Doctor. “I suppose he belongs to a sect of which you do not approve—though he certainly seems free from fogs of sentiment.”

“I? No. I am not bound to entertain all of Waldo’s views. I think him one of the finest fellows in the world; but I shouldn’t like to ruin the natural sweetness of my disposition by getting up to six o’clock family prayers! Waldo is the only man I know who is a real believer. He gets five hundred a year, and is content with poor clothes and food that he may give to the poor. He has one room somewhere, I believe, and can scarcely afford himself a new book, yet he’ll tell you, with a light in his face, that he has always had plenty. Never lacked. Been taken care of.

Then that is very fine of him, taking care of poor Hill, a cousin, who shot a friend by accident, and nearly went mad. He pays his board regularly. What Waldo ever saw in Hilary that he should do so much for him, I can't see ; for he has not reclaimed him."

"How noble!" said Elsie, who listened with keen interest. "I never knew any one so unselfish. I suppose it is a part of his creed."

"One appreciates that sort of thing all the more in Waldo, because he is not an old man, but young, and thrilling with dreams and ambitions."

But Waldo's ambition was to do good. He heeded the admonition, "Cast thy bread upon the waters ; thou shalt find it after many days." That very day he had received a letter from Hilary which greatly astonished him. It ran :

"DEAR WALDO,—I went to the town of B—— with some wild companions a week ago, some friends, who played the joke of putting me up to preach. I played the Rev. Mr. York—yourself, as we are both of the same name, Waldo!—I got up in the pulpit to preach, for a joke. I had a sermon written out—something of yours, I believe—and my friends, secretly convulsed with laughter, listened. While carrying out this terrible joke, I was convicted of sin, and have since been converted. I could almost see your guileless face as I saw it one morning years ago—as it has haunted me

since—when your religion became your life, and you kept calling God ‘Father.’ I was mocking the most solemn thing I had ever seen in my life, a little boy’s faith in God. . . . I stood there and confessed that I was not you, . . . that I was not worthy to undo the latchet of your shoe. . . . I have since found God. I desire to study for the ministry; but shall wait a year to see if my determination holds fast.”

Elsie’s eyes followed Waldo. That colorless face, with its tense, set expression, and its curious calm, interested her more than any she had ever seen. She envied Fan such a brother; so quiet, so deep, so resolute, so, courageous!

“Yes, it is courage!” she said. “I feel like saying to Mr. York, ‘When will you show the courage of your nephew?’ But they do not know that that is courage.”

And Elsie had never heard that the righteous are brave as a lion, while the wicked flee when no man pursueth.

Waldo’s uncle watched him as he moved here and there. He looked as much a man as his uncle now. How cheerful the sound of his firm step and his deep voice made the place!

“After all, Waldo is to be envied. He has had trouble, but he looks happier than most people do.

He gets more out of existence than I ever did. Then, he has a world of illusions besides. But now, there is nothing for me but despair and death at last," Mr. York said to himself, as he moved out of the gay parlors and seated himself in the shadow of the conservatory. He looked at Fan—Fan, for whom so much expense had been incurred by him, was moving toward him now. There was no pleasure in her face. He looked for it eagerly, almost angrily. When Fan left school in Berlin, where she had been educated, she had great anticipations, and thought the world a fine thing; but she had begun to feel that she could scarcely bear the long days and dumb nights at her uncle's home. She thought herself in momentary seclusion now, and tears filled her eyes.

"Is there anything you really want that you have not?" asked her uncle's voice, behind her.

"Oh, uncle! Why am I so unhappy?"

"It is your own fault if you are so. I have been a parent to you, Fan, making you a companion almost from your babyhood; and now you turn from me—you reproach me—"

"Uncle! uncle! I reproach you with nothing."

She stood and watched him with a kind of fascinating fear, her hands locked, her white teeth set, her eyes glittering through the dim light. He saw his

work, and could not say that it was good. The tiny French clock within ticked away the hours. A young lady sat at the piano playing some brilliant music.

"I suppose that piece is very difficult," said the Doctor to Elsie. "I am like Dr. Johnson; I only wish it had been impossible!"

Fan never in her life looked more dazzling.

She left her uncle and sought her brother. She found him on the balcony, looking out at the star-lit night. He had not known of the entertainment before his arrival, but they would not let him leave. Yes, he was thinking of that better world above. Ah, the thought of it, as the pleasure-seekers whirled past him that quiet night!

After the darkness, the light; after fighting, peace; after faithful work, a crown; after the heart-break, the welcome home.

He was a discord here; he was like nobody around him. He had nothing in harmony with his uncle or Fan.

"Now, Waldo!" said his graceful sister, laying a fair hand on his arm, "is this being sociable? I hunt for you, and find you out here star-gazing."

Waldo turned and faced her, and his eyes brightened. Her sheeny robes and lovely face made such a picture. Was it that she was conscious of the cold-

ness of her greeting, and was anxious to atone for that?

"I beg your pardon, Fan. I am in no mood for gaiety to-night; but to look at you, one would suppose there was no need of my aid to enliven the entertainment."

"My uncle thinks me very gloomy," said Fan. "Come, talk. You can say what you please, only help me to entertain the company."

They sought the lighted parlors together.

"What can I do for you, sir?" the gay voice of Elsie Carmen demanded of Mr. York, as he sat alone.

"I am past being comforted, Elsie. Just look at Foxy, will you—taking every step Waldo takes?"

He arose and they entered the greenhouse, and she turned and broke from a bush a bunch of pink moss roses.

Though dressed in silk velvet, her person was jewelless and floweriess. "Mr. York," she said, turning to him with the bunch of pink roses in her hand, "you used to let me comfort you."

Her fine face, her charming voice, the odor of the sweet buds, brought sad memories to the poor, remorse-stricken, world-wearied gentleman.

"Ah, me!" he said, mournfully, with a sigh. "I am growing old. There is little in life for an old man."

"You shall not say so, dear friend. There are pleasures yet for you. But, young as I am, I know all about this lonely, dreary desolation"—her eyes filled with tears, that made them all the deeper—"yet I won't give up to despair. You must not!"

He shook his head.

Through the wilderness of blooming flowers, with the musical splash of fountains, her sparkling face near his, half-forgetting his sorrow, half-forgetting his years, he strolled with her.

Waldo wished to please Fan; but to do so he more and more felt that he must disown his best nature, stifle half his aspirations, and wrest his tastes from their present bent.

As he stood alone, turning a fascinated eye upon the dazzling creature on his uncle's arm, he saw upon his sister's finger a ring that he had never seen there before. Then, glancing up, he met the Doctor's eye. "Sampson's locks are shorn!" those black, sparkling orbs seemed to say.



CHAPTER XIX.

THE well-known and somewhat severe aristocrat, Mrs. LeGrand, having gazed for a moment or so at Fan and Waldo, uttered an exclamation.

"What!" she said, "a minister, with Mr. York's niece? Yes, a minister, clearly; and I don't know him at all; though, it is true, I have been abroad so long, I wouldn't know my own family. What is his name?"

The young man by her side began, with a smile:

"It is Miss York's brother," he said. "They call him the Boy Preacher, at least, his uncle does, I know. Why, he has been preaching for years. He preached to the servants at twelve years of age, on 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Ha! ha! ha!"

"Pshaw!" said the old gentlewoman testily, "it is absurd."

“What? Gaining the world and losing the soul? Ah, pardon! His fair sister, on the other hand, has been taken nearly around the world on several occasions, and does not seem any the better for it. He has, at least, been as well employed in the Church, as she has with Paris and Berlin infidels.”

“What did he come here to-night for, Mr. Gordon?”

“Heaven only knows.”

For some reason, best known to herself, Mrs. LeGrand was angry. She was a worldly old lady with strong ideas, even at sixty. She quite glared at the young minister from under her bushy eyebrows. She amused Mr. Gordon by the unmitigated steadiness of her observation of the couple. She talked about them, too, and not in whispers, criticising the plainly dressed young man.

Later she said to Mr. York, “Bring the young divine to me. I want to talk to him.” It was wonderful how interesting she made herself.

“I have been to the Holy Land,” she said to Waldo, trying to look scientific, “where you believe some one arose from the dead. I have a friend buried out there, I believe he will never rise. The friend was Elsie Carmen’s brother. She was there, too, and cried so bitterly. She cannot believe in the Resurrection. She is not easily imposed on. Mr. York, she is a

wicked, cynical young creature, who laughs at her sins and never repents."

She turned and tapped Elsie, who was now standing near, with the sparkling fan.

"Ah, but I do repent, often!"

"What!" cried Mr. York, sauntering up. "Have you begun to say such things, Elsie? Thou, too. Brutus?"

The laugh with which Elsie stopped him was both light and hard.

"Not in the way you mean," she said. "I wish I could never do wrong as I wish that flowers could never die."

She moved away with Mr. York.

"Your sister is going to marry the greatest infidel in the place, I believe—Dr. Roland?" continued Mrs. LeGrand to Waldo.

She struck herself upon the breast.

"Look at me! I married an infidel, at sixteen! I married a man whose intellect I worshipped. It does not matter that I was wrong. One learns that late. He took my faith from me."

"And Waldo," said a voice, "is going to take our rationalism from us, going to utterly demolish the whole thing in a few Sunday lectures."

Waldo turned, and saw the Doctor laughing heartily.

"I do not flatter myself so far," said Waldo. "But you will not deny the decline of rationalism in Germany? It is a fact that it is dwindling. Strauss and Baur are in their graves."

Waldo soon found himself alone with his thoughts again. Foxy, lingering near, sometimes heard him mutter to himself, "He doeth all things well," and wondered what it meant.

"Where is Waldo?" asked Fan of Mrs. LeGrand, after the elegant supper had been served; rich wines, tinted creams and ices, fruits, having challenged the most fastidious taste.

"Oh, he is marching out there in the moonlight, studying about his sister, I suppose. I heard Foxy pelting him with questions about the devil just now. I am going home. I am tired. I did not sleep last night, after that bad singing at the concert."

Fan pointed to a wide lounge in the back parlor.

"Just loll there a few minutes," she said. "My brother will sing for us, and you will find your eyes closing softly, involuntarily. You needn't mind the words, you know; only hear the voice."

Mr. York had been compelled to acknowledge to himself that his nephew had a fine voice and sang wondrously well, really with hints of delicate perception.

Mrs. LeGrand protested against the arrangement, but seeing Fan approach with Waldo, she yielded. Mr. York retired to the porch with Elsie.

"We are gone, but you will fill the gap with melody," he said to Waldo. Pale, heavy-eyed, the old aristocrat reclined on the plush sofa. Dr. Roland was buried in a book. Foxy sat directly in front of Waldo, gazing up into his face. Fan sat alone.

"I will sing you a song of a beautiful land,
The far-away home of the soul,
Where no storms ever beat on the glittering strand,
And the years of eternity roll."

The modern instrumentation, the intricate scenery, the massed effects, the scholarship of the opera, were swept aside from the old lady's mind by a single voice. Those deep, sweet strains stole mellifluously, as out of the past.

Let us sit dumb a moment in the corner there and listen, as our eyes grow wet to the old hymn. It is rich in association, though barren in science. Its arias are wound round the names of saints, like "those trumpet-flowers around the plane-trees in the Italian mountains!" Old, and worn, and strained, and worked over, there remains enough of the pure gold of hymnology to strike the old lady, and keep her dumb and still as an Egyptian mummy. Thin as its harmonies

may be in that cathedral of vastness that men have erected to the unknown God of music, they remain in our recollection like immortelles. A certain joyousness of vital strength poured from the voice of Waldo, defying the pathos of "Marguerite" and the melancholy of Verdi.

When did a hymn roll through that house before Waldo came ?

The Doctor had shaded his eyes with one hand, as he sat alone in the library. Then he picked up books, photographs, pictures, and put them down without noticing what he did.

"Waldo was only a boy," he kept repeating to himself ; "only a boy, who wanted a guardian, instruction, development."

It was not his fancies, however beautiful, generous and noble, that could shape the destiny of men. A beautiful, noble boy ; ignorant of the world and its evils, full of dreams of impossible glories, and unnecessary sacrifices ; he was not one to order and rule.

