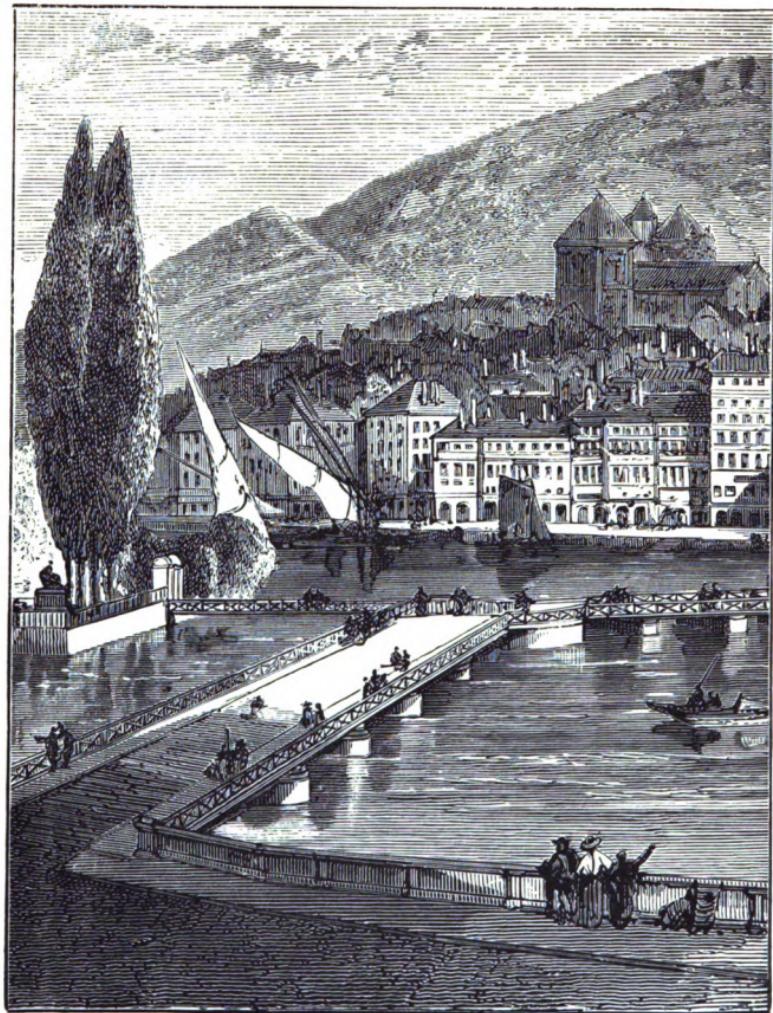


THE STORY
OF AN OLD WATCH
AND THE LESSONS
OF ITS
LIFE

The Story of an old Watch;
AND THE
Lessons of its Life.



GENEVA.

Frontispiece.

THE STORY
OF
AN OLD WATCH.

AND
The Lessons of its Life.

BY M. V. B.



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P R E F A C E.

IN issuing another volume for the Young, the Author earnestly desires that these simple pages may become a blessing to many an interested reader. It is perhaps necessary to say that the incidents recorded are perfectly true.

Each chapter is but the register of events which really transpired—the record of the joys and sorrows of a family, many members of which are still living. On this account names of persons and places have been substituted for those actually borne by them.

The “OLD WATCH”—which is no imaginary article—is, by an allowable figure of speech, supposed to be endowed with the powers of observation, reflection and description. It is thought that by adopting this style, force and interest will be added to the narrative.

An endeavour has been made to inculcate practical

truths by the application of various portions of the Word of God, which it is to be hoped will not be lost on the reader. That the “still small voice” of the ever loving Saviour may be heard speaking to each reader is the sincere wish of

THE AUTHOR.

Bournemouth,
November, 1882.



The Story of an old Watch ; AND THE Lessons of its Life.

CHAPTER I.

MY YOUNG DAYS.



WILL not trouble you with the details of my formation into the useful and beautiful article called a watch. Perhaps no town in the world is more noted for the skill and ingenuity of its watch-makers than that in which I was made.

I think I hear you say, "That must have been Geneva!" Quite right! Up to this very day, you can see on one part of my poor worn face, in small, but very distinct letters—"Geneva." I hope you will all be able to reflect as much credit on the place of your birth as I upon mine. But I must not be proud, although I am a Geneva watch. It is not good to think highly of oneself. Besides the wise King Solomon said, "*Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*"

B

Possibly you would like to know all about my outward appearance, though probably you may not care to hear about the intricacies of my mechanism. How shall I explain to you my reverse side? Made of silver, and elegantly chased by a skilful workman, it seemed to my uninitiated eyes that no more splendid time-piece could have been constructed.

Well! Here I was for sale! Waiting in that busy shop in the ancient town of Geneva for some one to buy me. Almost close to the margin of the lake was my owner's abode. I cannot pass over this part of my history without telling you something of that beautiful spot.

As I remained in the warehouse of my owner for some time after my completion, I had ample time to notice my surroundings. You have all heard of the Lake of Geneva; spreading a distance of fifty-four miles, and forming a crescent in shape, it is one of the most beautiful lakes even in Switzerland. A remarkable circumstance connected with it is that its waters are always higher in summer than in winter. From my quiet corner it could be seen that the waters began to increase about the end of January, and day after day they continued to rise till July or August. My master once explained to a cousin who had come from

Canada to see him, that the cause of the rising of the lake during those months was the melting of the snow and ice in the neighbouring mountains.

Long could I linger over the deep blue waters of that fair and beautiful lake. I could tell of the fantastic shades of light and colour that played upon its surface. It would be pleasant to describe the gay steamers, as they moved swiftly from place to place, with their living freights of human beings. Neither would it be a difficult task to tell of the sudden storms that ruffle at times its peaceful bosom, and that not unfrequently send the pleasure seeker to a watery grave.

I will not, however, dwell longer upon those quiet days. A life of usefulness was before me, and I was about to pass into the possession of a new owner.

You will perhaps be surprised that I have not attempted to describe my first master. But I did not see him long enough to judge of his character. Once only he took me in his hands, and with a powerful magnifying glass looked me through and through. That one searching look seemed to satisfy him. How many times since have I thought of his keen, searching eye! "Ah!" said I, when he laid me in my former place, satisfied with his investiga-

tion, "what should I have done if he had found something wrong in me?"

You all remember that sad story of the man who dared to go into the wedding without the "wedding garment." When the King came in to see the guests, His quick, searching eye detected something wrong! May you all be like David when he said, "*Search me, O God, and try my reins, and see if there be any wicked thing in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*"

Many of my neighbours had come and gone. They seemed to hang upon the little hooks only for a short time, and were chosen for active service almost directly.

Well! my turn came at last! Early one bright summer's morning, the voice of my master was heard in conversation with a stranger. Evidently it was no ordinary customer to whom he was shewing so many of his watches. One after another of my neighbours was selected and laid aside as purchased.

What a family that gentleman must have! I thought. And yet there was something about his manner and appearance that did not seem to speak of the wealth of this world. I could not understand it then. "What do you think of this one,

Mr. Harbury?" said my master to the stranger at last; "this is an exquisite watch. Perhaps the price is higher than you intended to purchase at?"

Mr. Harbury carefully took me into his hand, and examined the mechanism and various other details of my construction. His was a kind face—a face that having once seen, one liked to look at again and again. Even the very way he handled me told me that he was a man to be trusted.

A few moments only, and the bargain was made. I was added to the list of his other purchases. Joy! Joy! Now, at last, I should be of use to somebody.

Surely, if I liked the face of my new owner so much, all his family would be something like him. For whom did he intend me? Not for himself, for I had distinctly heard myself called "a lady's watch." So I must be for one of his daughters! Oh, no! More probably for his wife. His wife! That must be the one into whose hands I was now to pass.

"When do you leave for England?" inquired my former master of my new one, as he carefully locked the drawer in which he had placed me.

"Please God, by the mid-day train. I'm always glad to get back home again. 'There's no place

like home,' for the old man now, save and except the better home waiting for us above."

"You're right, there, Mr. Harbury," rejoined my old master. "If we only knew that home was ready for us, we should not make so much trouble about getting through this world."

"I only wish you were as sure of it as I am, then," said Mr. Harbury. "And you may be; Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, that we may go free, He it is who said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you.'"

"Well, sir," said my old master, "you always have something good to say. And more than that, you seem to get the comfort of what you believe."

"It is because I believe I do get the comfort," said Mr. Harbury, slowly. "I am getting old and grey, as you see. My time here cannot be many more years, and if I should never come again to your city of Geneva, will you remember that the last words I said to you were, that the comfort and the home, and forgiveness, and more blessings than I can tell you of, are all to be had by coming as a poor, lost, sinner, to the feet of the blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ?" With these words Mr. Harbury took his leave.

CHAPTER II.

MY FIRST JOURNEY.

NGLAND ! Yes, that was to be my destination ! How I wished the jolting of the train were over, and that I could come out of my dark recess. Not that I dreaded the darkness ; but I wanted to hear the good old man talk. I believed that he would lose no opportunity of speaking a word for his heavenly Master to his fellow passengers.

Were they not like himself, each possessed of a never-dying soul ? A soul that must live for ever in happiness or misery. Yes ! I should like to have heard him telling of "rest for the weary" heart, and "the precious blood that cleanseth from all sin." And to have heard him refer again to that "home," of which he had spoken to my former master.

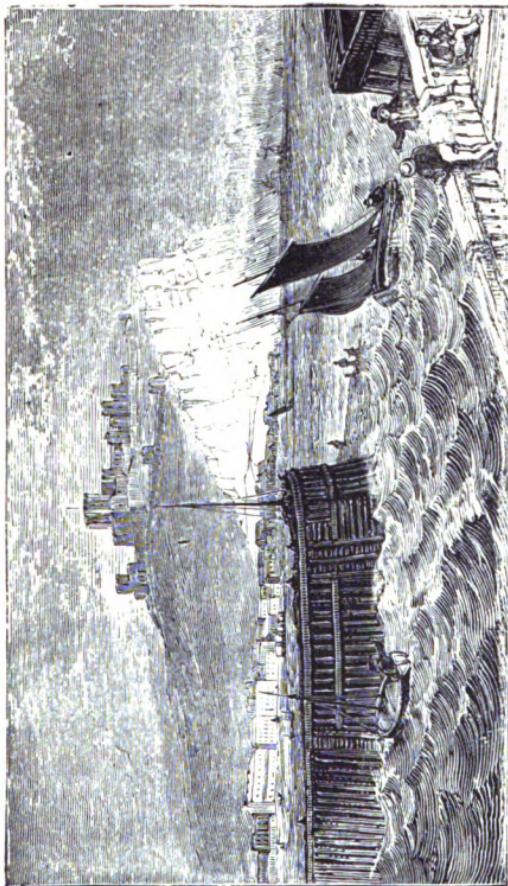
But safely in my warm, snug corner I lay, till the unusual bustle and noise told me that something must have occurred. I soon found that I was removed from the railway train to the steamer, and that we were about to cross the Straits of

Dover. It was a rough passage ! I could hear some of the passengers longing to be "safely on land" again. Once Mr. Harbury was near enough for me to hear him say to a lady, who seemed to be half hysterical with fear, "My dear Madam, do you not know that the power of God is the same on sea as on land ? "

I did not hear her reply. Whether she took refuge in the cabin, or whether the words of my master reproved her want of faith, I do not know. But certainly, I did not distinguish her cries any more. "A word in season ; how good it is !" May you all have that heavenly wisdom which alone can teach you how to speak the right word at the right time.