"Oh ! how grand and beautiful that is ! Whenever I hear you sing I feel exactly as I did last year when we went to the Alps. It is a solemn feeling, as if I were somehow afraid of something, and was of no importance. Waldo, what makes me feel so?"

Foxy stood with his hand on the back of Waldo's chair, and looked up into his cousin's face.

"You are impressed by the solemnity and holy repose of the poet's feeling, Foxy. The writer may be dead; his influence lives on."

Mrs. LeGrand's eyes had not closed. She found herself very wide awake—indeed, roused. Memories of the past came trooping before her mind.

"They have played a joke on me," she said, afraid some one would see the tears in her eyes. The voice had ceased, and silence reigned. She heard Waldo go out, a vehement limp following his step, and shortly afterwards a strange startling sound—a gasping sob.

"Fan! Fan! Fan!" she whispered, hoarsely.

"I thought you were asleep," answered Fan.

"I am awake, Fan," she groaned. "I am awake, at last, to what I have lost."

Mr. York and Elsie entered.

"That happy man," he said, "the Reverend Waldo York, is a good soul. He has no small doubts." And her smile was scarcely a pleasant thing to see. "It will be a pity when some fair creature fills that particular niche in his mind, and spoils all that fine enthusiasm!"

Waldo had been full of a feverish longing to hear and learn more of Fan. if only to hear her name spoken, her outgoings and incomings discussed, her girlish habits and tastes, her engagement mentioned.

As he went out and Mr. York and Elsie went into the room, he heard his uncle say :

“The fact is, I am anxious about Fan. She is not strong. All at once she seems very thin. She was always delicate and slight, but now she is shadowy. Her rings are getting loose upon her fingers.”

“Talking about falling off, papa,” said Foxy, who seemed ubiquitous, “look at cousin Waldo, himself. He is thinner than he was when he was here last, and his eyes are as much too big as Fan’s now.”

“Oh, perhaps he is fasting ! I know he don’t eat.”

“I like him better than any one I know,” said Foxy, stoutly.

“Fan,” said Mrs. LeGrand, “is absolutely *spirituelle* ! Take her to the country, Mr. York—to the mountains—somewhere. At twenty one should be as gay as a bird. Perhaps her brother’s views make her unhappy.”

“Oh, no, they don’t ; he can’t make anybody unhappy.”

“I never thought I could like a preacher as much as I like Waldo,” said Foxy, chiming in. “At first, you know, I wondered how I could bear him ; but now I love him. What hard things he can say, and yet not seem in the least hard. Every thing he says comes so straight, right from the bottom of his heart.

He says it is such a pity papa is *only* kind, *only* intellectual, *only* a gentleman, and not a Christian."

As he received no reply, he turned to look for Waldo.

Foxy had been wont to observe with a contemptuous pity and haughty mien those few Christians who passed his father's house to worship at the church near by.

"Deed, not creed," had been Master Foxy's motto; for he had become infected with modern ideas, and was one of those hopefuls who threaten every year to overthrow the Christian religion. He had considered prayer an innocent amusement, and thought that it was rather weak in one to be good.

Foxy had been longing to fall in love, but had never done so. The storm of rapture, the blessedness of contemplating ideal perfection, would it ever come? Was he not fifteen on his last birthday? Yes. At last this had happened. He loved some one. He felt the enviable thrill, the wild enthusiasm—only he loved a man, his cousin Waldo. But love was there. There could be no doubt about that. It is true that he intended to throw the Christian religion prostrate at one fell blow and organize a "new brotherhood," when he grew older. But that dream had given place to another.

Grand young kinsman! thought Foxy, paying the exaggerated tribute of youthful admiration to Waldo; where was he to be matched for good stateliness and natural grandeur? How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring good tidings! Religion! No longing could be too high for that; no hopes too tremendous and unreal for it to encourage. Yes, those promises were so brave and high that wise men mistrusted them—that was all! so concluded Foxy. Yet something told him “oft in the stilly night” that he might believe those promises. Waldo was a boy when he had chosen to suffer with the children of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Foxy felt like running up to his father, throwing his arms around his neck, and crying :

“ Oh, papa, I am happy at last ! ”

But he was afraid that Mr. York would turn his dark disillusioned eyes upon him and say, coldly :

“ Don’t be foolish, Foxy ! ”

It was late when the party broke up. Mr York had dozed in a chair, and woke up to bid the girls good night.

“ It is a pity to wake you up,” said Elsie, “ but we wanted to thank you for to-night. Good night ! ”

“ Good night, my dear,” Mr. York responded, mak-

ing no effort to stir. "Remember me in your prayers. I am like old Magnus in regard to the Almighty; 'I will never trouble Him again.'"

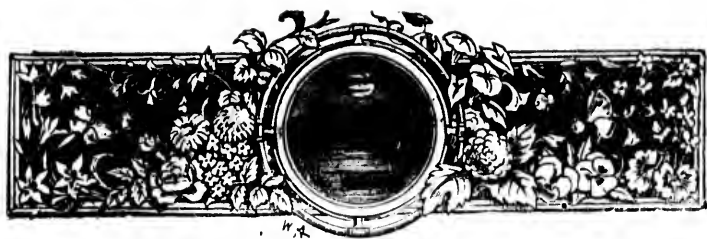
Fan linked her arm in that of the laughing, radiant Elsie, and they went upstairs together for Elsie's wraps.

"Oh, do look out, Fan!" cried Elsie, at the window; "what a night! I am like Harriet Martineau—I don't like to take my eyes off for fear it will all melt away. Think of it, Fan! I asked that unworldly brother of yours if there was any harm in dancing. He replied that it was 'hard to say what there was no harm in.'"

Elsie's grand, dark face, still bravely calm, had become quite sad.

"He is a man of hard doctrines," she said; "but, after all, he may be right."

"For life is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom :
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the strokes of doom
To shape and use !"



CHAPTER XX.

“WALDO,” said Mr. York, the next morning, leaning back in his easy chair and carelessly lighting a cigar, “I congratulate you. You have made an impression upon the most unimpressionable young lady I know, Elsie Carmen. That is a chrysalis with wings folded within, but whether a great moth of night or a butterfly, you must discover.”

“I am sorry if what you say is true. You must surely know that I would not desire a marriage with a lady who does not believe in God,” said Waldo.

“Marry her to save her, then. Convert her, as you call it. I love the child; I want to see her happy.”

“I would not marry an unbeliever if she were as dear to me as my own soul.”

“Bravely said!” replied his uncle, grinding his teeth secretly. “Wait until she gets you in her meshes.”

“ ‘ Be not evenly yoked with unbelievers,’ my Guide says.”

“ I heard some one say of you and Elsie last night, ‘ He’s found some one good enough for him at last—that scornful looking Elsie Carmen.’ You don’t know what you might make of her.”

“ You over-estimate my influence and her interest. She is a woman who lives in a world of her own, of vague philanthropy, flowers, music, paintings, dissipation. I can be just as happy, perhaps happier, unmarried, at my work.”

“ I doubt it ! ” said his uncle, pertinaciously.

He looked keenly at Waldo, as a voice rang through the house suddenly—Elsie’s voice.

“ What does my bird do here to-day ? ” he cried, opening the door ; “ my bird of Paradise ! ”

She was a brilliant creature, this graceful, gray-eyed nymph, with her coronet of raven hair.

She was followed by her little sister, Janey, who was laboriously bringing in a kitten she had found.

“ Waldo was just thinking of going for you to take you out boating ! ” said Mr. York, deliberately.

To this bold falsehood Mr. York’s nephew made no reply. “ Don’t compress your lips and look so stern, Waldo,” said his uncle. “ Should you not enjoy being told the way to ‘ salvation ’ as you sail amid the golden

and green glories of the morning tide, Miss Elsie?" he continued.

An arch smile passed over Elsie's face.

"Would it be polite to say 'No?'" she asked.

"Elsie, let's go!" cried Janey.

"Yes," said Waldo, "we will go."

"There it is!" mused his uncle as they left, "the quick, haughty York pride. I like him the better that he dare defy her charms. Were he spiritless, slavish, afraid to express his thoughts lest some one should be angered, I should disown him. I like his happy independence and bold strength of heart. But, Miss Elsie, look out for a homiletical discourse! In the meantime has Waldo fallen in love with her or not?"

Janey thought her sister's eyes look larger and deeper, and burned more brilliantly than ever before.

Waldo was angry with himself for feeling happy. He knew that a grove of nightingales would not be so musical to him as Elsie's voice.

He thought of the old heathen Chinese philosopher, who said, that when he was undecided which was the best between two courses, he generally found it safest to take the most untempting.

"We will return soon—and I will say something to her. Whatever begins in duty must end in joy."

"Elsie says nothing is as good as it seems beforehand," shouted Janey, "but this is."

A boat with a white sail passed, and Janey cried that it made a picture of itself in her sister's eye.

"Beauty born of murmuring sound," seemed to pass into the face of Elsie.

"Let's stay all day!" cried Janey.

"I have not yet lifted my heaviest cross," thought Waldo.

Janey, as soon as they got settled in the boat, sidled up to Waldo. All children loved him. Waldo was not loath to go out in the cool morning under the blue skies in his uncle's boat. Birds were singing everywhere it seemed.

The boat was soon under full sail, seeming merely to touch the clear little white crests beneath it. Janey felt a sweet sense of safety and protection with Waldo. Elsie was silent, making no effort to be gay. Together they watched the sun mount higher and higher. Waldo, erect and silent, set his thin lips firmly and kept his eyes looking straight before him for the most part. If he turned to gaze long at either, it was at the child, who loved him with all her little heart already. Was it not enough to touch the heart to see the tender innocence of that fair face as she turned it up in appealing wistfulness?

"Mr. Waldo!" she said, "Foxy told me all about heaven. An' I like it, an' I'm goin' there, only I can't pray. God don't come into our room, Elsie says!"

Waldo would not look beyond the child's innocent eyes, into those deep orbs that he knew were growing dark with shadows.

"Teach me to pray, please!" said Janey. "I told Elsie to, but she won't!"

He took the little hands in his. "Look up, Janey."

"Our Father, who art in Heaven," he said softly, "bless this child." But Janey scoffed at this idea.

"We haven't got any father—Elsie an' I!" she announced. "He was killed by a railroad! Didn't you know?"

"Our Father' means God, Janey."

"Oh!"

"Ask Him to make you a good girl for Christ's sake."

"Who is *He*?"

A smile crossed Elsie's tense, sweet lips.

"The Son of God."

"I can't pray to two at once."

"No one does. God gave His Son to die for the world. One Christmas night He was born, a babe in a manger. He will come again from heaven to judge the quick and the dead. Then the good up there forever."

"Where's the steps?"

"Janey, come to our Christmas-tree. I shall have one for the children. There you will understand; for the Babe grew up and died for the world, and if we love Him for that, He will provide a way for us."

"May I, Elsie?" asked Janey.

"Yes."

"Will you?" Waldo began; his voice fell and broke, "Will you come with her?" he asked Elsie.

He saw that she was troubled.

"I?" she faltered.

"Yes, you too."

There was a peculiar pause, a moment, as it seemed to him, of breathless silence.

"Yes," she said at length, "I will go too. Why should I not?"

Christmas-day came, and was sunny and beautiful. The bells were ringing, and Janey listened to them with a swelling heart. She wanted to go to the Christmas-tree, and hailed with delight the rosy glow in the west which preceded the setting of the sun.

It was early when she and Elsie entered the little church, but they found many children and a number of grown people there. But Janey saw little save the great frosted tree in the chancel, glittering with a hundred gifts. Everybody looked so happy there

among the lights. She had never seen anything like it before, and her belief in Waldo's words grew stronger as she looked. Janey was born in Germany. Her father had been sceptical professor in a college, and had been especially opposed to Christmas festivities. She had mixed little in scenes like this, but the tree and its association appealed to her childish heart and tastes, and she thought she had never felt so happy in her life as when they took their seats in that humble place.

How solemn it all was, and how splendid Mr. Waldo looked, and how like a jubilee sounded the music of the organ as it sprang into the warm and fragrant air. The floor was trembling with the gush of melody, and Janey was almost afraid. But then she heard the children sing,

"With angels in glory
We herald the story."