London once reached, I found that was not to be my destination. By various stages we had at last reached the little town of Barton, in Devonshire, the dwelling-place of Mr. Harbury, my present owner. Surely, there must be some mistake, thought I as the vehicle drew up before a small, but neat-looking cottage on the outskirts of the town. A man who could buy such a watch as I, for his wife, cannot live in this small place.

"Here's father !" shouted a merry-looking young woman of some twenty years of age. "Here's



DOVER HARBOUR.

Face page 8.

father back before we expected him!" And throwing the door of the cottage wide open as she spoke, Mary Harbury came out to be the first to welcome the traveller.

"Where's mother, Mary?" said my owner, as he kissed his youngest daughter's rosy cheeks, and looked anxiously toward the entrance.

"Here she is," said Mary, with a cheerful ringing laugh, that seemed to tell of a spirit little troubled with anxiety of any kind. "And here's Betty, and Jinny. All as safe and well as when you left us, father."

"The Lord be praised for that, and all his other mercies," said my new master reverently, as he seated himself in his old, arm-chair. "He has never failed us yet, and more than that He never will." Mrs. Harbury was a pleasant-looking old lady. Her face wore a happy smile; and though there were a few wrinkles upon her brow, yet I could not help thinking that if sorrow had ever fallen to her lot, it had only sweetened a temper naturally amiable.

The more I heard of the family conversation, the more puzzled I became. "Have you had many fresh orders for lace, girls?" asked Mr. Harbury, as his wife poured him out a second cup of tea.

"Not many, dear father," answered Jinny, the eldest of the family. "But we have sold that set of pocket-handkerchiefs we were so anxious about."

"Well done!" said my master. "Work away, my girls. The Lord will provide. I shall like to see what you have done for my travels presently. I must have a few days' rest, and then start off again on my 'rounds.'

"All in good time, father," said Betty, as she turned the arm-chair away from the window when the meal was over. "Now, if you will come and sit down here, you will get a few minutes' sleep, and then we'll shew you our work. Will you shew us your purchases after?"

"Yes, Betty," replied the old man, as he leaned comfortably back upon a patch-work cushion, and composed himself for a short slumber. How long it seemed while he slept! But I would not have disturbed his slumbers if I could have done so, anxious as I was to be brought out. At last the tired traveller awoke, and when Mrs. Harbury came in, she gave the signal to her daughters.

"Now girls," said she in her motherly fashion, "bring the box of lace in for father to see. And may be if there's time, he'll shew you the things he has bought in Geneva."

Jinny carried in her hand a small card-board box, containing the lace of which their father had spoken. Mary, the youngest, full of fun, as she followed her elder sisters, was playfully trying to snatch away the lid, in order to be the first to display the contents of the box to her father.

“That’s not fair ! ” said Betty, as she placed her hand upon the top of the lid, just as Mary had succeeded in getting a firm hold of one corner. “Father’s too tired for your freaks to-night, Mary ! ”

“Never mind, lassies,” said Mr. Harbury, as he drew near to the table to examine his daughters’ handiwork. “Peace and harmony before our likes and dislikes ; isn’t it ? ”

How those three pairs of hands could have made all that delicate-looking lace, I could not imagine ! I had previously thought the arrangement of clock-work difficult; but it now seemed easy in comparison to the intricacies of the patterns then lying upon the table. Collars, cuffs, veils, and handkerchiefs were all duly admired, and in the corner of each article, a small ticket was placed, upon which the price was marked. What could it mean ?

“Now, father, for the watches ! ” said Mrs. Harbury, as the table was once more empty. She little

thinks what is in store for her, I thought, as the box in which I had travelled was laid upon the table.

My dear readers, did you ever experience a great disappointment? Have you ever dwelt upon plans which you made for some self-denying undertaking, till you grew to consider your schemes as fixed and definite realities? Then, did you ever wake up to the conviction that it would have been just as well, and perhaps wiser and better, if you had never wasted the time in planning at all? If you have ever had to pass through such an experience, I am sure you will sympathise with me in this part of my story.

Scarcely had the drawer in which I was lying been opened, than cries of "Oh father!" and "What a beauty!" came from the admiring girls. But though Mrs. Harbury admired as much as the others, I could see that she was looking into her husband's face with a half doubtful expression.

"It's all right, wife," said the old man gently, as he evidently read what was passing through her mind. "Mrs. Grahame will buy that one, I feel sure. I should not have chosen such an expensive one for ordinary sale."

"Mrs. Grahame of Claverton?" asked the wife.
"Yes! Last time I was on my rounds, and called

there, she told me she wanted a Geneva watch. Though the price is high for a silver watch, yet I think she will give it."

What a mistake I had made! I could have stopped for very mortification at my own ignorance! I was not to be given into the possession of homely Mrs. Harbury after all! The future was no more certain now than when I first quitted the shop window in Geneva.



CHAPTER III.

THE HAPPY DAYS AT CLAVERTON.



ONLY a few days after, and I found myself in a very handsome apartment. "I can recommend it, ma'am," Mr. Harbury said to a lady, who was standing by the table in the apartment I had just entered.

"Mr. Harbury," said Mrs. Grahame as she laid me gently upon the table by her side, "I can always take your word without the slightest hesitation. Ten guineas is more than I meant to give; but as you say, the watch is well worth the money!"

Soon Mr. Harbury was gone! I could scarcely realise the fact. Was I never to see his kind face again, or to hear him in his simple, honest way speaking to one and another of the blessings of the gospel of peace? Possibly not! And yet, who could tell? Amongst the many changes in this world, who could see into the future, and say we had parted never to meet again?

Very different to the simple cottage at Barton, was the home in which I now found myself duly

established. From little items of information, gathered upon various occasions, I am now able to tell you something of the early history of the family into whose service I had entered.

Although you may find it difficult to believe my assertion, yet I feel it necessary to tell you that I am not fond of talking. Indeed, I seldom allow myself to indulge in conversation even with my neighbours. I have noticed in my long experience amongst old and young, that the greatest talkers are invariably those who do the least. So I cultivated the habit of listening to any conversation worthy of attention.

I make this remark, my dear friends, because there are some people who talk with no object. People who love to hear the sound of their own voices! Talk! Talk! Chatter! Chatter! And all to no purpose. Nobody the better! Nobody the wiser! I wonder, do such people ever think that there is a day coming when they "will have to give an account for every idle word"?

I had not been at Claverton long before I learned that Mr. Grahame had built this beautiful villa about twelve months previous, and that he had done so with a view eventually "to retire from business." As, however, I looked at him night and

morning, before and after his return to and from business, I thought that his countenance wore a much more troubled expression than that of a man just ready "to retire from business." I must tell you more about that presently.

With much pleasure I look back to my first days of usefulness in the quiet village of Claverton. Situated at a distance of about three miles from the busy town of Worcester, it was yet far enough away from the smoke to allow the wild flowers to grow in all their luxuriance. Very, very sweet, too, were the songs of the birds as they chanted their praises to their Creator. Sometimes a solo, sometimes a duet ; but more frequently a full chorus of songsters, making the very air full of melody.

Mrs. Grahame was a generous and noble woman ! Though the green sod now covers her earthly resting place, yet of her it may be truly said, "Her works do follow her." Not a poverty-stricken home within the village of Claverton, that did not see her enter and endeavour to alleviate the distress. How gladly the sick and suffering welcomed her ! Tears for their sorrows were no strangers to her bright, black eyes. And her raven black hair rested soothingly more than once in the long night-watches upon the cold icy brow of some poor labourer's dying child.



CARRIE, MAUDE, AND SYDNEY. *Face page 17.*

Family cares, however, occupied very much of my dear mistress's time. Her eldest daughter, Kate, was at this time about fourteen years of age. And though a daily governess instructed her during the morning hours, Mrs. Grahame knew that her daughter was of an age when the constant, solicitous companionship of a wiser mind than her own was desirable.

Other children there were, though Carrie, Maude and Sydney were yet in the nursery. Two boys, Herbert and Gerald, were away from home; Herbert apprenticed to a mercer in Coventry, and Gerald completing his last term at school.

Kate was the frequent companion of her mother in her afternoon visitings. I doubt not that it was the holy influence of that sainted woman's example that did much to produce and develop many a lovely trait in her eldest daughter's character. *Self-denial! self-control! self-forgetfulness!* These were among the earliest lessons taught by many a humble bedside. What a contrast to the *self-indulgence, self-assertion, and self-consideration* now to be met with on every hand!

But these quiet peaceful hours were not to last for ever! Days could not flow on with such serenity for a lifetime. After two or three years

of this enjoyable existence, I remarked that a very decided change was beginning to come over my mistress. Her step was getting more feeble; not that this in itself would have occasioned any great anxiety, for Mrs. Grahame was no longer young. I could see the raven hair interspersed with slight touches of grey, so that it would have been folly to expect that she would always remain as active as in the days of our earlier acquaintance.

But what troubled one most was the expression of anxiety that could be seen stealing over her sweet face. Often now, she directed her daughter's attention to the perishable nature of earthly riches; and in a few simple, but touching words, she would draw a contrast between such treasures and the "*true riches that none can take away.*"

I have seen the tears dimming the eyes of my dear mistress, when, in the evening hours awaiting her husband's arrival, she sat alone in the pleasant drawing-room. Somehow or other, I began to think that the cause of her grief must be something connected with him. Certain rumours also which reached me about this time, corroborated my suspicions. I could hear that my master had been speculating largely in some questionable securities. What it was, I could never rightly understand; but

one thing was certain, people were shaking their heads significantly about his "credit."

One morning during breakfast the housemaid entered, and addressing Mr. Grahame said, "If you please, sir, Giles wished me to tell you that he should like to be paid by the week for the future."

"Who is Giles?" inquired my master hastily.

"The milkman, sir," replied the girl quietly. "He says he is very glad of your custom really; but he should prefer being paid by the week."

"Tell Giles, I won't trouble him any longer with my custom," was Mr. Grahame's impatient retort. Had matters come to this pass! I gave a secret glance at the face of my dear mistress. A red spot was burning upon her cheek, and I could see that it was an effort to her to control herself.

"Will it make much difference, dear William?" she inquired of her husband as the maid quitted the apartment. "The man has served us well since we came here to reside."

"The difference is this, Emily," was the quick rejoinder; "I won't be asked for money when I have not got it!"

Mrs. Grahame said no more. Too well she could see that the money made by steady application to business, was now being more rapidly lost in specu-

lation. Besides, during the last two years business had not been quite so prosperous. War with Russia was draining the country of some of its resources, and trade suffered in consequence.

Persuaded also by some unwise acquaintance that building was a very profitable outlay, Mr. Grahame now turned his attention to erecting another villa in the immediate neighbourhood of his own dwelling-place. Knowing nothing of the art, and in the hands of unprincipled workmen, no wonder that my master found the cost much greater than he had anticipated. Whether it was this, added to his previous losses that really brought on his ruin, I can hardly say.