She felt a strange thrill creep over her, and took Elsie's hand.

"Are you cold, Elsie?" she whispered. "Your hand is like ice."

"No, dear," was the answer.

"Isn't it splendid?"

"Don't talk."

"Is heaven any better than this? Are the children

any happier, Elsie? Oh, *oh!* they are going to give the children those things on the tree. Look, Elsie!"

"Janey, be still."

But Janey had risen.

"They've called Foxy," she announced. "Mr. Waldo called Foxy, to give him a red book."

The brightness of Waldo's face was so great that it caused a pang of something like envy to pass through Elsie's heart. She wished she had not come. The joyous stars, the glory of the frost, yes, the very night itself, in its beauty and peace, had set her heart aching; but not like that beaming face; not like that glad voice; not like the shimmering tree that spoke of childhood.

"If they'd only call me," Janey had said to her sister.

"Miss Janey Carmen," said Waldo.

Janey rose, pale with joy. Christ's own tree had a gift for her. She forgot the dazzling necklace her sister had given her. A Bible so splendid was handed to her that everybody stared.

"Will you read it?" asked the young minister.

"I'll read it all," shouted Janey.

Suddenly Waldo felt her pluck at his sleeve.

"Is He behind the tree?" queried Janey, in a whisper.

“Who? Santa Claus?”

“No!” said Janey, indignantly; “Christ!”

“He is surely here,” said Waldo, gravely.

“Elsie,” said Janey, returning to her seat, “Christ is surely here, in this very room, without doubt.”

Waldo was meditating. He was in the past again. He heard the tread of tiny footfalls and the sound of a prattling voice. Fan, comically studious with her book upside down, or dressing her doll in unheard of finery, provided by Maria, or looking at stars and rivers, and saying, “Waldo’s stars, Waldo’s rivers.”

Fan’s farewell sobs knocking against his heart. Fan, tired at last of the husks of philosophy, coming home to God, converted, become as one of these little ones.

“Yes, God will raise up help for her, as He did for me,” he thought.

Thus did the rustling of angels’ wings get blended indeed with these merry sounds around him on that Christmas night.

“Fan,” said Elsie, an hour later, as they entered Mr. York’s parlor. “Why is it that your brother dislikes me so?”

“Does he?”

“Acting is not your forte, Fan. I know that he does not like me. His eyes told me before I uttered

one word, or gave him cause, that he did not fancy me. I wish he would be a real friend to me."

"He will. And he is the sort of man to go through fire and water for a friend."

"I believe it. Strange that he seems to be struggling with an antipathy to me."

He approached as she spoke, and she looked straight at him with her deep and lovely eyes.

He received the glance coldly, she thought. Under his kindly yet distant gaze, she felt what an actress she was.

"Oh, Mr. York, what lovely flowers," she exclaimed, looking at a tremendous bouquet which he carried in his hand.

"Yes, Miss Lucretia (his uncle's housekeeper) presented them to me, as if she did not really wish me any harm."

Miss Lucretia had been very sharp and distant toward him at first.

"They suit you and Fan better than me," he continued.

He divided the bunch and gave half to Elsie.

"Oh, thank you. How lovely." Elsie deliberately stood before the mirror and decked herself in the pale, pretty blossoms. She chose white; arranging them in her hair, fastening a cluster in front of her dress on

her breast, and setting a little trailing bunch against her shoulder.

Waldo never forgot the picture which she revealed to him as the moonlight streamed through the window upon her, for they were near the window, and she seemed frosted o'er like the December night. She was dressed in black, heavy, stately black; and the white against the dark background gave her a St. Cecilia or Lady Jane Grey look.

“Are these offerings (possibly of repentance) well disposed, Mr. York?” she asked.

Involuntarily he caught his breath. He felt that she was more than a merely beautiful woman. She was powerful in her way. But he was far from being impressed, conquered, as she intended that he should be, and merely bowed.

“I shall go hunt up Foxy!” said Miss Carmen, with lofty indifference; but she did not go immediately.

She found that her grand airs were of no avail against this bold young preacher, who conversed with her when he liked, and paid no attention to her sceptical speeches. Her hours with the great thinkers of the age went for nothing then? As for the vague something—was it a warning, was it a prophecy?—that opened upon her now and then in his eye, that something which made her tremble and grow pale, as if she

had been wandering on the edge of a chasm. She longed to dare, divine, and question it. And she thought Fan happy that she might look into his nature, explore its secrets at pleasure.

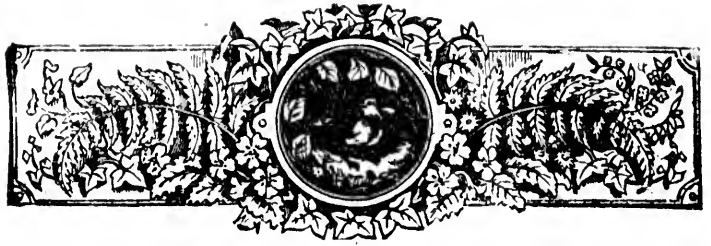
The restfulness of youth and health and all-commanding faith was not to be removed from Waldo's heart. It filled his life with immortal beauty, so that the wise gray-beards envied him; and the youthful, feeling that he was of their kind, loved him.

But, oh, it is hard to learn the lesson of faith; to pray and hear no answer; to "toil all night and win nothing!"

So it seemed to Waldo, when Sunday after Sunday passed, and none of his uncle's family, except Foxy and some of the servants, had ever been to hear him preach.

At last they all decided to go.

"He is going to be a very successful fellow," said Mr. York, with something like a sigh. "People may ignore him if they choose. That is nothing to him. And there is no reason why it should be anything. He is a rising man."



CHAPTER XXI.

IT was a calm Sabbath morning, and Waldo had risen to preach.

“The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silent before Him,” he said.

For the first reading he selected the forty-third chapter of Isaiah, in which occurs that lament of Jehovah, “But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offering. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money.” It was singularly pleasant to listen while from his lips fell the words of the Bible—that Bible that had become dear to him when a boy.

Never did his deep voice sound at once so deep and tender; never was his manner so impressive and convincing as when he stood behind those awful pages, and to-day that voice took its most solemn accent,

that manner its most intense meaning, as he preached, not only to strangers, but, as it were, in a household circle for the first time, the sun shining through the windows and lighting up his mobile features.

As he stood there bending over the great old Bible, and read the second lesson in Revelations, describing the New Jerusalem, telling how Christ, through the very heavens through which they gazed by day and night, spoke, promising that there should be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying—promising the crown of life, his triumphant voice sounded like a trumpet.

He then prayed, wrestling with God, like Jacob in the night. "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me!" thrilled strangely through the people.

He felt the solemnity of his call to preach, the purity and meaning of his purpose so sincerely, that others could but feel it too.

Ah, there is beauty indescribable in the radiant outlook of a face with the glory of the throne shining upon it!

Elsie looked at him in amazement.

The sun rose higher in the heavens. Waldo preached on. Promises, a soft relief of hope and comfort in a sad world, fell in a perfect shower from his young and happy lips. His face was like a sunbeam in the place. Faith called, angels beckoned, God thundered. The

present rolled together like a scroll. The little church was full of visions.

He had taken for his text, "And I see a great white throne."

When he ceased, a magnificent voice rolled through the church, singing, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Some one had requested Elsie Carmen, who had great musical ability, to give the congregation a treat and surprise by singing a solo, and she had consented. People turned to look at her.

Waldo did not turn his head. He knew that triumphant composition was being sung with an inward sob; that the quiver in the voice was not artistic, but despairing; and, as he rested his temple on his hand, he wished it would cease—that glorious, thrilling music that seemed to him like mockery.

He could not help sketching a vision of enchantment—of what might have been, had that voice enlisted angels in its behalf, and sung to dying souls with a meaning and a hope. If that charming woman above there, in her cushioned pew, had only kept her soul from the love of the world, the pride of life, the doubts of the age! A vision of a happy man—priest and husband—joined to a real helpmate, serving God, stepping heavenward, filled him for the moment.

At last with a faint sigh, which reached no ear but

that of the Lord whom he served, he arose to pronounce the benediction.

With one hand pressed to her heart, Fan leaned heavily against the back of the pew in front of her. Her brother stepped into the aisle, and, as he did so, his eyes met her's. His was a deep, yearning, heart-searching gaze. His calm, holy eyes seemed to pierce her's like an angel's. It was her face that wore a stern mournfulness, an alienated coldness. While a prayer burned in his lifted eyes, her's smiled a melancholy farewell to his doctrines, his hopes, his work, his interests. The crowd swept the tall form forward beyond her gaze.

"What a man," thought Elsie. "That unfashionable idea of God—fear of the Eternal One, awe of the judgment, belief in 'special providence,' yearning to save souls—absorbs him, exalts him."

"It's a wonder," said Miss Lucretia, "he didn't read them all a chapter from Ecclesiasticks."

"Father," said Foxy, "I am going to be a preacher. I say, father, I am going to be a preacher!"

Mr. York stood still, amazed.

"I am going to study for it, that is," said Foxy, "I may die before becoming one."

"Die!"

Foxy turned his sturdy body about.

"I may die at any time; but if I live, I shall be a preacher. I thought there was nothing for me, and there is that."

His father laughed faintly.

"Father," said Foxy, "you always look at the sky and woods as if something was lost from them. You have lost your God; I have found Him."

"Waldo's twaddle! If I had sent you to R——, as I intended, you would have escaped all this."

"But I don't want to escape it."

"Well, if you will have it, I'll give you the truth. You shall know what all that humbug is—"

"Waldo says it is not right to walk flauntingly where angels fear to tread. That Christ existed is a historical fact. That He was good is another. That He could not have been good if He had been a liar and a fraud (saying He was God when He was not) even I can understand."

The boy faced his father. He had caught Waldo's spirit. As the soft May air buoys up the wings of a young bird, Waldo's faith had crept under the budding soul wings of the boy and had lifted him.

So even Foxy was to drop out of his curiously lonely life. Mr. York looked at the boy intently.

"It will pass," he said.

He had watched Foxy with Waldo with some rather

sharp pangs of jealousy. It was, perhaps, natural that Fan should love her brother, but Foxy—

As Foxy's long-forgotten laugh rang out on the breeze, and the thin wiry arms of the boy twined into those of his tall cousin, his father stood motionless, and a large bright drop of moisture appeared on his dark kid glove.

"As for me," muttered Regina, the next week, "I was adrowned in wonder a-Sunday; but more so a-Monday. He seeked me out an' talked to me about my scul. For him to seek out a poor nurse for no other reason than to say such things to me. Which," continued Foxy's old nurse, "'tis wonderous how a quiet man like that will bring home a body's thoughts at such times. An' what's more wonderful than keepin' Peter 'Toles from fallin' into a deep snorin' slumberin' sleep at meetin'? I've knowed men drouse off in that church near as soon as they got to it. Well 'n, I don't keer who the man is, I said it was a mercy I hadn't been abutchered, or aburned like some, or astoned or ahanged to a tree, so I couldn't go an' hear so handsome a young gentleman—like the prophets—tell me how I was to repent. Then I was permitted to go, and I felt thankful. A preacher! You'd think he was a professor of the stars one minute, an' a professor of the earth another, an' a

professor of books another ; but this he is—a professor of the Bible. He talked about stars till I was afraid to walk under 'em. Den I commenced to thinkin'."

Fan, to whom she was talking, closed her eyes.

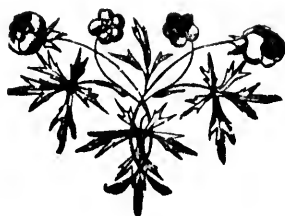
"You know," said the old nurse, "anybody kin be a infidel as wants to. Thar ain't no law against it, Mr. York says, if anybody desires of it; tho' I don't see what good he's got, neither! Tho' he acts as if to say nobody shan't cheat him out of it, nor nary part o' that there belief o' his. An' Mr. Waldo, de Lord bless him! I'm as sure to cry as he begins about God! He may say the cheerfulest things, but I'm sure to cry! 'Folks hasn't got any right to do it,' Joins says to him. 'Somebody has given me the right, Joins,' says he. Well, I declare!"

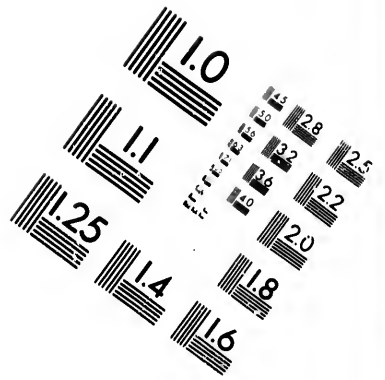
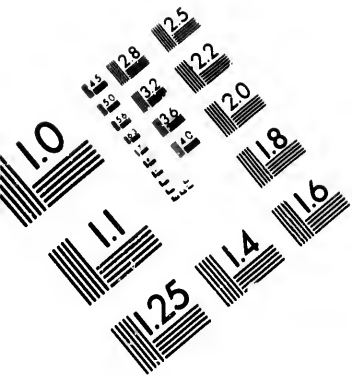
Fan now became inexpressibly dear to the deserted sceptic—the sceptic who thought himself deserted.

"Uncle takes no interest in anything. If you could help him it would indeed be like breathing life into a corpse," Fan had said to Waldo. Uncle was sad. He never saw Waldo but there swelled within him an infinite regret, in spite of his Darwin and Huxley. Whatever paths might be open to him, the soothing shades of faith were forbidden him forever, and his spirit seemed to shut him out from the spirits of the young, the innocent and the good. But he was more

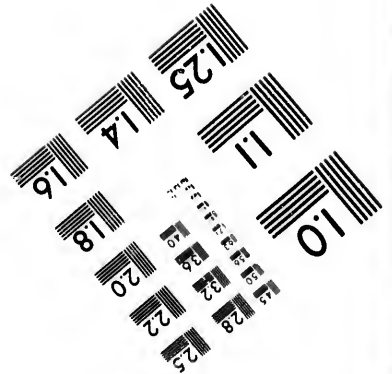
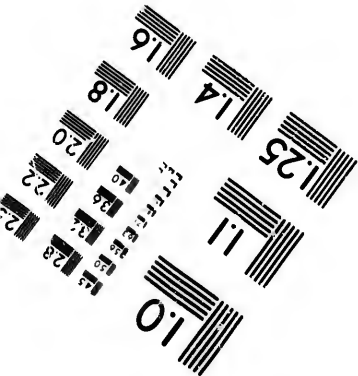
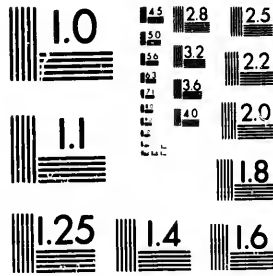
angry than sad. Foxy, seated on the front bench at church, gazing up with reverence, and kneeling with devotion had amazed and enraged him.

"It's too late, father," he had cried. "Waldo has convinced me. There is a Christ—a real Christ. Whenever I lie down, I think of Him. Whenever I rise up I think of Him. You can have every book in the world, I'll stick to Our Father!"





**IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)**





CHAPTER XXII.

MR. YORK was right.

Elsie felt herself for the first time in years taking a supreme interest in something. Yes, not only in Waldo, but in Waldo's work. It pleased her to see him pursuing his own steady life, a happy man. He was always the same, trying to crowd each day with work for the Master. But she never saw that bright face without a pang. She wondered at him, at his quiet heart, at the delight he found in his work, at his deep enjoyment of church ordinances, at his lack of care, at his triumphant look on Sundays.

"You always find something to cheer you, it seems; but how empty life is!" she exclaimed, to him, one day.

"Empty!" he echoed. "It is crowded with glorious possibilities. Every movement teems with interest and promise, and hides its reward in its flying bosom."

"I see none of it."

"None in your days of youth and health? Tell me, Miss Elsie, are you always so misanthropic?"

There was a little silence.

"All is dark to me," she said a length. "Impenetrable gloom shrouds us. God? If I could only imagine Him at all, connected with me in any way—no matter how far off—in any way!"

"Look at this body of yours—this dazzling, well-ordered, beautiful structure that holds the soul! Don't you feel that it must surely have had a loving Creator and wise Maker? Can you think He made so wonderfully, tenderly, *carefully*, that which He would neglect? Oh, Miss Elsie! you sin more than in any other way in such a poor conception of God. A proper conception of Him and of ourselves is necessary in order to seek Him acceptably."

"You who know so well how to seek Him acceptably, should, it seems to me, have all your prayers answered.

"I know you love your sister, Mr. York," she said, "and pray for her. Where! oh, where is the assistance for which you have prayed? Few have any practical belief in prayer, after all! Fan is getting further from your views all the time, and is going to marry an infidel. Tell me, do you still believe in prayer?"

The question sounded strange to Waldo. Believe

in prayer? Why, it seemed like the breath of his body. To breathe was to pray. To look up was to let his heart go out and up to an Almighty Spirit. Waldo, as a boy, had set out as zealously on the road to heaven as Christian for the Celestial City of pure gold, that stood upon the mighty hill.

“Yes,” he said, “He is faithful that has promised.”

“How can you believe in a God who is so pitiless?” she asked; “in One who, instead of dispelling your anxiety, increases it? I should think you would lose the feeling that He was good to you. Are you not asking a righteous thing? He himself—if there be a God—is giving you a stone instead of bread?”

“Did you ever read the Bible?”

“A little lately.”

“Where does it promise that the Christian shall have amenity from grief? ‘Whom He loveth He chasteneth.’ But though the answers to prayer sometimes tarry, I believe they always come. Our prayers are put in golden vials.”

One afternoon Waldo went with his sister to call on Elsie. Fan wanted her brother to see the beautiful home of her friend. This mansion was the substantial reminder and support of that family pride in which Elsie had been raised, her one goodly possession in the city which she loved. She made them stay to tea with

her. "A Methodist minister never has a home, does he?" she asked Waldo, teasingly. "He drifts about from post to pillar."

A terrible crisis had come in Waldo's life; a moment in which religious conviction and newly awakened love rushed together. His life had been a history of purely religious and intellectual zeal. His yearnings had been for doctrines, for argumentative conquest on the side opposed to doubt. The temptation he had to pray against was that of ambition—not weakness. He was not desirous that romance should enter his life. First, he feared lest this woman might be lost. Next, he wished she might join him with her wonderful help in his beloved work. But she was an unbeliever and he was a Christian minister. He longed to silence her busy little doubts that flitted like shadows around her faith, now strong with the strength of a giant. Her questioning spirit should no longer insinuate weak scepticism, express cool, inquisitive thought about the Holy Trinity, but be hushed

"On the bosom of her Father and God."

He had at first regarded this feeling with a stir of curiosity, next with keen enjoyment, and last with anguish.

He told himself this was the voice of the tempter;

that he could not influence her. She would only darken Fan's life and his, and glide with quick soul and intense life into some gayer world of fashion.

He was glad there was a high calling to which he owed allegiance, and church and friends to reprove him if he went astray.

They went through several of the rooms, and he found himself alone with her beside a tiny book case, with carved pelicans (which represent the motto of the State of Louisiana) with inlaid tracery of costly wood and little painted windows for its doors.

"Confess," she said, "you think me the giddiest butterfly of fashion you ever met."

A flush rose to his forehead.

"That, I think, can matter very little to you," he said.

"It does," she answered fearlessly, "you are one of the few persons whose good opinion I consider worth having. I know that you condemn me. I have seen it from the first; but I should like to convince you that I am harmless."

"It is your influence over my sister that I do not look upon as harmless," he said.

"Ah, that is it!" she murmured. "I knew you would tell me something, for you are very straightforward and thorough, and could not pretend to be

what you were not. But I am sorry Fan's brother does not like me—and—and for such a good or bad reason!" She sank upon a chair, evidently deeply moved.

"I did not say that I didn't like you, Miss Carmen."

"Pray, what need to say it?" She was quite white now. "Still I feel that I could trust you, and should like to see a great deal of you, and become better acquainted. Come to see me with Fan often, will you?"

"It is not possible," he answered, hoarsely. "We shall soon part, no doubt, and our paths will diverge."

"Then arraign me no more!" she said, passionately. "Forgive; I will be careful before Fan. I cannot bear to be so terribly censured. No one before ever dared—"

Was she crying?

"You would take her from me?" she said.

"I would if I could, until that proud heart of yours was broken before its Maker. Then I would put her hand in yours. Then—Miss Carmen—I would let myself love you."

Elsie rose.

"You!" she said. "You! I could never give up the life I lead. I should die of gloom without its pleasures, unsatisfactory as they are."

"I have not asked you to give it up for me," said

Waldo, gently. "I only say that, converted to God, you would be a being whom I should love. But I think I shall never talk to you again in this strain. Shall we join the others?"

"Not yet!" she said. "Mr. York, you and your sister are avenged. See this!" She showed him her wrist, wasting to a shadowy slenderness. "I have not told Dr. Roland, but I tell you that agony of mind, not illness of body, is doing this. Always, even in my childhood, restless, my womanhood is being consumed by a fever of the soul which is killing me. You thought I looked gay and well? Do you know what I was doing when you came? I was wondering if out there in the rescunding darkness of the river I might not find surcease. But no! Death is just what I fear, just what I live in dread of, just what spoils my brightest hours, and gives me sleepless nights!"

"Ah," said he, "what is suicide, indeed, but a loss of faith in God and eternity?"

Reader, does this seem old-fashioned? It is old-fashioned as the human heart, which was created six thousand years ago.

"Do you think I reject religion?" she asked. "If it came to me this moment, I would hold out my arms and welcome it."

Even Waldo could not doubt her sincerity. His voice fell on the silence, "If any man love the world —"

"Ah! And I do love the world! I could not even give up this precious home!"

"No, I should say not!" echoed Fan, entering with Janey, and catching Elsie's last words.

"You leave to-morrow?" said Elsie to Waldo, when they parted.

"Yes."

"Is it farewell?" she asked, in a low voice.

"It is farewell," he answered.





CHAPTER XXIII.

EVEN that man of the world and sceptic, Mr. York, felt some sympathy for Waldo when Fan's hand was given away in holy matrimony, and she became Mrs. Roland.

The Doctor was courteous to Waldo, but he secretly frowned over the young brother's agitation and pallor. It was hard, but Waldo was not the only one who loved Fan!

"You will yet see her," he said to Waldo—for he was as stubborn as a rock—"happy; for she loves me, hard as that is to believe! You will yet see her happy without your panacea, religion."

So she was married—the pale, beautiful bride.

When the ceremony was over, Waldo felt as though the fire had been kindled about a sacrifice.

"Now, Fan," said the Doctor, rumpling his hair in his excitement, and looking more like a mighty

wizard than a bridegroom, "we'll run away from Waldo on our bridal tour, and leave him to grow famous. You are so extremely grave, my dear Waldo. Bless my soul, how happy I am!"

The bride in her radiant robes did not look happy, though, as Waldo believed, she loved the man she had married.

"Is not society a farce?" asked Fan of her brother a few minutes afterwards, when they were alone together. "I went to a ball the other night, where we all were overheated, tired and disappointed; but we laughed the hours away right nobly. Oh, I wish this was over! The people congratulate me so furiously. Marriage is so solemn—time alone will tell whether it means happiness or misery. I don't feel as if I were married at all till I look at you, Waldo. 'The die is cast' is written all over your face."

The young man's eyes shone curiously, and he excused himself early.

Away with a shriek, a rattle and a roar of the great train, went Fan with the Doctor. Away into the world. Away from Waldo's world of faith, and hope, and love.

"Recklessly cleaving the shadows dim."

No one saw Waldo as he looked a long farewell, whispering, "Good-bye!" No one saw him as he

brushed a tear from his thin cheek, and passed like a phantom from the moonlight into the house.

Three months passed. As for Dr. Roland, he only knew that he failed to make his young wife happy. He did not guess that she still withered like one under the shadow of the upas tree. He looked at her beautiful face like one staring at a problem too hard to solve.

He had been half buried in his great work on the Heart. He worked closely, that he might forget himself.

"Entombed," he muttered. "She feels entombed with a mummy. That precious brother has shadowed our paths."