From this time, there were several retrenchments made in the arrangements of the household. Two servants were dismissed, and I could see that Mrs. Grahame's cause of anxiety had not been groundless. Very patient was she as the knowledge of the position in which her husband stood gradually came upon her.

I have often thought since, how many a wife would have upbraided her husband for similar folly! How many would have reproached him for the sorrow and trouble of which he had been the principal cause! But my dear mistress had one

Friend to whom she could pour out all the sorrows of her troubled heart. Alone in her chamber, I was witness to the fervency and frequency of her earnest prayers.

Dark days were coming ; and God was preparing my mistress for the struggle. Lovingly as before did she talk to her daughter Kate, who by this time had grown into a fair, tall girl of seventeen. Unlike her mother in appearance, Kate was of a fair complexion, with grey eyes, and soft, brown hair. Yet there was much in the mind and tone of both mother and daughter to remind an observing stranger of the constant intercourse that must have subsisted between them. Happy is it when mothers and daughters thus find mutual delight in each other's society.

As the necessity for curtailing expenses became patent to the young girl, she was the first to propose that Miss Hamilton's daily lessons should be discontinued. More than that, Kate had taken upon herself the instruction of the three youngest members of the family. Very tiresome, tedious work too, she sometimes found it with her wilful brother and sisters. But it was enough for her to know that she was doing "what she could ;" and she was never heard to complain !

CHAPTER IV.

DAYS OF SORROW.

OU would have found it difficult to believe that Claverton was the same place as the one to which I at first introduced you. As day after day passed, and my master's affairs became still more complicated, I could see that his countenance had assumed a reserved and gloomy expression. In his self-brought trouble, he knew not the source of comfort and consolation to which my mistress always turned. Late and early—turning night into day—he pondered over his unsatisfactory accounts.

Gladly now as he would have retracted some of his more recent acts, it lay not in his power to do so. Anxious to raise money to meet present necessities his own dwelling-house had been mortgaged ; while his business liabilities were discovered to be greater even than he had supposed. Only one resource now lay before him. Proudly as he recoiled from the advice of his solicitor, yet full well he knew that to be a bankrupt was inevitable.

I should like to silently pass over those sad days;

but I cannot. There came a day, when, with an unceremonious knock at the front door, a stranger entered our quiet dwelling. Coolly looking round at the various articles of luxury and convenience in the apartments, he passed uninvited from room to room. Before night the family was preparing to quit Claverton for ever! Mrs. Grahame wept for a few moments; for weeping was a relief to her over-charged heart, and she knew she should feel better for the indulgence. It was a trial to see those so dear to her thus turned out of what had (till this affliction) been so happy a home!

“Look up, dear mother. There’s a God above us who will guide and care for us,” whispered Kate.

“I know it, my child,” replied Mrs. Grahame tenderly. “May He bless you for reminding me of it at such a moment.”

I don’t think my mistress thought of me once during the day. Her heart was too full to think of anything except what demanded her immediate attention. It was not till she laid me down on a small, wooden dressing-table in a house in a crowded part of Worcester, that she remembered my companionship.

I found then that Mr. Grahame had taken some humble apartments in this place for his family,

until he could decide as to what course to pursue. "This ought not to have been brought away, William, I suppose?" inquired my mistress, as with pale face, and weary movement, she held me towards her husband before retiring to rest.

"That watch! Did they let you have that?" inquired Mr. Grahame in surprise. "They did not see it, dear," she answered; "but if it is right that they should have it, you must give it to them."

"It is not right," he said after a short pause. "The watch is yours. I gave you a ten pound note on the birthday before you bought it, telling you to buy anything you wanted with the money. And when old Harbury came, you bought the watch. So it is yours by right and possession." Whether or not this reasoning would have been allowed in a court of justice, I am not prepared to say.

Worn, sad, and weary as my mistress at this moment certainly was, she said no more on the subject. Her pillow was wet with tears before she slept. He who had permitted the trial alone knew its intensity. Above the trouble she would one day hear His voice speaking peace and blessing to her soul. Now it was the furnace; now the refining time. But there would be an "*afterwards*"

when she would experience for herself, "*the peaceable fruits of righteousness.*"

Several days elapsed before I quitted the chamber of my mistress. Anxiety, followed by the suddenness of the removal from Claverton had been too much for her naturally delicate constitution ; and she lay prostrate for some days. But faith in God continued strong in the mother's heart ; and with a feeling of chastened joy Mrs. Grahame found herself once more downstairs amidst her family.

How her heart beat as she entered that lowly parlour! Although Kate had done all she could to make the apartment look as cheerful as possible, yet it was a back room, and no cheerful sunbeams found their way in through its small window. A bird, perched upon the low wall that divided the garden into two equal parts, was the only object that seemed to attract attention in the world beyond.

"Here's mother!" shouted Carrie, as my mistress entered leaning upon Kate's arm. "Here's mother!" echoed Maude and Sydney, as they joyfully rose to greet her on her entrance.

"If won't be half so bad now you're come down, dear mother," said Sydney, as he left the place where he had been seated, and came and stood by

his mother's side. "It seems so different when we are all together." "Yes, my boy," said the mother fondly; "the trouble will not be so bad if we can all keep together."

Nothing remarkable occurred during the few weeks that followed our arrival at Worcester. Mr. Grahame did not find it an easy task to procure employment. There were days when little sustenance could be procured for the household. Six people could not live upon the air!

There were other days however, when Mr. Grahame had been successful in earning a few shillings. Those were better times, and when they talked together of how many more knew poverty worse than theirs, they all acknowledged that there were many things to be thankful for in their lot.

"Here's a letter from Herbert," shouted Sydney, tapping at Mrs. Grahame's bedroom door, about seven o'clock one morning in November.

"I shall be downstairs in a few moments," said his mother, as she took the letter in her hand and broke open the envelope. "If you can be patient enough to wait till then, perhaps there will be some special news for you."

Sydney, naturally gay and light-hearted, was running off in his boyish fashion. Two steps at a time

was almost too slow a pace for him! The boy was now about eight years of age, and a general favourite with all who knew him. Except that he knew and felt, in some little measure, his father's change of circumstances, Sydney's present style of life rather pleased him. It gave him more freedom than he would otherwise have enjoyed.

"Herbert's coming down to spend the day, Sydney," his mother called after him, as he reached the bottom of the stairs.

"News, Kate! News, Maude! News, Carrie! Herbert is coming down to spend the day with us, mother says," cried the boy, as he re-entered the little parlour, where the breakfast was being prepared. "And there's father," he added, as a step was heard coming along the narrow passage; "I'll be the first to tell him of it!"

But Mr. Grahame did not seem so pleased as his little son had expected. It was painful to him to think that his eldest son should find them in a house which was such a contrast to Claverton. But he said nothing of his thoughts, and only patted the child's curly head.

Herbert Grahame had now attained the age of nineteen. His term of apprenticeship had expired about a year previously, and in accordance with

his father's wishes he had remained in the same establishment. He was now receiving a small salary. Gay, thoughtless, but kind-hearted as a lad, his naturally cheerful disposition led him to associate with those of a like temperament. Wiser and better would have been his after course in life, if he had been more careful in the selection of his companions.

"What shall we have for dinner, Emily?" asked my master, as he rose from the breakfast-table.

I was lying upon the mantel-piece as he spoke. For so eager had my mistress been to read Herbert's letter to her husband and children, that she had not hung me in my accustomed position, but had laid me in this place for safety. While waiting for his wife's answer, I could not help imagining that my master was thinking of the means to procure whatever she might suggest for the occasion. Suddenly, I saw a strange, undecided look pass over his countenance. He advanced a step towards me, then, as quickly drew back. Another moment of hesitation, and I felt his hand beneath me, and saw plainly his deep-set eyes making an estimate of my value.

I could read that look upon his pale, haggard countenance. It is a sad sight to see the marks of "*the*

sorrow of the world that worketh death," upon a man's face! The struggle of whatever kind was over, and with a muttered expression of "No! Not to-day! I can manage for to-day," Mr. Grahame laid me in my former place and went out.

Some hours later, in came Herbert with a hand held by each of his younger sisters, who had been to the railway station to give him the first welcome. "Bless you, dear mother!" said Herbert, as he put his manly arms round her neck, and gave her just such a loving kiss as every true son should give a mother. "How are you, mother?" Herbert was saying. "How are you keeping up, with all the trouble you've had?"

For her son's sake, Mrs. Grahame was brave over her trials, and made the best of what she could not avoid revealing. It would perhaps have been better had his mother told Herbert more about their mode of living during the last few weeks. It might have made him a little less gay and thoughtless, and have helped to make him more considerate over his own expenditure.

A very merry party they all were at dinner! No trace of the morning's vexation remained upon the father's brow. How could it? Who would not have been proud of such a son as Herbert? The life

of the whole dinner-party, the straits of poverty were for a time forgotten beneath his genial influence.

"So you're all off to the cathedral this afternoon, I hear," remarked Mr. Grahame, when dinner was over. "I wish I could make one of the party, but business prevents. However, I'll be home early to tea, and spend the evening with you after. What time does your train go, Herbert?"

"Not before nine o'clock, father!" "I don't come very often, so I shall stop as long as I can."

"All right, my boy!" nodded Mr. Grahame as he left them.

Herbert, having nothing better to do while the rest of the party were preparing for their walk, amused himself by making a survey of everything in the room. All at once his eye fell upon me!

"It is a real beauty!" said he, as he rose and examined me—although, of course, he had seen me before, during previous visits. "Our Coventry people think very much of their watches; but I really don't think they can at all come up to this one."

"Mother, I shall put your watch in my pocket for this afternoon," said he as she entered. "We shan't like to be late if father is coming home early. So I will be time keeper."

Mrs. Grahame made no objection. Across the

soft, green grass of the large, level field known as Pitchcroft; down by the margin of the rippling Severn, the happy party passed. Fully three-quarters of a mile lay between their present dwelling and the cathedral. Very merry were the three younger children, as they played mimic races with their elder brother. Mrs. Grahame and Kate, with a quieter enjoyment, watched their freaks with satisfaction. Very much of truth did those simple words of Sydney's contain: "Things do not seem so bad when we are all together."

Ah! how sweet to see the invisible bonds that unite in love's fond ties the members of the same family.

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of the garments: as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." (Psalm cxxxiii. 1-3.)



CHAPTER V.

HERBERT'S HOLIDAY.

S we entered the stately edifice and examined its various interesting objects, what a multitude of thoughts kept crowding into one's mind—thoughts especially of the past! Here in fancy one could see many a monk and nun *seeking*—*seeking*—what they could not find in this world—rest for their troubled consciences! One could understand them coming to the shelter of such edifices, and hoping thereby to get away from the evil around. They had yet to learn that the mischief was *within*!

Then a brighter vision would present itself to one's mind. An eager scholar pored over the pages of a worn, musty volume. No passing event was allowed to divert his mind from his occupation. Ink and pen lay beside him; but he used them not. What magic charm lay in that ancient manuscript? What thrilling tale thus captivated every power of his strong intellect? It was Luther, who thus eagerly scanned the old, and in some places,



"AS WE ENTERED THE STATELY EDIFICE." *Face page 50.*

almost faded letters. Yes, he too was *seeking!* and his eye fell upon the wonderful words, "*The just shall live by faith.*"

The afternoon was passing on. Already several visitors had entered the transept where the afternoon service would shortly be held. Scrutinising glances I gave at the countenances of one and another, as they passed our little party, still busy in deciphering strangely-worded epitaphs and curious inscriptions.