"God is a spirit, you say," he had remarked to Waldo. "It is all one to me—no God at all, or one so intangible as that." And these words of his had seemed to make Fan's heart colder and sadder, for of late she had often wished she could pray to God as Waldo did.

It may be asked how the doctor solaced himself? He studied. That was his object in life; to what was he looking forward? Simply and always to learn. It was not happiness that tempted him, nor public opinion, to which he was good-naturedly indifferent. His mind was a burning spark of curiosity, and that only.

"The Christian religion, sir," he had said to Waldo, "will not do for a thinker."

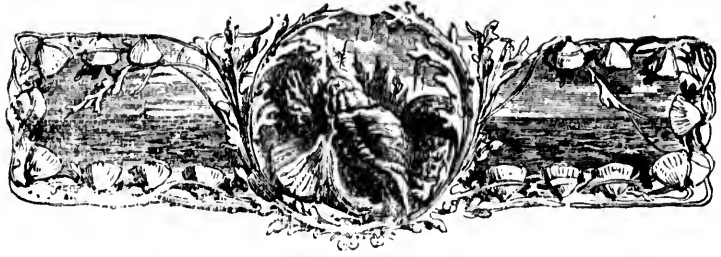
But even as he spoke the man before him seemed to refute him. He felt that there was something great about Waldo, and it made him bitter. He saw the full falcon eye flashing, yes, with tenderness for him. He quailed a moment, then rallied. He assured Waldo he was very hard—flinty, in fact. But once alone, he felt like giving way to tears.

"You did wrong to marry," he said to himself. "I think, gray as you are, and weather-beaten, you should not have expected to make her world—her heaven. You are like that old tree, that will never have green leaves more. The time of happiness and romance is over with you. She would have been happier with that dreaming brother than with you."

He looked out at the river, where the waves rose and died down, and repeated these lines:

"As they die a thought emerges,
Ghost-like from the scattered surges ;
To strive is but to fail ; the strongest
In striving most but suffer longest."

His eyes shone fitfully, as from under dark caverns. His beard had much less silver than black in it, and he was even elegantly dressed.



CHAPTER XXIV.

“FAN,” said the Doctor one day, “Oh, Fan, why are you not happy? We love each other, do we not? and we try to do right in all the details of life.”

“Waldo asks how can we know what is right when we never pray—never seek guidance from—”

“Waldo! Waldo! my head is bursting with Waldo.”

“And mine. Perhaps if he lived with us, instead of being shut out by himself as if he had not a relative on earth, we should feel better.”

“Do you mean,” asked the Doctor, gravely, “that you really wish that?”

“No,” she said, for his wounded look moved her. “No, only I fancy he is lonely and hurt.”

“Fancy that I am lonely, too,” cried the Doctor, “and troubled. My work brings me many a care with which I will not burden you. I spend the greater part of my life amid scenes of pain and distress, and

at sad death-beds. This makes me seem dull and old."

"Not old, not dull! Never! But life is so sad. My heart is so hungry for something better."

"Will you stop crying and listen to reason?" asked her husband.

But Fan had listened to reason so long, and to reason alone; she was a little hysterical, and could not stop her tears. The floods were broken up, and she sobbed.

The Doctor's eyes roved over his lawn, which looked as smooth in the soft light as the breast of a bird. The shadows mingled with the beautiful and imposing flowers, brimful of sunshine. How carefully he had worked and weeded the plot for her. How he tried to make her happy,—and had failed.

"I am very sorry," said the Doctor, "that your heart is hungry. There has been a mistake somewhere. I thought that my wife, with her high-toned, heroic character, would be satisfied with love and love only."

She was at his feet now, looking up into his pale, anxious face.

"It is *because* I love you," she cried, "that I feel so sad. I have the love, and yet there is unrest. If there is any good in life, in death, I want you to have

it. And Waldo's words. I can't forget them. He says faith is very simple. He said—but how many things as cheering and beautiful have I heard my brother say that passed me by like the idle wind that I regarded not?"

There was a call for the Doctor as she spoke, and he hurried away, after kissing her tenderly, and bidding her "cheer up."

"Cheer up, indeed," muttered old Regina, in the dining-room, "You may tell her to take somethin' stimulin'. Proscribe dis an' proscribe dat. Let her own brudder proscribe for her—dat's what. I likes to see him settin' by Miss Fan, 'scoursin'. And when he says, soft and easy, 'God bless you, Fan,' I wonders she don't throw her arms around his neck; but she don't."

Walking out alone among the children of the poor, finding his way into dreary prisons, Waldo saw many sights that made him patient under his cross. But he also saw sights which caused his eyes to suffuse with tears. He saw here among these wretched ones, family ties like adamant. He saw miserable objects, ruined, cast out by society, cross, rude, silly, worthless—but beloved.



CHAPTER XXV.

FOXY was sick, he was often sick ; but soon after Waldo's last visit the boy had had a fall from his horse after which a fever set in. His father was with him a good deal, and nursed him tenderly.

"Father," he said one day, "read to me a little in the New Testament. Here it is!" He drew a book from under his pillow. "My hands are so weak. Read about Bethlehem." His eyes were smarting with fever. His father laughed.

"No! no! Foxy, you used to blow sun-lit bubbles out in the warm air; such a bubble you are now pursuing. Well may all this shock Waldo, who clasps the Bible to his heart, but you—"

"Yes, I, papa! What about me? Suppose I die. Suppose I am on the left-hand on that great day?"

"Nonsense! Have I not told you that justice is not postponed? A perfect equity adjusts its balance in all parts of life."

"Is not that a sceptical saying?"

"It may be considered so."

"Well, Waldo says those men contradict themselves."

"Have done! Be reasonable and contented, Foxy. 'Discontent is the want of self-reliance,' as a great writer says."

"Waldo would say it is the want of God. I should like so to see Waldo."

"Waldo wouldn't do you any good. He is a good lad, but—"

"Lad! He is a preacher!"

"That is the reason why I think him so insane."

"But—"

"There are no other friends you wish to see?"

"Not one," said Foxy, bitterly.

Mr. York had much sympathy for Foxy, whose angry, disappointed boyhood stung *him* most keenly; but he wanted no more of his nephew's society than he was forced from courtesy to have.

"It is only Waldo who has made my life bearable to me," said Foxy, "and I need him."

"Ah!"

"Send for him. Is it not through him that heaven will come to me?"

His eyes lighted up. A smile—his father's own smile, only sweeter—softened his rough, dark face.

"Why, even when I have the blues, the thought of him sets me up. I have twice in the night got up, intending to run away to him, and was not strong enough. But I wanted to."

"Why?"

"I was sick—and—afraid—"

His father laughed again.

"In a week your religion will be a dream of the past," he said.

Foxy thought of his strong young cousin; the resolute lip, the nearly straight, heavy brow, the shining goodness, the open gaze; but his father's cold and sunken eye looked wise—terribly wise. A wild gleam shot from the boy's eyes.

"O God, have mercy!" he prayed.

"See here," said his father, "don't give up to that foolish excitement."

"Papa! promise to meet me. Promise your poor, lame boy, who is going to die."

"You are in a fever now. One of these days the doctor will come in and find that your brain has given way, and that you've begun to laugh and sing. Then he'll put you in a carriage and bear you off to an asylum. Waldo is half mad, you know."

Foxy's face reddened. He looked out of the window, up at the ceiling—anywhere but at his father.

"Waldo's looks have fascinated you," said Mr. York, "but his views are wrong."

"All wrong?"

But as he walked away something seemed to say to Mr. York, "All cannot be wrong where there is such continued peace."

Foxy had been ill several days when Waldo arrived.

One morning Mr. York saw that a change was stealing over the boy's face. Foxy's pulse fluttered against his father's fingers. Mr. York sprang into the next room, shook his nephew, and hastened back.

Eagerly he listened to hear if Foxy spoke of him, but though the black eyes opened wide, there was no recognition in them even of a father's face.

In vain stimulants were given. Mr. York wept aloud. His scepticism was powerless in such an hour. It could speak no word of consolation. There were no tears on Waldo's cold, gray face.

"Do you think I took his religion from him?" asked Mr. York.

"I hope not," said Waldo, gently.

"Ah, it was just the other day I laughed at his 'special Providence,' Waldo," he raved. "I'm sorry there's no special Providence."

The day passed. The night waned, and Foxy's life waned with it. The poor father was almost beside himself.

“Speak to him, uncle,” said Waldo, as Foxy seemed to wake.

“No, no! I do not know what to say to him! Sing, Waldo. Sing something he loved to hear.”

Waldo sang the little hymn that Foxy loved:

“A tent or a cottage—
What do I care;
They’re building a palace
For me over there!”

Fuller and fuller, spreading wave after wave through the air, the deep melody dreamed along—

“I’m the child of a King!”

Poor Foxy had sung it in his weak, quavering voice, but his father had laughed, and not loved to hear it; for the boy had looked up at the sky as he sang, as though he longed to fly away. Waldo’s musical voice, so familiar and dearly loved, awaked some show of consciousness in the dying lad, even at that crisis. For a moment Foxy’s eyelids trembled; the faintest shadow of a smile crossed the poor lips.

“Foxy!” cried the father, sobbing aloud. “Oh, dear Foxy! My dear Foxy!”

“Try—to—pray!” the boy whispered.

“I will!” cried the unbeliever. “But only tell me you forgive me!” He put his ear to the lips, but no answer came.

Never more, Mr. York, will it be your privilege to turn your child's thoughts to a better world, or warn him of a sadder one. Never more will he appeal to you to know if Revelation is true, flinging his arms around your neck and crying to be comforted, while you turn away with a laugh. No more jeers and ridicule for him. No more limping through the lonely, magnificent home.

There was a moan, and then the words, "My God!" uttered in a voice it chilled the doctor to hear.

"You will see him again," said the preacher.

"Oh, never, never!"

Waldo was praying now. He did nothing but pray as that feeble little heart ceased to beat. He did nothing but implore the Good Shepherd to take that young spirit in His kindly arms and bear it to the heaven He had tried to people with friendly faces.

"He is no longer here," said Waldo, "but

"In that far-off happy country
Which no human eye hath seen,
Where the flowers are always blooming,
And the grass is ever green."

Mr. York shivered, and wrapped around his shoulders a heavy shawl that Foxy had been accustomed to use.

"I will be me merciful to thy unrighteousness and

thy sins, and thine iniquities will I remember no more,'” repeated Waldo.

“Is that in the Bible?” asked his uncle.

“Yes, sir.”

Waldo knelt. “Holy Lord! Father! Maker of all men!” he prayed aloud, as the sallow face grew into clay before his eyes, “now look upon the father of this child! Help him to say:

“‘Thy ransomed servant, I
Restore to Thee thine own,
And, from this moment, live or die
To serve my God alone.’”

A great peace seemed to settle on Foxy's face.

Mr. York looked upon that countenance whence the shadows of bitterness and woe had passed.

Was Foxy listening to angels in the new Jerusalem?

“Upon my soul,” said Mr. York, “I believe there's something in it. I will keep my word to Foxy. I'll try.”

Waldo turned to speak to the doctor. He was gone.

The next evening, as the stars were coming out, the two men, uncle and nephew, were alone together in the room with their precious dead. “Uncle!” said Waldo, “St. Paul could hide the axe of Nero with the crown of everlasting life. We can hide, throw over this spectre of death the robe of righteousness, ‘Blessed

are the dead who die in the Lord.' Why can you come to this coffin with a peaceful face? Why do you feel that this room is a sacred place? Uncle, you are changing."

He laid his Bible on his uncle's knee, and his eyes—clear eyes, peaceful and earnest—looked up reverently in the aging face. His uncle's hand rested on his shoulder, and he seemed to be pondering his words.

"I expect to pass through this life but once; if, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, any good thing I can do to my fellow-beings, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

So Waldo felt. So Waldo lived, with noble purposes and pursuits, upheld by a hope sacred, strong and sweet. Morning and evening found it burning like an altar-fire in his heart, engrossing his thoughts in his lonely walks, and proving the truth of God's Word, "They that believe do enter into rest." He would not pause to censure or repine. As the wise men of the East kept their eyes steadfastly fixed on the star, following it through rough paths and smooth, so he passed on. Faith should reign and redeem, leading like a light, though that scaly monster of the deep—doubt—swam down below and kept his shining eye upon poor Fan.

But there were times when Waldo's eyes would fill with tears, as he wondered if love and faithfulness would ever bring the dear reward he sought; if his sister would ever be proud of him; if she would ever be glad that he was her brother, though an humble minister of the Gospel; if she would ever learn that her stony road might end in a brother's heart.

One day Fan and her husband were sitting in a rustic bower, outside of which was an old fruit tree. The leaves were thick and green. The fruit, ripe, luscious, beautiful peaches, hung in hundreds, stem by stem, while just beyond dipping down upon a blossom, was a radiant butterfly, symbol of the resurrection. The Doctor plucked one of the peaches, and gave it to Fan. She took it and looked up at him a little sadly.

"I wish I could eat them as Waldo does," she said.

"How, darling?"

"Thanking God for His goodness."

He laughed and looked at her, astonished, vexed.

"It is just as good without," he said, eating one.

"No! *You* look up at the tree and say, 'See, nature, unguided, make all this!' *He* looks up and says, 'See how good God our Father is. He made these things for us.'"

Constantly there appeared to her mind Waldo's form, kneeling, the light upon his splendid hair, his counten-

ance breathing faith—faith for her. Then snatches from her uncle's past quotations would occur to her, such as :

“ Nothing is the same as being.”

How absurd !

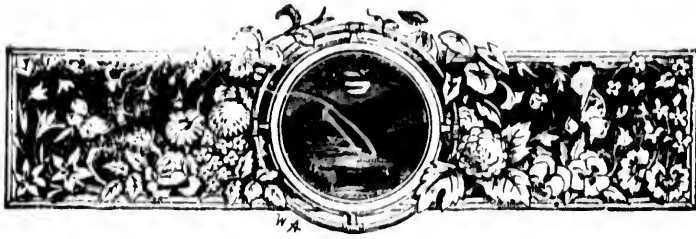
But, of course, Hegel must be right.

“ Universal pure being.”

Why could not they say what they meant ? The Bible was at least plain in its language ; and the people who believed in the Bible, like Waldo, were happier than others. She read the Bible stealthily—sometimes half believed it was true ; then she resolved that she would try to conquer this feeling, for it was one of awe and distress.

“ Into each life some rain must fall ! ” It was falling thick and fast into Fan's life. Was there no silver lining to the cloud ? None. She and her dear Doctor had drifted apart.

When he took refuge from her bitter tears in that grim and awful silence, then she felt the necessity for something more than beauty, something more than wit, something more than the strong tie that bound them for life. And now, as she sits pensive and alone, she hears Waldo's story of his boyhood repeated again and again by the wind, ending, “ I knew I should find you, Fan, for I loved you so ! ”



CHAPTER XXVI.

IT was midsummer. New Orleans lay in the grasp of a terrible epidemic. It sent out signals of distress like a ship disabled in mid-ocean. Yellow fever in its most malignant form had made its appearance in the city. It wreaked its fury on the people with all the venom of the transatlantic plague. The arrow flew by day, the pestilence walked in darkness, and destruction wasted at noon-day.

The summer held its sceptre until the leaves curled inward, as if from sheer fright, and the blue air held its breath. The dust was not subdued by the rush of rain, and the clear morning never dawned without new horrors. Flowers died upon the dying grass. Magnolias and cedars crowded in close proximity to roses and carnation pinks, in a wilderness of beauty, yet there seemed to be neither shade nor sweetness anywhere. Without dew or shadow, summer is as heartless as a woman without tears or thought, caring only

for her insignia of beauty, her colors flaunting the day. So had summer come to New Orleans, with the epidemic in its track. In vain the Board of Health fought the evil. It eluded their grasp like an essence. It had come so suddenly, that even all the wealthy could not escape by the usual exodus; and, indeed, so terrible was the scourge that boats were at length forbidden to land their terror-stricken passengers. Crape floated at the doors of wealthy homes, and wails made dismal the air around the hovels of the poor. In one day, from one house, five coffins filled with beloved forms had been borne.

The fierce blazing sun hung like brass above the doomed city. It heated the pavements until they appeared to quiver, and to be too hot to touch even where the awnings sheltered them. The trees were scorched and stood motionless, as if they were the production of art instead of nature.

The waters, so uniformly caressed by breezes that curled and crested and coquetted with them, and sent the boats dancing to the shore like home-coming children, were like glass. Those breezes that had sung to the city all spring and summer of lily-whitened marshes and rock-hooded springs, forsook the scourged vicinity, and left the boats to blister and the sails to gleam, ghost-like, in the stillness.

The sun rose so early and set so late. By five o'clock in the morning it shot through curtained crevices its smoking arrows, and coursed all day through an unclouded sky. At seven o'clock, compelled to sink, it shivered into infinite atoms of splendor its shining beams.

A death-like stillness reigned over the old French quarter, but among the tombstones of the white-walled cemetery there was motion—there was sound that made the outer silence the more impressive.

Death came stalking up to the people, swiftly, mercilessly, silently. They had time to comprehend him fully now, those unbelievers who dealt only in facts, if such a thing be possible. What is death? Who can answer the awful question, or realize the final catastrophe? De Quincey has tried to picture it in his vision of sudden death. But no pen has ever described this enemy. No artist has ever sketched him.

Sceptics have felt able to speak gaily of the invisible hand, and the step in the dark; but when the human mind catches a mere twinkle of the "vast flame of death" it faints, unless God sustains it.

Dr. Roland strode through the streets with a massive kind of gait, but a grave enough face.

"Weil," said Regina, "sich is life. And sich is the

good man's mind it will almost always stick to its own sister, no matter how unnatural and even against him. He says she's got ter leave these parts "

Elsie's housekeeper, old Aunt Phoebe, always a conundrum to Janey, was more so than ever now, that they told her she was dead. Janey determined to go and peep at her just once before they took her away.

Nobody noticed the child as she went; but when she was found vibrating with emotion, and frowning at the corpse, the evil was done. She caught the disease, and lay long in its grasp. Elsie remained with her. No hand dared separate them. It was touching to hear Janey, in her delirium, try to pray. The dry little lips would mumble something a long while, then end in a devout "Amen." Elsie felt that she would rather hear anything than that dull murmur and that ignorant, explosive, piteous "Amen." But when it ceased, Elsie raising Janey in her arms, listened intently for a moment to the little heart. "Janey! Janey! My baby sister! My precious darling!" she murmured, passionately, pressing the pallid face to her warm bosom. "Oh, pray again, anything to hear your voice." A faint sigh parted Janey's lips; and when she recovered, Elsie determined to remain in the city and nurse the sick.

Was not Waldo in the city, and exposed at all times?

He had even boarded a vessel which no one else would approach, and ministered to the wretched ones there. She was not afraid of the disease. Many noble women came from abroad, and risked their lives among strangers. Should not she risk hers to be with him whom she cared for more than for her own life?

Wherever she went, her eyes had a searching, observant look, as if she was seeking some one.

But Fan, unhappy Fan, suffered from a nervous fear of the disease. Her husband and brother must stay; their avocations demanded that they should not desert their post, but the Doctor had decided that she should go away immediately. She and her uncle were to leave together. She had arranged for her departure, and at noon one day she stood at her open door. The air was blistering. Not a cloud in sight. Hearses were drawn along the burning streets. Death was all around. Stores were closed. Pleasure haunts were silent and dreary. No music was showered upon the air at the opera house. The burning pitch now took the place of revelry and song.

All night the Doctor had watched beside stiffening limbs, listening to the cries of widows and orphans. He could not say "I believe Thee, O God, when Thou

speakest," as Waldo did, "and Thou wilt be a father to the fatherless." No. If he could not stop the fever he could do nothing, alas.

When her husband arrived to take her to the train, Fan's teeth chattered, and her young frame trembled.

"Doctor," she cried, "I am ill. Oh, can it be the fever? What shall I do if it is? Perhaps by tomorrow I shall be dead. Nothing! Oh, Doctor, are you sure Waldo is wrong? He gives so much comfort to the sick, they say. If I could only believe in such a life hereafter, as he preaches."

"There is no use in our deceiving ourselves, my love," said the Doctor. "Doubtless his superstition arose in the same way as the belief in former days in a newt's eye, or any object remote and difficult of access."

"The place looks deathly," said Fan. "Even the sunshine is mournful. Oh awful, awful!" she cried, in a low, shuddering tone, as a hearse passed. "But I can't go away. Oh, save me! I feel the chill creeping on me now." She reached her trembling arms toward her husband. It was true. Fan was smitten. She was carried to her bed, the tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Never fear, you will recover. It is seldom one dies in this part of the city," said her husband, pre-

paring a bath for her. "I will work as I never did before."

The strong man, though almost fainting from fatigue, nursed and tended her tenderly.

But Fan's thoughts were with Waldo. She wished he would drop in as he sometimes did. She thought of the picture he had kept of her, and the little birthday gifts. She felt the touch of his hand, the tear that fell upon it at her cold rejection of his religious interest.

She missed him now. She missed his sweet, holy singing, his bright face. She had no idea how she had been leaning on him, for in some way, whenever she had talked anything over with him, it always seemed to lift the burden.

But he was out among the sick and dying now, and did not know that she was ill.

Ah, let him comfort others. She had refused his help. She would not call him from those terrible death-beds, where she felt that he carried the light of hope. Others, strangers, would not reject it, as she, his sister, had done.

She would not let her husband nor old Regina know what she felt, though it had been a woeful day when she had turned her back on a faithful brother's loving counsel, and nothing had seemed right since.

“What have I done in sending him out from me with anguish in his heart?” she asked herself. “I can no longer affect superiority to such a man. I shall go to my grave with the thought that I have wounded the noblest heart that ever beat.”

But now she was too sick to think any more. Her husband bent over her, and heard her murmur wildly, “Waldo, Waldo!” And then her mind wandered.

Suddenly he rushed out of the room.

“Great heavens!” he cried, “I have it myself. I, too, have taken the fever.”

He crept back, and flung himself beside his wife, without a word.

The place was almost deserted. A nurse was not to be obtained immediately.

It was late when Waldo called in at his brother-in-law's, exhausted, haggard from unremitting toil and vigils among the poor and sick.

He took his place beside the sufferers. He knelt down and kissed the poor, tossing face of his sister. Fan did not know him, and the Doctor was wildly delirious. He turned his crimson face toward the young minister, and said,

“You know how I love Fan, but you don't know how I hate her brother. He has made her life miserable. She is afraid of her shadow.”

Waldo smoothed the heated brow.

“He makes himself ridiculous,” confided the Doctor. “He entered our midst with signs of friendship, but treacherously poisoned my wife’s mind and turned her against me. I will not believe in the life divine, he will not believe in death.

Then the Doctor demanded a spade, that he might go out and dig his own grave. Waldo gently held him back.

“I was trying to be a good, honest man, but that was not enough for the pious soul,” said the Doctor. “If you had done a great wrong, if you had allowed a soul to faint for help before your very eyes, if you were conscious of remorse until you feared the insanity of melancholia, what would you do?”

Fan’s eyes followed Waldo, then they turned toward the door, as if looking for some one.

Waldo walked softly across the room and leaned out of the window. It was only by the exertion of a powerful will that he forced himself to keep up at all. He could eat little, and sleep had fled. He had heard that Elsie had remained in the city as a nurse. His uncle, too, had stayed.

An awful stillness brooded around him. How he yearned for the first sprinkling of rain-drops on the roof; as he looked back at the Doctor and thought

how the shadow of vanishing days had lain, gathering on him ever since their first meeting. "Bring out the dead!" sounded below, and made Waldo's heart beat quickly.

Clasping his hands, he repeated earnestly :

"What is your life? A dream in the night. . . . A tale that is told. . . . A breath! A span! A vapor! As grass which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.' Why, then, so anxious, so full of perturbation?"

A light touch caused him to look around, and his eyes rested on Elsie.

"How worn you look, Mr. York," she exclaimed. "The place is desolate, is it not? A few ministers, a few hundred dying people, and some negroes. I am glad you are here. I have just heard about these two noble ones. You will not let Fan die? They say you have become a good physician for the body as well as for the soul."