I wanted to discover, if possible, the motive which induced those people to leave the busy tasks of the day in order to go there for an hour's "devotion." It is a difficult task to read the human face aright. I could not possibly decide whether any amongst that number were of "the true worshippers, who worship the Father in spirit and in truth." More gifted eyes than mine were requisite for that, even the eyes of Him who seeth into the "thoughts and intents of the heart."

Herbert as "time-keeper," at last said they must think about returning. "You seem proud of my watch," said Mrs. Grahame playfully; as Herbert replaced me in his pocket with an air of self-importance. "It's a watch to be proud of, mother!" was his quick rejoinder. "I mean to save and buy one

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for myself; but I shall not get so good a one as this."

Through the busy streets, much faster than over the smooth field of Pitchcroft, we sped again towards Mary Street. Mrs. Grahame, unused to such excitement, was feeling fatigued; and gladly would she have walked at a more leisurely pace.

"Buy some sweets, Herbert," pleaded Sydney, as they passed a shop window full of those articles so attractive to childish eyes.

"Come along, then!" said the elder brother as he entered the shop; while Maude and Carrie were not long in following. Once inside, a shilling was soon spent. It appeared kind of Herbert to think of buying sweets for his little brother and sisters. But had he consulted me I certainly should have said, "See how tired your mother is, Herbert! A shilling will be better spent upon her. Call a cab, and let her ride home!"

Herbert did not mean to be thoughtless. If any one had pointed out to him the need of such a thing, he would have spent a shilling as happily one way as another; but he was not in the habit of thinking far beyond his own present gratification.

After their return home there was, perhaps, less boisterous mirth than there had been in the earlier

hours of the day ; but the enjoyment was none the less on that account. Much there was to tell of all they had seen ; and Mr. Grahame was asked many a question by his intelligent children. It was a relief to him to have his mind diverted even for a short time. Much he could tell them, too, of the early history of the cathedral they had just visited.

The evening passed more rapidly than I can describe. Conversation on many topics—the latest news of his brother Gerald, who was now in a merchant's office at Swindon, occupied and engrossed a good deal of Herbert's attention. It would be a long time, if indeed ever, before Herbert could feel as happy amidst the family circle as he did on that pleasant November evening.

“Half-past eight, my dear boy,” said Mr. Grahame. “You will just have time to walk leisurely to Shrub Hill Station. I will come with you !”

“It's very good of you, father ; but aren't you too tired ?”

“Not at all !” replied Mr. Grahame quickly. And then in a musing sort of way, he said in a low tone, as if speaking to himself, “I could call there, too, as I come back. It would be in my way.” I then saw him glancing towards the mantelpiece; and though he said nothing when he found I had been

removed, it was evident that the business to which he referred was connected with myself.

What might not to-morrow bring me? I had distinctly heard Mr. Grahame say in the morning, "Not to-day! I can manage for to-day!" But that implied to-morrow! And what would the morrow bring forth? Herbert kept me in his possession the whole of the afternoon and evening hours. Several times in the earlier part of the evening he playfully drew me from his waist-coat pocket, and gave a glance at my dial-plate. Not once, however, during the last two hours had he done so! And as he bade farewell to those at home, thoughts of me never once entered his head.

"Got your top-coat and scarf!" said his father, just before the train started.

"Yes, father! Purse, gloves, and all!" was the merry rejoinder, as first in one pocket and then in another Herbert searched to make sure that he had all that he required. His hand was once within an inch of where I was lying! Every pocket was searched except the one in which I lay.



CHAPTER VI.

ANXIOUS FORECASTS.



ERBERT did not arrive in Coventry till it was rather late. He discovered me in his pocket when retiring to rest. Laughing in his gay, light-hearted manner, he had laid me on a chair by his bedside, saying: "What will mother say when she finds that I have run away with her watch? I must send it back the very first opportunity I have."

A hurried note telling of his safe arrival, and of regret for having brought me in his pocket, was posted during the following day. A promise also to send me back by the very first opportunity was added as a postscript; but certainly the right thing for Herbert to have done was to have carefully packed me up, and forwarded me at once to Worcester. I was however destined to pass through many a sad scene before I could see the face of my dear mistress again.

Very different, indeed, was the life I now led from the one to which I had previously been ac-

customed. Gladly would I refrain from speaking of my experience in the old-fashioned city of Coventry; but for your sakes, dear readers, it may be well to reveal with accurate truthfulness facts which otherwise I would have left unrecorded.

Being Herbert's constant companion I had the fullest opportunity of forming my own estimate of his character. I have already told you that the occupation which he had chosen was that of a mercer. The term of his apprenticeship having expired, he had recently been raised to a higher position in the establishment. Possessing qualities of a winning nature, he was a favourite with all who knew him. Generous even to a fault, his companionship was courted by most of the assistants in the warehouse.

It was not a very large establishment, that owned by Mr. Sheppard. The whole staff of assistants included no more than twelve; nevertheless, it was a little world in itself, representing the principles which govern the bigger outer one.

Mr. Sheppard was a business man, cool, calculating, with a keen eye to his own interests. Provided his employees did their duties in their various departments, it was nothing to him how they spent their time when the hours of business were over.

A matter of anxiety to me from my first intro-

duction into Herbert's bed-chamber was the light, thoughtless way in which he and his companion, Joseph Newton, conversed before retiring to rest. I could scarcely credit the testimony of my own eyes, when I found that these two young men retired prayerless to slumber.

Of Joseph Newton's family I knew nothing ; but of Herbert's I did. I knew that my dear mistress must have taught her son to pray ! I felt sure that she had instructed him in "the way he should go." Would that Herbert had heeded better those early lessons ! They would have saved him from many terrible dangers.

Looking round the small but comfortable bedroom, I tried to see what kind of books were in the apartment. There were two or three lying upon one side of the wooden chest of drawers. Well read they appeared, too, as the light rested upon their well-worn edges ; but the very look of the pictures upon the covers shewed one that they were of that class called "sensational novels" ! Anxiously might I cast a glance towards the dressing table—then the mantelpiece ! But no ! I could not see the Book of books as I had hoped to do ! No Bible ! No prayer !

Little wonder that Herbert Grahame—Herbert,

amiable, generous, and with all his winning attractions—fell.

“I am the light of the world”—said the voice of Him “who leads into the paths of righteousness,” whose “ways are ways of pleasantness,” whose “paths are paths of peace.” “If any man walk in the light, he stumbleth not, because he hath the light of life.”

“Now, therefore hearken unto me, O ye children; for blessed are they that keep my ways. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death.”

Oh! dear readers, I cannot quit this part of my story without a word of advice as to the books you read. Older boys! Older girls! Men! Women! Mothers! Fathers! Listen to the voice of the old watch. Read no books but those you are sure will be productive of good to yourself and others. Every book contains food of some sort for the mind, imagination, or heart. Some books are like subtle poisons, which work out their deadly purpose none the less surely, because they take time to accomplish their fatal mission.

Very fascinating is the eye of the subtle serpent

as she charms her prey. “ *With her much fair speech she causeth him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks: till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare and knoweth not that it is for his life Harken unto me now, therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her.* ”

“ I’m going down to Garton’s to-night, Grahame, ” said Joe Newton to his companion in the course of their dressing operations.

“ What fun is on there? ” was Herbert’s inquiry, as he proceeded with his toilet.

“ Larkworth’s going to be there, so we are sure to have something to keep us alive. He’s just such another fellow as you are yourself, Grahame, ” said Newton with a laugh.

“ They do say two of a kind never agree, ” was Herbert’s rejoinder. “ But as I don’t happen to know your friend, even by sight, there’s not much danger that we shall fall out. ”

“ But I mean you to know him, ” said Newton quickly. “ Jack Garton told me to be sure and

persuade you to form one of the party. He's going to give us a supper in honour of his having won the cup last week."

"What did he get the cup for?" asked Herbert somewhat anxiously.

"Now, you needn't pretend to be so sanctimonious!" laughed Newton. "No betting, Grahame; only a little private amusement with some of the fellows of his corps."

"What time do you go, Newton?" said Herbert, as the day's work over, they passed out of the warehouse arm in arm.

"About eight o'clock!" replied Newton, turning round to his companion sharply. "But you have made up your mind to come, too, haven't you?"

"I don't know. I'm tired, and fancy I should like a walk better to-night."

"But you can have a turn before that, Grahame. There's nearly an hour before you, so I shall look out for you. There will be double fun if you're there."



CHAPTER VII.

THE DOWNWARD ROAD.



LET'S have a game at whist," said one of the party. I saw that Herbert looked slightly annoyed at the suggestion, although he said nothing.

"I'm ready," said Larkworth, as he looked at Garton, who had risen, and was evidently seeking something in one of the drawers of the sideboard.

"What do you say, Grahame?" said the first speaker. "What shall it be? Loo, whist, or speculation?"

"I don't know much about cards," was Herbert's hesitating rejoinder.

"But we'll soon teach you," was Jack Garton's ready response. Another flippant speech—another moment of hesitation, and Herbert was seated round the table, receiving the cards which were being dealt out by Larkworth's dexterous hand.

Did no recollection of his mother's expressed wish that he should never indulge in this game enter the mind of the young man as he thus yielded

to temptation? Perhaps it did; but if so, there were no visible marks of its presence. Nevertheless I thought he was not so gay as usual.

“Let’s play for nuts,” said Joe Newton, as he passed the pack over to Larkworth.

“Nonsense, Joe!” said Jack Garton. “If we are going to play for anything, let it be for money?

Who cares for nuts? I don’t for one; so here’s sixpence towards it! Now then, follow the leader! that’s what I say!” Larkworth’s sixpence was placed on the table in a moment, and Dacre, the first speaker, with a laugh, placed another by its side.

“You’re a long time getting yours, Grahame,” said Newton gaily. “Shall I lend you one?” This was enough! Herbert, though earnestly wishing that the money had not been proposed, now drew forth his purse, and taking a sixpence from amongst the loose silver in one of its compartments laid it by the side of the others.

“Now that’s something like, I say,” remarked Larkworth, as he held up the money in his hand, and examined something that had attracted his attention upon one of the coins. “Now we shall find what play is!” But I do not care to enter more fully into the details of that sadly eventful evening.

Hot, thirsty, and excited, wine circulated freely amongst the party, which did not disperse at a very early hour. When before retiring to rest Herbert took the key to wind me up, I felt that his hand was unsteady, and saw that his eyes had a strange look I had never seen in them before !

Unfortunately this was not the last occasion on which I noticed poor fallen Herbert in a similar condition. Many were the after meetings planned amongst Larkworth and his associates, to all of which Herbert was invited. And Herbert—prayerless Herbert—went. Led on by one temptation after another, gradually he acquired a fondness for the society of these godless young men ; and in spite of all that he knew to the contrary, he found himself taking delight in these unholy meetings.

In a short time he became a skilful player at cards ; and it was pleasant to him to feel that he could take the lead in the evening's amusement, and win money from those who had first taught him to play.

Ah ! It is easy to pass into habits such as these. Down—down ! No rough stones to impede the descent. All smooth, subtle ; but nevertheless declining ground : “*Going down to the gates of death!*” How different the upward course ! Rocks, hills,

difficulties ! but none the less surely up—up—up ! Yes, indeed ! Up to that bright world above where joy reigns, where the Lamb is the glorious light and centre of those heavenly courts ; and from the heights of which He now speaks to his climbing pilgrims, saying :—

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name from the book of life ; but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels . . . Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God ; and he shall go no more out ; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.”

Letters from home reached Herbert about this time telling of more family troubles. Mr. Grahame had not been successful in his desire to get regular employment ; and the daily subsistence was not a very certain one. Mrs. Grahame's health, too, was failing ; but as the November fogs were now nearly over, they hoped she would soon be better.

“The children are well,” Kate wrote. “Maude has become much attached to Ruthie, the landlady's sick little daughter ;” while Sydney sent word that Herbert was to bring him one of the

famous Coventry book-markers for a Christmas present. As to Carrie, "she is such a little chatterbox," Kate continued, "that it is no use to attempt to send her message, for I have no room for it! We are all looking out for you in a month's time," the letter said in conclusion, "so that we can have another of those happy days we spent some little time ago."

Herbert's salary was now due; and very pleased he was to receive it. We might have fancied that small though it certainly was, a desire to send some trifling portion to the home circle would have been the first impulse of his naturally generous spirit.

But no! Other thoughts were in his mind at that time. He had recently contracted several little debts. It was not likely that Herbert could be a constant guest at these evening festivities, without having to share in the indulgences consequent upon such gatherings. There were times when he knew that the rest of the company looked to him to pay for the bottle of wine which had been purchased, and the cigars which had been used. Well may he look at the small sum in his possession, and decide that "mother would not expect anything, he was sure."

Quite true, Herbert! She would not expect anything; but what would have been the feelings of surprise and delight produced in the mother's heart at the unexpected reception of some little article of comfort, which her husband's earnings had not, latterly, been able to procure?

We little think how greatly we rob ourselves at times. Here, a little self-indulgence tolerated; there, a little more allowed. Choice fruits, fragrant perfumes, unnecessary adornments! when the price paid for them might have been spent upon some poor humble neighbour; and the blessing of a grateful heart might have rested upon our future pathway.

"Grahame," said Mr. Sheppard, as he placed in his hand the salary due to him, "a friend of mine told me this morning that you are seldom at your lodgings before twelve o'clock! If such has really been the case, don't let it occur again." Mr. Sheppard thought he had thus done his duty. Would that I could have spoken! Would that I could have pleaded with him to ascertain for himself the cause of these late returns; but it was not in my power to do so.

How I would have liked to say to unhappy Herbert before it was too late for him to retrace

his steps, “*Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Misery and remorse will be the end of it all.*”

Sorrowful, painful, and bitter lessons were yet to be learned by the unhappy youth. The dark days of December had arrived. Now almost nightly the friends met ; sometimes in Larkworth’s apartment, sometimes in Herbert’s. Occasionally the meeting was held in one of the side-rooms of an adjacent hotel. Whether or not Herbert drank too freely to be able to play with his former skill, one thing was certain, that upon several occasions about this time he lost considerably. From shillings it was easy to play for crowns, and from crowns it was not a great transition to a “golden stake.”

“I’ll beat you yet,” said Herbert eagerly, upon one of these occasions. “You shall not crow over me in that fashion, I can assure you!” And the infatuated youth proposed a still higher stake.

“Steady, Grahame!” cried Joe Newton, as he noticed the unusually eager expression of his friend’s countenance. “You lost last time, and may be you will this. I wouldn’t make it too high.”

“I shall win this time, you’ll see,” was the prompt reply. But Herbert did not win. To his bed-chamber that night he retired without a penny of his salary, besides a sum of two sovereigns to be

paid to his successful opponent on the morrow. What was he to do? Long into the night he thought of the matter. The consciousness of his position for a time seemed to sober him. To send home for money was useless. But in that moment of perplexity Satan was at hand to suggest a resource!

Oh! If Herbert had but cried out, in the conscious sense of his own inability to meet such a temptation, "Lord, help me!"—he would doubtless have been heard, and spared an after life of sorrow and remorse. Sad to say, however, that before Herbert's eyes closed in slumber that night, he had resolved to become a thief! True, he did not use that terrible word in his own calculations. And even settled thoughts of repaying, at the earliest opportunity, the sum he meant to take from his master's desk, were amongst those with which he allowed himself to be led into the contemplated crime.

Opportunities for carrying out his purpose would, doubtless, present themselves during the following day. He was frequently sent to Mr. Sheppard's desk, and frequently also entrusted with money for the cash-box which always stood in one corner. Very easy would it be for him to abstract the amount which he required. That Mr. Sheppard had



HERBERT AT MR. SHEPPARD'S DESK. *Face page 50*

the fullest confidence in his integrity, he knew by Mr. Sheppard allowing him to have access to his cash-box.

As Herbert planned so he performed, yet not without more than one severe struggle with himself. The fraud was not at first detected, for Mr. Sheppard was not quite so methodical in his private expenditure as in his business arrangements. Not very often did he know the exact amount in the part of his cash-box marked "private." Herbert, who knew of this fact, stole from that quarter.

This one crime led on to others. There were times when he was successful in gaining money from his companions; but recently other games had been introduced, and more skilful, more adept gamblers occasionally formed members of the party.



CHAPTER VIII.

HOME, SWEET HOME—A CONTRAST.

ERBERT was going farther and farther away from the “paths of pleasantness and peace.” Very sad was it to notice the unhappy change that came over his once cheerful countenance. Now he looked dull and haggard; how could it be otherwise! The frauds must one day be discovered!

Mr. Sheppard had already thought, upon one or two occasions, that there ought to have been more money in the private part of his cash-box; and one morning, about a week before Christmas, he adopted a simple plan to test whether or not his suspicions were groundless. Herbert, little suspecting that a trap was laid, abstracted, during the course of the day, a ten pound note! And no sooner did Mr. Sheppard discover that the note was not in the place where he had left it, than he called his most trustworthy clerk, and consulted with him about the matter.

Up to this moment, no suspicion had entered his

mind as to the real culprit. His own thought was that Newton was the perpetrator of the theft. He had never felt much confidence in that young gentleman's principles. Mr. Darnet, however, shook his head, and asked, with a look of anxiety :

“And who do you think has done it, sir?”

“I am afraid it is young Newton.”

“I'm more afraid it may be Mr. Grahame,” said the old man sadly. “His salary, I should judge, couldn't pay for what he spends.” Shortly after, Herbert's presence was demanded in the office.

Infatuated by the delusive hope that the charge could not be proved, the unhappy young man denied all knowledge of the matter. Perplexed and angry at Herbert's obstinate refusal to acknowledge the truth, Mr. Sheppard finally sent for an officer of the police, and gave the youth into his charge. The note was discovered in his possession, and the miserable culprit was committed for trial.

Oh, the horror of those days of anguish, the burning misery of those hours of disgrace and shame! How can one speak of them? How can I, even at this distance of time, think of them without dismay?

It was Wednesday, and the trial would take place on Friday. The news of this terrible blow fell

with crushing effect upon the family at Worcester. Mr. Grahame hastened to Coventry. Who shall paint the harrowing scene between the father and his boy? I will not attempt it. Great was the interest displayed in court on behalf of the unhappy young man. His youth, his appearance, his former respectability were all in his favour.

But when that awful question was put to Herbert at the bar of justice, "guilty?" or "not guilty?" what could be the answer but "guilty, my lord"? Breathlessly those in court awaited the result of the trial. Never can be forgotten the scene of that winter's morning. Never! Never!

"Prisoner at the bar," said the judge, as he fixed his keen piercing eyes upon the youth now cowering with shame before the gaze of so many eyes, "We find you guilty of the charge brought against you, and therefore sentence you to six weeks' imprisonment." I saw Herbert bow his head, and felt the movement of his hand to his heart. Others saw that, too; but I heard him say to himself as he did so,—

"Thank God, it is no more than that!"

Ah, dear readers, is it not true as ever, that "the way of transgressors is hard"? Yes! Herbert now thought so as, on that never-to-be-forgotten day, he left that hall of justice.

Inside the thick, strong walls, the receptacle of crime and shame! Branded as the associate of murderers and blasphemers, I looked around. Not upon the person of poor, miserable, wretched Herbert might I hang now. I must remain silent on the shelf where I was placed until he was free.

Christmas day came at last! On Sunday, too, that sad year! Once, at least, in the week might those poor outcasts from society pause in their loveless labours. Haggard countenances passed me on their way to the upstairs chapel. Women who had once been gentle and tender as other women; men who had once walked in the paths of rectitude and honour; and Herbert—the once gay, winning Herbert—was amongst such as these now.

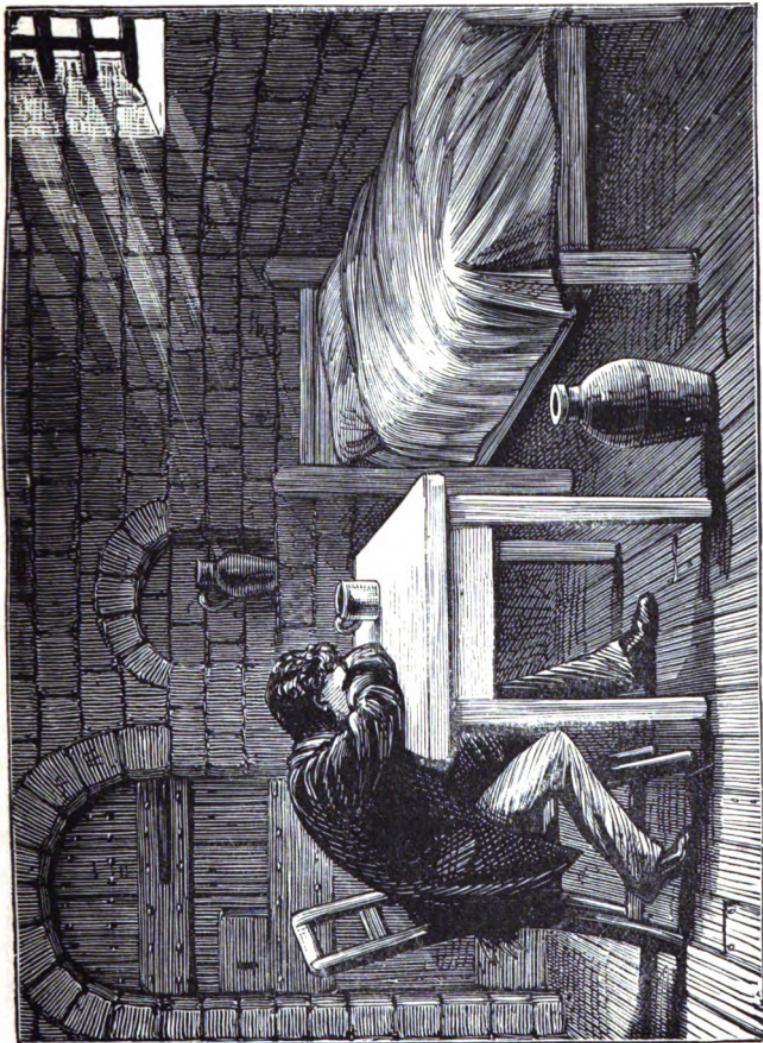
Texts telling of the awful judgment of the impenitent, startling one by their appropriateness to such a purpose, hung in various parts of those dismal chambers; but none telling of mercy “to the uttermost,” none speaking of the efficacy of the “*blood that cleanseth from all sin.*” Oh! Why not give to those poor, remorse-smitten, guilty men and women some anchor to which to moor the wreck of their immortal souls, before they drifted into the fathomless ocean of eternity? Why not? Why not?