"Sit down, Miss Elsie; you are quivering with exhaustion."

"How is Fan?"

"Very ill. So is the Doctor."

"Let me stay and help?"

Waldo's brow dropped rather sternly.

"You run a terrible risk," he said; "one which I do not wish you to run in your present belief."

"Have you been ill, sir?"

"No."

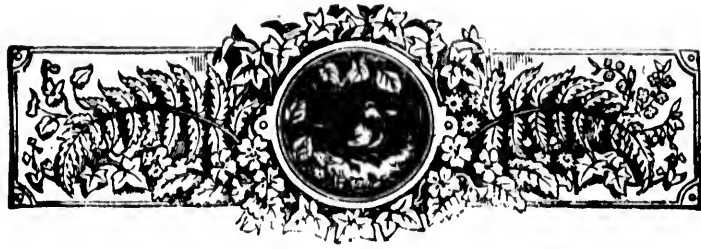
"How strong in faith he seems," thought Elsie. "He instantly and quiescently accepts 'God's will.' Heavenly delusion? And there is Janey, who never tried to deceive any one, says she loves God and feels so happy, and is not afraid to die."

Elsie had never looked so beautiful in his eyes as she did at that moment.

"You may come back to-morrow, if you will go out of the city and rest now. And, oh, Miss Elsie, try to believe in God; make your peace with Him without delay. Isn't this the very time to look to Him for aid?"

"Y—e—s; I will try. Oh, take this money for the poor. You will know how to use it. If you knew how I feel, you wouldn't hinder me. Religion must be very sweet. It makes me think so of the old times. It reminds me of twilight, around the fire, and voices. There!"—stopping suddenly, and clearing her throat with a cough—"Good night!"

Waldo had scarcely known what a strain he was undergoing until to-night—until he had felt the clasp of that soft, even-pulsed hand, and looked into those deep gray eyes, perhaps, for the last time.



CHAPTER XXVII.

FAN was better, and knelt beside the bed, with her eyes fixed on her husband's face.

"He cannot last another day," she said to herself.

Hours passed. It was almost day when he opened his eyes; his lips moved. She put her ear down to catch the words.

Could she be deceived? The only word she could distinguish was, "Waldo."

Again she looked into his open eyes; they were full of anguish. He put his arms about her neck, pressed her lips to his, drew her head to his breast, and moaned.

"Fan," he asked, "is Waldo here?"

"No; but I expect him. You are better now?"

"No; but I am so glad you are better, Fan. I think I am going to die. Wait! Stop! Nothing can be done. I understand my case. But Waldo thinks prayer is so mighty. Would you—try to—pray for me, Fan?" he asked.

She was amazed. She hesitated. How could she pray? And yet, he might be about to die.

"Try!" he cried.

"Why not?" she said, and knelt down.

She raised her eyes. Providence—Omniscience—Eternal Law. Some words she had once seen rushed on her memory:

"If there is such a thing, it laughs at us, as its great forces crash on and crack our bones to dust."

"O God," she cried, "if there be a God—help my husband!"

A sense of awe was upon her, so that she almost feared to turn, lest after all, what she partly disbelieved in, yet wholly longed for, were at her side.

Waldo, softly turning the knob, saw her kneeling there, and lifting up her tear-stained face. Fan's attitude was that of humble prayer. He stood stunned with amazement, especially when the Doctor raised his hand, and added,

"For her sake—I dare not ask for my own—forgive."

Then Waldo saw Fan rise in a strange, moved manner. Suddenly she clasped the Doctor's hand with a thrilling, ecstatic cry.

"He heard. God heard me. I feel, I know that He exists. He loves us. There is hope for us. Oh,

death! I do not fear you now. I feel so safe. Oh, why did I ever doubt?"

The next moment Fan was in her brother's arms. His lips found only one word they could utter, "Fan."

He could clasp his long-lost darling, heart to heart at last.

She could make no answer; but a deep, long sob of that mysterious, wondrous happiness they now shared together.

They stood mutely gazing at each other. Waldo, with eyes of intense fire looking out from a pale and shaken face. Fan, with awe and humiliation mingling with her joy.

Oh, that face of Fan's. Reminder of his purest affection and greatest trial, of his happiest days and loneliest years. How fair it was now with the expression God intended it to wear.

"Go to him," Waldo cried, suddenly pointing to the bed.

Waldo thought the Doctor might be dying, his face showed such agony of mind.

"Oh, science! *ignis fatuus!*" the sick physician muttered to himself, "you have mocked me long enough. In place of my mother's God. Oh, grand philosophy, you have given me only conjecture and abstractions. Oh, can the shades of death be darker than the star-

less night through which I have groped for forty years? Metaphysics! Science! Grand words! A little genuine peace would be more to the purpose."

"It would be delightful," thought Waldo, "to see the peace of God shining on that pale, stern, grim face."

Waldo knelt and prayed aloud. The Doctor closed his eyes, but tears stole from beneath the lashes.

"The grave will soon shut me in," he thought, "and I shall weep no more."

He felt that he had left the fountain of living waters, and hewn out for himself a broken cistern which could hold no water. Science could give no relief in the dying hour.

He had heard Waldo say, in this terrible danger, "I can but die, and I am not afraid to die. 'Living or dying, I am the Lord's.'"

The Doctor did not die. No son, no brother, could have tended him with more care than Waldo did.

Waldo felt that now he could look into the workings of the great infidel's heart. Patiently he must wait, and watch the inner life of this man.

The Doctor felt that he was beginning life all over again, when the rain fell from the dark clouds, and all danger was dispelled. He wept for joy. He had not intended to do so; but the arm of that brother around

him, had pressed upon his great, big, old heart, and under the combined happy influence of his wife and Waldo, he thought, with them, what mighty gifts were God's. What great rivers, and vast clouds, and falling rains. What miles of sunshine. What absolute peace all around.

Hundreds had fallen, and he was spared.

What heart does not glow, whose countenance does not shine, when called upon to acknowledge deliverance from sudden, awful death?

"Fan," said the Doctor, looking into her thankful face, "the sweetest episode in all my life, was that little, feeble prayer put up for me and ending so brightly."

Fan's whole nature was changed. She had been timid, gloomy, restless; she became fearless and calm.

"Fan," said Waldo, "I feel as if a great wave had almost swallowed us up, and that we are thrown back again now on a safe Rock, hand in hand, somewhat hurt and bewildered, but high and secure, never to drift to sea again. We shall be in heaven together, as really as when we roamed the daisied fields as little children."



CHAPTER XXVIII.

WALDO, who for some time had kept his eye upon the broad and liberal-minded Powell, had of late lost sight of him. This man, who had shone like a star for awhile, had for the past few years dwindled rapidly. He was hand and glove in "jolly fellowship" with liquor dealers to whom he had once carried tracts, intimate with irreligious men, whom he had scathed. He had followed so many new lights that he had got rather mixed up in his ideas.

If he went to the theatre and paid five dollars for a seat, it was only a narrow bigot who would remark on it. He said man needed relaxation, and that it took money. Nevertheless, according as he went to such places, his ambassadorial dignity diminished.

Circling around the centres of fashion, he had found the giants of modern thought irresistible. He no

longer "enjoyed religion," no longer heard the whisper out of heaven, "Feed My lambs."

He could not be, like many other ministers, content with a small salary, and with no reputation beyond a small town, laboring year after year in the obscure work of elevating, regenerating, helping to save the poor class committed to their charge. The narrow path, the straight gate, leading to so little brilliant earthly success, meant bigotry.

Waldo had met him more than once, and tried to reason with him; but Mr. Powell had gone into one gorgeous digression after another till he could not find the original current. His early faith was gone, and he seemed dazed with the perplexities of popular reforms.

One of the saddest pictures Waldo had ever seen was that of the brilliant Mr. Powell, orphaned of all religion, sitting gloomy and silent among his literary friends as they talked of death.

"And you, Mr. Powell?" said Waldo, when they found themselves alone together.

"Oh, I? I am like Tourgeneff," was the answer. "I don't think of death. 'It remains distant—covered—the Slavic mist!'"

Somewhere, in the world of fashion, he had lost his God; he still had his modern thinkers, however, whose

books he read as the true Christian reads his Bible. He said he had "exhausted Providence." The time was coming when he would almost exhaust the church "charity fund," but he did not know that.

It is the shortest possible step from relaxation to utter overthrow. So he fell.

Some said he was demented, others said he was going mad. First, he had been "the brilliant Powell," then he was, after awhile, called "Old Powell," now "Crazy Powell."

Waldo thought he had simply trifled with his faith until he had lost it—lost his faith in God, and had now no heavenly Father's smile; lost his faith in heaven, and had no future to brighten his old age.

"No wonder he is going mad!" said Waldo. "I will try to help him." And now he was growing old. Waldo, hearing that he was among the stricken, and knowing that intemperate men were the easier victims to the fever, called to see him, in a narrow street. He trod the wretched stairs with a sense of what it meant to live—and almost die—in a garret.

Poor, comfortless, solitary home!

Poor, desolate old philosopher, watching so long for the friends who never came! Deserted by scientists, reformers, explorers, and new lights, the prey of sad memories. Waldo heard a cracked, muffled voice re-

peating the words, " Primarily, the Unknowable moved upon cosmos and evolved protoplasm.

" And there went a spirit out of evolution from the unconditioned, and working in protoplasm by accretion—"

Waldo knocked, opened the door, and saw a wild-eyed man almost in rags. With Darwin's scheme of creation he was whiling away the wretched hours, scarcely knowing what he said.

Waldo saw that he could not converse rationally, and soon left him, and made arrangements to have him cared for at the home for the sick and infirm where he visited him and helped to nurse him.

Mr. Powell recovered from the fever; but out of the gloom and scientific discord his mind never rose.





CHAPTER XXIX.

WALDO could scarcely realize it, but they were gathering around him, one by one, those whom he loved.

As truly as the evening star rises amid the gloom and sends out its light, so did he shine wherever he went.

The epidemic was over, and there were happy reunions at Mr. York's homestead.

Paler than he had been, but with the same indomitable brightness of face, and the lasting youthfulness of enthusiastic feeling, Waldo made his friends think of those birds that "fly high enough above the earth to have forgotten to be timid."

It was through him that there seemed to shine upon Coppet, his uncle's home, a glory that had never shone there before; through him that there was a sweet union between Fan and her husband that they had

never dreamed of; through him that there was a change in Elsie's life, from the earthly to the heavenly.

"Ye are the light of the world," the Master said of all such.

All felt his influence, and grew to look up to him, and love him and honor him as he never expected to be loved and honored in this world.

"They air makin' his crown," said old Regina, with a glance upward, "weavin' it above his head, while he hol's out so faithful an' good."

True he was tired, broken down, fevered with fatigue. But what did it matter if he was weary, almost beyond endurance? What did anything matter so he might one day hear the words:

"Thou hast been faithful over a few things."

True he loved Elsie Carmen with a hopeless affection.

"Waldo York," he said, "there must be an end of this folly. Elsie Carmen is not a Christian."

Oh, how he wished he had been able to make her see God as he saw Him that night.

"Ah, proud girl," he said, "you are struggling desperately with your convictions. You, too, have built your little palace on the sand, and because your life is desolate, you blame God. 'They build too low who build beneath the skies.'"

One morning Elsie ran to her window and threw the shutters open. She had slept late. The sun was up in a cloudless sky. Sheets of purple vapor were lifted from the river's bank. The sun had shivered the fog into infinite atoms of splendor, but on every leaf there shone a satin softness.

Her own face startled her in the mirror that morning. She almost wondered if those happy, shining eyes were hers.

From the violets growing in the window she plucked a tiny bunch, and fastened it in the bosom of her dress.

After breakfast, she wandered to the music-room, and played some chants, till her eyes grew wet over their tender sweetness.

"Oh, strange experience," she murmured. "Can this be happiness at last? Why then am I so prone to weep? This is—this must be—oh, that I could dare to complete the sentence. Oh, why can't I tell Waldo? Why cannot I seek him? He makes everything so simple; but I cannot."

There was a knock at the door, and Waldo was admitted. He seemed too agitated to see her tears.

"Good morning," she said. "You are ill. You have been working too hard. Let me bring you something."