“Call them in, the poor, the wretched,
Cow’ring ’neath the brand of shame ;
Speak love’s message low and tender,
’Twas for sinners Jesus came.”

The service was over ; short, simple, and solemn. And now while those sin-stricken hearts, some very hardened, some less callous, descended the long row of stone steps, the fingers of the organist were moving over the keys. Unconsciously and without premeditation he played a well-known air. How it thrilled through many a human heart ! Strong men and women bowed their heads as they passed down, and sobbed aloud as they recognised the well-known air of “Home, Sweet Home !” Poor Herbert ! Five weeks more ! God in His mercy help him.

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Over the deep waters of the broad Atlantic, over the briny ocean ! Away from the spot where the finger of scorn might be lifted, away from the scenes of former temptation and guilt, away from the loving influence of mother, father, brother, sister ; but not away from the remorse which must henceforth be his companion. A new life might open for him in another clime ; but the old life might not be forgotten. Beneath the sun of a foreign sky must Herbert henceforth toil, with the



remorseful knowledge in his aching heart of what had brought him there.

“I shall never see him again,” said Mrs. Grahame to her husband, as sobs almost choked her utterance on the February morning that marked Herbert’s departure.

“He is in the hands of God, dear mother,” whispered Kate, as she strove with tender affection to allay her mother’s grief. Mrs. Grahame’s words were true. Not again did her fond eyes rest upon that earthly treasure!

This has been a sorrowful chapter, dear readers, but I trust the lessons which it contains may have their desired effect. Think of them. Lay them to heart and profit by them. Temptations and snares abound on every hand. We pass daily in and out amongst them. How shall we stand in moments of temptation? Ah! There is one sure refuge, there is one unfailing resource! May we not listen and hear those wonderful accents speaking to each tried, tempted one?—

“I will keep thee in the hour of temptation. . . . Resist the devil and he will flee from you. . . . Call upon me in the day of trouble. I will answer thee.”

CHAPTER IX.

KATE QUILTS HOME FOR A NEW SPHERE.

ES! Once more I was with my dear mistress. A sad change had passed over her peaceful countenance since I had last quitted the humble apartment in Mary Street. I could read in that indescribable expression of the thin, pale lips, the hours of anguish that lay behind. And though her face was as calm and peaceful now, as in the days of prosperity, yet the terrible tossings of the tempest could have been hushed only by Him who had said, "*Peace, be still!*" She had also grown somewhat feeble. Her loving heart was crushed by the news of her son's disgrace: this lay upon the spirit with a pressure that none but a mother could feel.

The children had grown. Kate looked paler, and just a little anxious. One could see the searching gaze she fixed upon her mother from time to time, as if a subject of painful consideration were absorbing her thoughts.

Mr. Grahame had never recovered his former

activity. The consciousness of his sad business failure seemed to deprive him of the energy of mind and body requisite to commence business anew on his own account, even in a more lowly way. So he, sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, occupied his time in assisting others wherever he could obtain employment. But even this could not always be procured ; and there were times when the pinchings of poverty were experienced by the tried family. The empty breakfast table would tell its own piteous tale, and hungry children learnt its bitter meaning.

It was upon one such occasion, that, after the younger children had quitted the apartment, Kate took a low, wooden stool and placed it by her mother's side. "Mother," she said, as she looked up into the face of her loving parent, "I want to talk to you a little this morning ; can you bear it?" The soft touch on the brown hair was sufficient response. Mrs. Grahame could not speak, her heart was too full.

"Don't you think I could do something to help in this ?" asked Kate, with her earnest eyes looking straight into the mother's face.

"What could you do, darling, more than you are doing ?" was Mrs. Grahame's response.

"But I mean more, mother. These little cares, one here and another there, seem nothing. It troubles me that I can do no more."

"My child, you do not need me to tell you the comfort you are to me! Is that nothing?"

"But, mother," answered Kate, "these little home duties bring you no real help. Maude and Carrie could do what I do."

"What do you mean, darling?" asked Mrs. Grahame, as she noticed the eager, half-timid expression on her daughter's countenance.

"Mother," was the response, with a little difficulty of expression, "I have thought of it a long time, and now, every day, the more distinctly I see the necessity for it. You would not like me to leave you."

"Leave me, my child?" repeated Mrs. Grahame in surprise.

"Yes, mother dear," said Kate, in rather an unsteady voice. "The world is large, and there must be work for those who are willing to do it."

"What work could you do, Kate?" was the next response, not spoken till after a short pause.

"Teach music, drawing, other things, mother."

"You think you might get an engagement as governess?" asked the mother, again passing her

hand over the soft, brown hair. "And Maude, Carrie, Sydney! What of them?"

"I have thought of them, mother. If I am away earning money, why should they not go to school?"

"And what should I do without you, darling?" said Mrs. Grahame, as she saw some force in Kate's proposition; but her voice was low and tender, telling of a depth of feeling stirred in her bosom by the appeal.

"Mother, I would endeavour to be a comfort to you wherever I was. I'd send you long letters."

Many were the obstacles and objections which presented themselves to the mind of Mr. Grahame, when he heard of his daughter's plan. Finally, however, both parents yielded to their daughter's desire; and Kate was not now slow to do what lay in her power towards procuring an engagement. It was, however, easier to be "ready for work" than to procure it; and so Kate found. Yet, is not there One who has said, "*Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him*"?

With a sense of gratitude in her heart towards her heavenly Father, Kate Grahame finished the perusal of a letter she had just received.

"Father," said Kate, as she placed the letter in

Mr. Grahame's hand, "the salary is not what I had hoped it would have been; but, at least, it is a fair beginning."

"Well, Kate," said Mr. Grahame, "perhaps it is the right thing after all for you to go. I seemed to hope you wouldn't get anything suitable; but this lady writes kindly."

"Yes, I think so," replied Kate.

"And she wishes you to commence your duties as soon as possible," remarked Mrs. Grahame, as she read the letter a second time. "Are you sure you will be happy, Kate?"

"I shall be happy in the knowledge of helping, ever so little, mother," was the quick response. "Don't think about the troubles of my governess-life till you hear I have any."

"You don't know what lies before you, Kate," said the father after a pause, during which Mrs. Grahame had been watching every changing expression on Kate's expressive countenance.

"Isn't it all the better for that, father?" she replied in a low tone. "If God has provided the work, He will keep me to do it."

"You will find hardships of a nature you little expect, my child," said Mrs. Grahame. "But you know the source of endurance—the One who can

and will sustain, in all conditions of life—who will perfect in us the desire to serve Him. I can trust you to Him, Kate." And the mother rose from her place, and went towards the little window to hide her own emotion.

"Do look at that mignonette, mother!" said Kate, as they stood side by side at the open window a little later in the day.

"I was thinking of it, darling, in connection with you," remarked Mrs. Grahame, as she plucked a small branch, and placed it in her daughter's hand. "Its odour is as sweet here as if it were surrounded by a more genial atmosphere. The fragrance of its blossoms is not lessened by the humble corner in which it blooms. Such should be the life of the lowly followers of the Lord Jesus. No display, no attractions to demand attention; ever lowly, ever fragrant, doing its happy work wherever its lot is cast. What about this new life before you, Kate? Do you fear it, darling?"

"Only a little, mother; not for the difficulties, but I fear myself. You will pray for me, mother; and when I look at this sprig of mignonette, I shall think of what you have said."

"That will soon fade, dear Kate," said Mrs. Grahame, as she kissed her daughter. "My words will,

I doubt not, be thought of long after that little blossom will fade away."

"It is going in my Bible, mother," said Kate. "I shall keep it there."

Oh, how lonely the house seemed when Kate really left us! The little back room seemed to be duller than ever, as if the sun had passed behind a cloud, the shadow of which rested upon us all. Maude, Carrie, and Sydney now attended school daily. This allowed my dear mistress to have some time alone. How often would she be found sitting in her accustomed seat, anxiously regarding some worn garment which required attention! Her dexterous fingers had enough to do to make the well-worn articles fit for further use.

Her open Bible was Mrs. Grahame's constant companion at such seasons. Solitary the days might have been otherwise; but with her Saviour by her side, in that lowly dwelling Mrs. Grahame was happy. Ah! who teacheth like Him? Well may she be happy in thus sitting at the feet of Jesus.

"Here's the railway parcel van stopping at the door, mother," said Sydney, as he entered the house one evening, about three months after Kate's departure. "I expect it's a parcel for Ruthie! Her uncle sent her one before, she told Maude yesterday."

“For Ruthie!” said Mrs. Grahame in a quiet tone. “How delighted she will be! She has not many pleasures, poor afflicted child!”

Ruth Gray, the landlady’s child, was lame; she had for the last six months suffered more than usual from the pain in her diseased hip. Gentle, amiable, and very patient through all her sufferings, Mrs. Grahame was pleased for her children to make a companion of the little sufferer.

“Don’t you disturb Ruthie, my boy,” said the mother, as she noticed the boy’s look towards Mrs. Gray’s sitting-room.

“I only just want to know from whom it comes,” said Sydney, with boyish curiosity. “She won’t mind, mother!”

But before he had left the doorway where he was standing, Mrs. Gray herself appeared. In her hand she carried a large package. “I find it’s for you, ma’am,” she said in her low deferential manner.

“I think you are mistaken, Mrs. Gray,” replied Mrs. Grahame. “It’s from Kate!” said the mother, as she examined the handwriting upon the label. “From Kate, mother!” echoed Maude and Carrie, who had just come in from a short walk.

Oh, the delightful surprise of mother and children as the contents of the parcel were displayed! Several

yards of warm flannel for the coming winter's use, some yards of strong, comfortable-looking linsey, sufficient to make a dress for each of the two girls; a warm scarf for Sydney, and a pair of gloves for father. A small parcel of money was also enclosed.

"I am working very hard, darling mother," an accompanying letter concluded by saying, "and the recompense is worth the trouble. Don't be anxious about me! My mignonette still whispers its little message, and I often look at it and think of you."

"The Lord bless her with His best of blessings," said the father on his return to supper, and the mother's heart echoed what the father's lips expressed. Shall we say who was the happiest—Kate, with her power to send the gifts of love, or the happy father and mother who received them? Into our minds like a soft cadence of heart-music comes that little whisper, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"



CHAPTER X.

“WILL YOU BE THERE AND I ?”



UTUMN as ever was followed by the dark days of winter. No lovely tints of rich, bright autumn foliage to please the eye with their varied shades. No soft, mellow sunset to shed its beauty over the distant Malvern Hills. November! chilly, foggy November again! And as the days grew colder, and the bright fire blazing upon the hearth threw out its welcome beams, many a laughing child rejoiced that the snow would soon lie on the wintry ground, and the delights of sliding and skating be theirs once more. Yet there was one child, who would never again take part in those youthful pleasures.