She looked keenly at the pale face, which, in spite of its calm, bore the marks of late vigils and present anxiety.

"No, thank you," he replied. "Can you come with me to see my uncle? He is very sick, and has been asking for you."

"Oh, he is like a father to me!" cried Elsie, clasping her hands. "He is not dying?"

"Oh, no; I hope he will be better soon," said Waldo, hurrying her unceremoniously away.

The red and yellow leaves of autumn were already beginning to strew themselves at the feet of pedestrians, as Elsie and Waldo walked up the avenue leading to Mr. York's house. They talked but little. In a silence more blessed than words, they walked together, with the shadows of trees around them, and the sunshine on their path. A damp, sweet wind came crowding out of the south.

They heard the great slow strokes of the bells behind them beating through the morning air.

Waldo bared his head and looked upward. He was renouncing her.

"O God," he said, inwardly, "though it be like cutting off the right hand and plucking out the right eye—Thy will be done."

He paused a moment, then went resolutely on. A

gust of melody was showered from the branches above his head by birds, like the first notes of a chorus in victory.

Mr. York was eagerly looking for Waldo's tall figure, and uttered an exclamation of pleasure when his nephew entered.

Waldo, with a face as clear cut as Miss Carmen's own, approached the bedside, and took the hand that had once been raised against him.

All about the house was going on as it was wont. Beautiful and peaceful in the early sunshine, Coppet gave no evidence of its proud owner's decline. The birds were flying about busily in the orchard, the horses were being curried in the stable—birds that he would soon cease to hear—horses that he would need no more.

"Lors o' mussy!" cried old Regina, starting at the sight of Waldo, and speaking in a whisper aside to Fan, "Mr. Waldo look mo' like dyin' 'n Mr. York do."

"Dying!"

"Mo' like marbile. Got be mons'ous partic'lar wid him. For dar's people dat can't be too dead, an' o'ers can't be too alive. Feelin's won't stand too much tramplin'. Only—who'd ha' thought lovin' Miss Elsie would 'flict anybody like dat?"

Fan turned. Waldo in love!—with Elsie!

“ Mr. York knows his preachin’ he found so much fault wid has done good now, an’ turned many a idle man into a ’dustrious worker, an’ emptied some o’ de bar-rooms ; an’ if Joins do come in too, he’ll do his work none de wors’ for dat. Lors ! everything looks so nachel, I can’t sca’cely believe in death bein’ nigh ! ”

There was Trixy, Foxy’s dog, running wild at the sight of Waldo, though Miss Lucretia whispered hysterically, threw water on him, and at last shut him up to preserve quiet.

Within, the house looked still and dark to Waldo. The deep oak wainscoting looked somewhat gloomy now, but homelike. The lofty, carved chimney-pieces glowered their welcome down. The sceptic’s face had vanished from the wall, and old ancestors, some of whom he resembled in a point here and there, seemed to follow his movements with glances of intelligence and recognition.

The table was set in the dining-room, with the master’s plate unturned. The flowers by the bed, brought by Fan, wore a solemn grace. The big, heavy doctor walked about softly and spoke low.

There upon the mantel ticked the clock that Waldo had first heard strike ten, when his heart had seemed to break at the coldness of his people.

Listen, O Waldo, to what it says !

“ Living is flying ! ”

Flying with Love and Forgiveness—flying with Faith and Peace. You need no silver spurs. You are going heavenward.

On the table by the sick man's bed were white grapes, jellies, nuts, candies, books—all the abortive efforts of old Joins to appease a gnawing anxiety in behalf of Mr. York. He was coming now to bring something else, but Waldo waved him back this time.

As Waldo had mounted the stairs, he had felt conscious of a vital tugging at his heart-strings. He loved his uncle now.

Somehow, it was Mr. York now who began to talk, wonder, speculate about, and hope for strange, invisible things—things with which his banking account, and homestead, and the great world that occupied him so long, had nothing whatever to do.

Yes, he was going to leave all these. The face that had once turned on Waldo with that bitter grin, was pallid, the eyes that had laughed at him were dull, the cheeks were furrowed, the pulse was faint.

“ There's no especial hurry ! ” he had sneeringly said one year before to Waldo, who urged him to make his peace with God, having the courage to make himself disagreeable rather than neglect his duty. But the year had been in a hurry ! The winter and summer,

the unheeded moments, and Death seemed in an awful hurry now.

“Waldo!” he whispered now, “forgive me! Kiss me.”

He lifted his impenetrable glance to his nephew’s face.

“Did you not know that I had come to love you?”

He drew the strong still face down, and clasped his feeble hands about the young man’s neck, and Waldo knew that he was loved as a son.

There, on that heart that had spurned him, he uttered two or three deep, smothered sobs; but when he raised his head and looked down on his uncle with pardon and tenderness, it was like the stars’ clear shining after rain.

“Oh, there was never a happy day or night spent out of Christ!” said Mr. York. “Elsie—child—I know that you feel that the very thought of Him is like struggling in deep waters. But—let me beg you—ah, I little thought I should ever do this!—to accept the truth as it is in Jesus.”

“‘There’s a morning and a noon,
Then the evening cometh soon.’”

Her beautiful eyes filled with tears.

“Dear Mr. York,” she said, in low, broken tones,

while her regular, noble features worked with the agony of remorse, "I am trying—trying to believe, to hope, to change. I am unworthy of God's forgiveness. But last night it seemed to me that, suddenly, I was pardoned for all. A sweet hope of the future dawned in my heart with the morning light. A soft rapture that I believed impossible beat with my pulse. . . . I was kneeling by Janey's bed. I could not help thanking some One that she was spared. I thought of those words of the angel, 'Behold, he prayeth!' I felt no longer alone. . . . But I fear it will be hard to maintain this faith, this peace. The old doubts will rise."

"Look at Fan," whispered Mr. York, clasping the hand of his niece tenderly, "and the Doctor. They are steadfast, and full of peace."

He looked so ashen and weak, that the Doctor said he must not talk any more.

An hour passed. Waldo took no note of time. Prayers of thanksgiving were rising like a fountain in his heart. He had trusted God, and he was not disappointed.

People had said it was vain to pray and trust Providence. "But was it so?" he inwardly cried. "O Lord, Thou knowest! 'Thou didst feed me as with the finest wheat, and with water out of the stony rock didst Thou satisfy me.'"

After resting for some time, Mr. York gave Waldo some directions about the place. "God has given you a noble soul, Waldo. I trust you with everything," he said.

"Now, uncle," said Waldo, after he had concluded, "can you think of anything else you would wish to have done?"

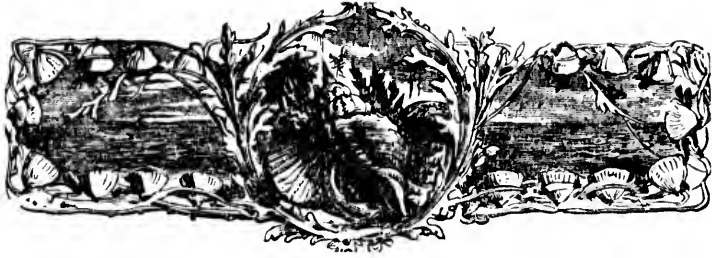
"Yes, Waldo," said his uncle, with a light in his eyes, "there is yet one thing more."

He took Elsie's hand, and placed it, trembling and cold as it was, in Waldo's.

"No! What?" said Elsie; but he held them fast; and the two before him stood speechless, with a far deeper thrill than even the dying man imagined; for no torch ever flashed more bewildering and sudden light into darkness than his act did then.

"Elsie," said Waldo, stooping his head for a closer look into her eyes, "how would you answer if I asked that it might be even so?"

She did not withdraw her hand, and Waldo, with a gesture of boyish rapture, raised it to his lips.



CHAPTER XXX.

THERE was the hush of "holy night" upon Coppet.

Waldo stood watching the stars kindle, and the city lights twinkle through the gloom. He leaned his head against the porch pillars and gave himself up to the flood of inexpressibly tender emotions.

The sky was serene and beautiful, and the clear steeples of several churches stood out distinct, taking a brightness upon them. The glow of the sunset had not entirely gone from the single cloud that lay at peace in the west.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall never pass away."

Waldo uttered these words solemnly. There was a light step behind him. He turned.

"Are you ready?" asked Waldo.

"Yes," said Elsie, for it was she, and she stood be-

side him with the moonlight bursting in glory out of the dark sky, and shining upon the glistening dew.

“When I first saw you in your home,” he said, “I saw that if God had given me such a retirement with the companion I desired, I should have neglected the work to which I was called, and set up my rest in this world. Now how different. You have sacrificed much of your property to the sufferers around us. You leave your bright, flowery path, and come into my shadowy one.”

“You say you loved me from the first. Tell me,” she whispered, “do you love me as well as you loved the wicked Elsie you were trying to save?”

“More,” he said, sweeping her away with him up the broad stairs to the sick chamber. “I seem to love you more than all the brides in the world were ever loved before, in spite of the fact that the old Elsie was not nearly so much afraid of me as you are, and if anything, was more demonstrative.”

Mr. York's face brightened when he saw them. None knew better than he did what a tremendous influence for good Waldo would have over the brilliant Elsie. He knew Waldo had a power over her through understanding what was weak in her so well. He knew what a mine of love and faithfulness there was in the man, and he rejoiced to know that it was

through *him* that Waldo had won a bride worthy of that great heart.

Now, as the hour of their marriage drew near, and he saw them happy, he felt that he could depart in peace. All were happy at last. Fan and the Doctor, Waldo and Elsie, and he should soon go to Foxy in heaven.

Was there too much happiness to be real? Ah, no; for "blessed," that means "happy," "are all they that put their trust in *Him*."

Janey sat beside Mr. York.

"As long as she lives," said Janey, "Elsie is going to be Waldo's. To think we are always going to be with him—Elsie and I. To eat our dinner with him every day, to go to church with him and to Sunday-school every Sunday, to read the Bible and to pray with him every night, to walk out together, and not to live apart forever 'n ever. I tried to be good since he told me how. I thought God would make you well; I asked Him this morning would He."

When the minister appeared, Waldo and Elsie were quietly married. It was a touching and hallowed bridal.

Elsie had grown pale. The deep iris of her eyes was dilating, but she gave herself joyfully and with her whole heart to Waldo.

His head was bent for a moment, and his light hair fell over his forehead.

“And this,” he whispered, hanging over her, while he lifted one of her small hands toward heaven in a clasp that seemed eternal, “this, dear Lord, this tenderness and care, this jealous affection, this pride in possession, is only a little like Thy love for us.”

Fan seemed to drink in happiness by merely looking at her brother.

“Sing something,” said the Doctor to Waldo.

Images of divine beauty filled Waldo’s mind, and heaven-born aspirations took possession of him. Never had his voice sounded more comforting than now, as he sang for his uncle :

“Cast thy burden on the Lord.”

Ah, Waldo, it is the last thing you can do to cheer him. Sing him to rest. He listens to you—to you only—till he shall be with the angels choiring in the skies.

After a while, Waldo, holding Elsie’s hand, prayed aloud, asking God’s blessing upon the life that was passing out to another sphere, and upon the new life just beginning for them. It seemed like a delightful dream to hear her soft “Amen.” He knew by the solemnity in her voice, and the tears in her eyes, that her consecration was sincere.

When they rose from their knees, another day, cloudless and bright, a blessed Sabbath, was dawning in the rosy east.

So deep a hush was on the bright waters and green trees, they scarcely whispered of storms and tempests past. Faith pictured a meeting beyond this fleeting world—angels flying through the gates ajar, brighter than the morning sun.

Heaven and loved ones were just beyond that beacon light.

Was it the sun in his eyes which seemed to transfigure Waldo's countenance? Was it not rather the sweet assurance of belief that comes to all the faithful?

Elsie was happy. Her great deep eyes were searching the blue above her. She bent a moment over the still and peaceful form upon the bed, then buried her face upon Waldo's shoulder.

"Elsie, my wife," he said, in a deep voice, clasping her, "what can we fear? Life? God will guide our steps. Death? The grave will hold these bodies for a little while, then we shall rise,

" ' Rending the stones,
And crying Resurrection ! ' "