Poor little Ruthie was now laid aside. She had been growing weaker, and had for some time past been unable to move from her little bed in the corner of her mother's chamber. Many were the visits paid to the sick child by Maude and Carrie at this time. Sydney, too, went sometimes, but Ruthie said he was just a little too noisy to stop

long. All that the children thought would interest her was repeated to the little invalid.

Very soon, however, the pain in the diseased hip was too great to allow of Ruthie experiencing the same pleasure in their visits; and when the severe fits of pain were over, the child would lie back pale and exhausted. After such seasons as these, she would sometimes ask in a low patient tone, if Mrs. Grahame would come and sing to her. Nothing seemed to soothe the young sufferer in her most restless moments like the soft, sweet notes of my mistress's voice. The first time that Ruthie heard it, was one evening some few weeks earlier, when all the children were sitting in the little parlour chatting about something that occurred at school.

A remark, by one of the little ones, gave the conversation a more serious turn; and Mrs. Grahame who had long wished to know the child's own thoughts respecting her infliction, now took advantage of what Maude had said, and drawing Ruthie towards her said,

“Tell me, Ruthie, do you think you will ever get well again?”

“Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't,” was the reply after a moment's hesitation.

“If God were to spare you to grow up, would you like it?” asked Mrs. Grahame.

“Yes, if I were well,” was the quick response.

“But now, dear child, suppose you never could be well, but must always suffer? Wouldn’t it be good of God to take you away from the pain and suffering?”

“Yes, I shouldn’t always like to suffer.”

“He has a beautiful home for those who love Him,” said Mrs. Grahame softly, at the same time placing the child’s thin hand in her own.

“I have heard of it at Sunday-school,” said Ruthie confidently. “But it always seems *so far off* when I think about it.”

“I don’t think it so far off from you, Ruthie, as you think,” said Mrs. Grahame, as she looked at the wasted features of the little sufferer.

“Not far off from me, ma’am!” repeated the child, as a new thought seemed to possess her mind.

“Do you know that you are a sinner, Ruthie?” asked Mrs. Grahame.

“Yes,” answered the child, looking up with a little surprise. “We are all sinners, aren’t we?”

“I don’t want you to think of other people, but of yourself, dear child. You are a sinner; Jesus is a Saviour. He wants you—you need Him; but

if He had not shed His blood to put away your sins, dear Ruthie, you could never go to Him in that bright place where He lives. It is all holiness there!"

"*My* sins," said the child; "I did not think of that. And did He die for me?"

"Yes, dear, if you really trust Him as much as if there was not another sinner in the wide world."

"*Died for me! Died for me!*" repeated the girl, as she leaned her slight frame forward, and looked into her friend's face. "Then He *loves* me!"

"That is it, Ruthie. *He loved you; died for you; loves you now, every day—every hour!*"

"Is it believing to love Him for doing it?" asked the child with an earnestness quite new to her generally quiet nature.

"Not quite, dear; though it is a part of it. But believing is this: Jesus says something. All you have to do is to listen, and to know that it is true. This is what He says: '*He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.*'"

"That means now, doesn't it, ma'am?" said Ruthie eagerly.

"Yes, dear child! Now, here in this quiet little room. Jesus speaks and tells you this."

“I do believe it, ma’am,” said Ruthie, with a depth of expression that told how much was passing in her young heart.

“And listen. ‘To as many as received him to them gave he the right to become the sons of God.’”

“It seems too good to be all for me,” said the child. “And I never thought of it before! How He must love me!”

“Yes; and He will love you to the end.”

“I love Him for doing it,” said the child, in a low, impressive tone.

“*We love him because he first loved us,*” said Mrs. Grahame softly. “But you are tired, my child; would you like me to sing you a hymn of which I am very fond? You could lean against me and rest.”

“Oh yes, ma’am, if you please,” said Ruthie.

Mrs. Grahame then sang :

“We know there’s a bright and a glorious home
Above the heavens high,
Where all the redeemed shall with Jesus dwell;
But, will you be there and I?

In robes of white, o’er the streets of gold,
Beneath a cloudless sky,
They walk in the light of their Father’s smile;
But, will you be there and I?

From every kingdom of earth they come
To join the triumphal cry,
Singing, 'Worthy the Lamb that once was slain;'
But, will you be there and I ?

If you take the loving Saviour now,
Who for sinners once did die,
When He gathers His own in that bright home,
Then, you'll be there and I !

If we are sheltered by the cross,
And through the blood brought nigh,
Our utmost gain we'll count but loss,
Since you'll be there and I."

Ruthie never forgot that night; and as I said before, nothing soothed the poor little sufferer like the soft, low voice of Mrs. Grahame. Very restless, at times, during the day had Ruthie been; and the poor mother, worn out by constant night-watching, lay down to take a little needful slumber, while Mrs. Grahame took her place by the sick child's bed. Through the clear, frosty air came the peals of bells ringing merrily. Their sound fell upon Ruthie's ears, as she lay wearily upon her pillow.

"Why are the bells ringing?" asked the child.
"For some victories the English have gained over the Russians, dear," replied Mrs. Grahame, as

she passed her hand soothingly over the damp forehead, and wondered at its coldness. Then followed some moments of silence during which the child lay with closed eyes, evidently pleased to feel the gentle touch upon her brow.

“What are you thinking of, dear?” asked Mrs. Grahame in a whisper. She did not like to disturb that restful look; but she longed to hear again if Ruthie’s Saviour were still precious as before. Her eyes opened for a moment, and with a bright look came the answer,

“*I was thinking of victory through the blood of the Lamb!*”

“Is it all right, dear? all peace, all rest?” asked Mrs. Grahame. Slowly and distinctly came the answer—“*All peace! All rest! His great love!*”—and Mrs. Grahame asked no more.

Only a few days’ more pain, a few days’ more longing to be with Him who died for her, and the happy spirit passed from its lowly abode on earth up to the glorious courts of the mansions above.



CHAPTER XI.

“THE EVERLASTING REFUGE.”

OW sweet to be at home again with you, mother,” said Kate, as all the excitement of her afternoon’s arrival was over, she sat down by the comfortable-looking fire to have a chat with her mother before her father’s return. The children had all retired to rest, and mother and daughter were alone.

“It is sweet to have you back again, love,” responded Mrs. Grahame. “No one but the Lord knows how I have missed you.”

“Mother,” said Kate after a short pause, “I can’t help thinking that you are more unwell than you will own.”

“Now, that is naughty, Kate. You must not begin to find troubles directly you are with us again. I have not felt very strong lately, but this weather is trying.”

“Mother,” replied Kate, as her eyes rested on the thin hands by her side; “have you had a doctor?”

"No, darling ; doctors are too expensive," said Mrs. Grahame, with an attempt at a smile. "When the spring comes, Kate, I dare say I shall feel stronger again."

"It is a long time till then," said Kate with a sigh. "Have you any pain, mother ? or is it only constant weariness ?"

"Have you been studying medicine, while you've been away this term ?" asked Mrs. Grahame playfully. "Are you going to become my doctor ?"

"Don't laugh about it, mother," said Kate ; "I am really in earnest. Tell me a little about yourself." Little by little, Kate drew out many details that Mrs. Grahame had never spoken of before. It was not usual for her to speak of her own ailments; but, already in her own mind the conviction was growing daily, that the time would soon have to come when the family must know. Very grave, indeed, Kate looked as the conversation came to a close. Not that she possessed medical skill, for it did not require any knowledge of that description to see that some of her mother's symptoms were very serious.

"Mother, with this palpitation, how do you get about ? Can you go up and down stairs without bringing it on ?"

“ You must not be so anxious, Kate dear,” said her mother gently. “ I avoid doing so as much as possible. The children do those little errands for me.”

“ But when they are at school, mother ? ”

“ Since poor little Ruthie’s death,” replied her mother, “ Mrs. Gray has been so much in my room. She is a widow, you know, and Ruthie was her only child.”

“ I am glad there is some one who thinks of you, mother. I could not bear that you should feel so unwell, and be alone.”

“ *I am never alone ; there is ever One with me. Never think of me as alone, Kate darling,*” said the mother, as her eyes filled with tears.

“ You must have a doctor, dear mother,” urged Kate ; “ I shall not rest till you have his opinion.”

“ We can’t afford it, dear,” pleaded Mrs. Grahame, in a low, earnest tone. “ Don’t mention it to your father ; it would vex him so, if he thought I needed one.”

“ Mother, I shall pay for it,” said Kate in a quiet, decided tone. “ You must have one ! So you must be good now, and do just what I tell you.”

“ Oh, Kate ! ” said Mrs. Grahame ; “ you spend all that you receive upon us.”

“What could I do better, sweet mother?” asked Kate, as she rose to greet her father who just entered.

It seemed like old times to have Kate back again with us. All had missed her a great deal more than she thought. She had been called into a new sphere in which to exercise new influences, to fulfil new responsibilities; while we had been left behind to work on much in the same order of routine as before; but without the presence of the one who had made such sunlight in our midst.

“Kate,” said Mrs. Grahame a few evenings later on, “when I am gone you will still point the children to Jesus. He is the only One who can give daily strength for the conflict.”

“Mother,” said Kate, with a painful start of surprise, “you’re better than you were; are you not? Why do you say that?”

“I don’t think I am really better, darling; a little patching up of the old house! that is all.”

“But Dr. Turner says you may get stronger when this severe weather is over, dear mother,” replied Kate.

“Dr. Turner is very kind, Kate. You chose the kindest doctor I have ever had; but if it is not the Lord’s will for me to get well again, he cannot cure me.”

“Oh! mother, don’t,” said Kate in a pleading tone; “I can’t bear to think of it.”

“My darling child,” said Mrs. Grahame, as she drew her fondly to her side, “it is better to talk of what must be. Think of it gently, Kate. Isn’t the Lord by your side all the way?”

“Mother, I know it,” was the low answer, wrung from a heart that, for the first time, felt the reality of the shadow that was coming.

“And you will try to rest upon that knowledge, darling,” said the mother gently. “Let it help to cheer you and sustain you, whatever may come. My love, there’s a refuge from every storm, in the heart of the Lord Himself; a place to rest beneath the shadow of His wings. You have trusted Him for salvation, Kate; can you not also trust Him for the difficulties of the way?”

“They may be harder than I expect, mother,” spoke Kate through her sobs.

“He knows what is best, darling; but I thought you wouldn’t look at what is coming, Kate,” said her mother in a low, soft tone.

“I endeavoured to hide from you that I was very anxious about you, mother,” said Kate softly. “I couldn’t bear the thought of it.”

“But it is better to talk of the burden which is

on your spirit, darling. I saw that it was there in spite of all the brightness you've thrown around us since you came back again.”

“Mother, my holidays will be over in a week!” said Kate, as she burst into tears.

“I know it, darling. It is why I chose to talk to you to-night.”

“Mother, I'll come back home at Easter!” said Kate with sudden resolve. “Oh! if I could only stop now!”

“We must leave that with the Lord, dear,” she answered. “Easter may be different; but now your duty lies before you plainly—to return at the appointed time.”

“Kate,” said her mother a little later, “I want you to take my watch with you this time.”

“Your watch, mother,” said Kate, a little surprised; “I have my own!”

“Yes, dear, I know; but you can leave me your old one, and take mine and keep it for my sake. I shall not need a watch much longer, darling.”

“Keep it till I come back next time, dear mother,” urged Kate quietly.

“Take it now, darling,” said Mrs. Grahame in a low whisper. “I should like you to have it for my sake; and so often during the pressure of our every-

day life, I have feared that it must be sold. It is safe with you." But father will be coming in shortly, and he must not find that you have been weeping. Go and bathe your face in my room ; and Kate," said the mother, as she once more clasped her daughter in an affectionate embrace, "get close to the Lord, under the shadow of His wings. 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, saith the Lord.'"

Ah ! surely Kate had need of that comfort ; and as the cold water did its work, cooling the hot brow, soothing the aching eyes, so there was another power, unseen, invisible ; but nevertheless doing its office of comforter to her wounded spirit. And as she knelt by the bedside for a short time, there came into her soul the remembrance of those beautiful words, "*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*"



CHAPTER XII.

REFUGE FROM THE STORM.

 E quitted Worcester by the mid-day train, and it was now eight o'clock. Only the governesses were expected to return to Madame Moret's establishment that evening, in order to be ready to take charge of the pupils on their arrival from various quarters on the following morning.

“Well, ma chère, how have you enjoyed your holidays?” inquired Mademoiselle Dulan of a young pupil-teacher, who was seated not far from her side in the apartment we had entered.

“I don't know, Mademoiselle; they have gone so quickly, that I have not had much time to think of them,” was the rejoinder.

“But what have you been doing with them, ma chère?” persisted Mademoiselle, who was curious to know about everybody's holiday pleasures.

“I've been to Aunt Marty's, part of the time, if you really care to know,” replied the young girl. “I enjoyed that very much.”

“How could you, ma chère? I have heard you

say she is old and devotes all her time to visiting sick people."

"That is what I liked so much. I now think differently about those things from what I once did, Mademoiselle. I find pleasure in them now," said the girl with a grateful look towards Kate, who had taken a piece of embroidery in her hand, and was listening to the conversation.

"Bah! Do you call that pleasure?" asked the French governess, with a look of half-pity, half-contempt. Adeline Montague—for that was the name of the speaker—blushed, as she noticed that Mademoiselle's dark eyes were fixed upon her, evidently waiting an answer.

"I have learnt, during the last few months to see that pleasure is not what I once thought it was," she said in a low, distinct tone.

"Ah, ma chère," said Mademoiselle, with a kind of patronising air, which made Adeline feel a little uncomfortable, "you are very young; your mind and powers of feeling are not as yet sufficiently developed!"

"I know it, Mademoiselle. I am little more than a child; but I have learnt a little of the pleasures which the world cannot give," answered Adeline Montague quickly.

“The world ! Bah ! Much you know about the world, ma petite,” said Mademoiselle, with another look of contempt.

“What have you found in the world to give you pleasure, Mademoiselle ?” asked my young mistress, drawing a little closer to the table and joining in the conversation.

“It’s all pleasure, Mademoiselle Grahame. The concert, the dance, the opera. Ah ! I have enjoyed *my* holidays !” added Mademoiselle Dulan, with an expressive shrug of her shoulders.

“But it has been a very different pleasure from mine,” suggested Adeline Montague.

“It need be !” said Mademoiselle, who was as much at home in the English language as in her own.

“And Mademoiselle,” said Kate, as the servant entered with the tray bearing supper, “ours is a joy that no one can take away from us ! You have to come away from all your pleasures when your duties commence ; but we can bring with us the One who has taught us what true pleasure really is.”

“Well, Mademoiselle, I suppose it will be as it was last term ; you will draw Adeline into your narrow-minded views upon various subjects, and

Fräulein and I must be companions. So we must do what you English call 'agree to differ.'"

The conversation had lasted only a few moments; but it was sufficient to shew that Kate's path was not a smooth one. The school was not large; it consisted of about thirty pupils in all, about half the number day-scholars, half boarders. The principal was a French lady of good birth and lady-like deportment. Possessed of great powers of mind herself, her chief aim was to cultivate and enlarge the understandings of those who were placed beneath her care. Able, proficient teachers aided her in her task of imparting instruction in arts, science, music, painting, &c. That higher culture of the heart and spirit was, however, ignored.

Had Madame Moret always been as careful in moral training as in mental, she would have ascertained more clearly the kind of subjects likely to be conversed upon by her teachers, and the effects likely to be produced by the same.

She little expected that more than one member of that youthful band would look back from a remorseful death-bed—back over a life of gaiety, self-indulgence, and ungodliness, that had had its commencement in hours of flippant conversations on subjects such as those in which Mademoiselle

Dulan delighted. A favourite with all the girls, on account of her vivacious manner, and story-telling capacities; no small amount of mischief might such a person as Mademoiselle Dulan accomplish.

Kate's conscientious discharge of duty won Madame Moret's approbation; and by this time she regarded her English teacher with more affection than she had ever before permitted herself to feel towards any stranger. Cold and hard as Madame's nature was, yet the other teachers soon saw that my young mistress was regarded with more favour than themselves.

"Dear Miss Grahame," said Adeline Montague, as she stole softly into Kate's chamber, and found her with traces of tears upon her countenance, "how is it that the Lord lets His children suffer?" Just a short time before, Kate was the subject of an undeserved and spiteful attack on the part of Mademoiselle and Fräulein.

"It is good for them, dear, or it wouldn't be allowed," answered Kate gently. "The Lord has a purpose of love in all His dealings with us. I am learning it, Addie."

"Isn't there a verse somewhere, Miss Grahame, which says, 'Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake'?"

"Yes, dear," answered Kate. "What made me so sorry just now was because my life was so little testimony. You were present when Mademoiselle said what she did!"

"Yes, I heard it. I was standing thinking how I longed to be more like you, when she said that," answered Adeline.

"Not like me, dear Addie," said Kate, as she prepared to descend to her afternoon's duties. "More like the Lord, isn't it?"

"Yes, dear Miss Grahame; I meant that," said Adeline Montague. "If you only knew how much you have helped me since I came here. I came dissatisfied with myself, and with everybody else; but you led me to Jesus, and I love you and thank you for doing it. I do want to grow more like Him," she added. Oh! grateful words at such a moment! Kate was thankful that all her labours were not in vain, and went down to her duties with deep peace in her heart that nothing could disturb.

* * * * *

Maude and Carrie wrote often, telling Kate of all that could interest her. Very seldom was there a line from Mrs. Grahame now; her last letter was dated about three weeks back. Only a few, feeble

lines thanking Kate for some grapes she had sent; but the conclusion! How could Kate keep the tears back? as she read, "Good bye once more, my precious child. Your loving and grateful mother, Emily Grahame."

Was not Kate more than repaid for any little act of self-denial she must needs have made to do what she did for the home circle? No good news, however, of returning strength did these anxiously-looked-for letters contain. No! though very little was said about the terrible dread which was upon them, they knew it now. Very evident it was, even to the children's eyes, that their mother was sinking fast.

"Come home, dear Kate," wrote Sydney about this time. "If anything will make mother better, it will be seeing your dear face again;" and at the bottom of the note, in her father's bold handwriting, was a postscript: "Sydney is right, Kate; come if you can." Kate who had lately got into the habit of shewing Madame Moret the children's letters, shewed her this one also.

"You shall go, my dear," said Madame Moret, as she replaced the letter in her hand.

"Oh, Madame! how good of you!" was all that my young mistress could articulate.

"And you needn't be anxious about your duties," she continued, as she drew Kate to her, and kissed her, much to Kate's astonishment. "I can arrange all that. I shall give you a fortnight."

"A fortnight! Oh, Madame; if I am spared to return, how shall I shew you the gratitude I feel?" asked Kate, in a half-bewildered tone.

"I will tell you how some day, dear," replied Madame, in a tone of unusual gentleness. "But you go and pack up the few things you need for your journey. Such a mother as yours must have been," added Madame, "must need her daughter now."

"Kate," said Madame, a short time after, as she entered her private room to say good-bye; "if you want anything—money or anything else—send to me." Who shall tell the warm rush of gratitude that welled up in Kate's soul? "Kate," too! Never had Madame, whom everybody thought so cold, so distant, spoken in this way before. "Write very soon and tell me all you can, dear," added Madame Moret; and again, for a moment, her lips had rested upon Kate's brow. Is it not sometimes so? Hearts we deemed capable of no real affection are wakened into life and sympathy by the touch of some unconscious hand?

“Mother, do you know me?” said Kate, as late in the evening she took her place by her mother’s bedside. Mrs. Grahame had not risen for some days; and at times, during the afternoon hours of the day of Kate’s arrival, her mind had wandered. The invalid opened her eyes and looked anxiously, eagerly around, as if to assure herself she had not been deceived by the voice.

“Sweet mother,” murmured Kate, in a low, unsteady tone, as she stooped and kissed the long, transparent fingers lying so motionless on the coverlet.

“My Kate!” was all the mother’s response; but those two words were a world of welcome, a world of satisfaction to that longing heart. “I asked for you, darling,” said Mrs. Grahame later in the evening.

“Asked the Lord, mother?” inquired Kate.

“Yes, dear; I would not let them send for you, it could do no good; but I asked Him to send you when He saw fit. You won’t leave me again, darling?”

“Never, mother,” was the fervent answer.

“Did Madame mind you coming, love?”

“She sent me, dear mother;” and Kate repeated what had taken place before her departure.

“How great are all His mercies, Kate! I long to see Him and praise Him for what He has done for me.”

“It will not be long, mother,” said Kate in a voice that shewed she was doing her utmost to control herself.

“No, darling; not long,” repeated the mother, as she lay back on her pillow and closed her eyes. A few moments' more silence, and then she spoke again. “Kate,” she said, “I have found that the way was all right; *all right*. I loved the Lord before; but I never rightly knew till lately *how much He loved me.*”

Aunt Mary now entered. She had been sent for about a week before this period. And very good it was to have her in that sick-room. Kate found it so before the week had expired.

“I must have you go and lie down, my child,” said she, in a firm, gentle voice, as she took Kate's hand, and gently drew it away from her mother's.

“Don't send me away, aunt, please,” pleaded Kate.

“I will stay with my sister to-night, dear,” said the firm kind voice. “You are tired after your long journey; rest now, and to-morrow, if all is well, you shall be nurse during the day.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DESIRED HAVEN.



LMOST a week had passed since Kate's arrival at the humble home in Mary Street. A week of anxiety it had been to all; for Mrs. Grahame grew daily weaker. Dr. Turner came and went; and tenderly as a nurse he assisted in placing the sick woman in easier positions on her pillows. Soothing medicines were administered, quiet services rendered; all that his art could suggest was not tardily executed.

But better than all the restoratives which human skill might introduce, was the little word of encouragement whispered softly in Mrs. Grahame's dying ear, before the doctor's departure. Upon more than one occasion his voice was raised in prayer from the side of that lowly bed, and soon the stricken family learnt to welcome Dr. Turner's visits as much for his spiritual ministry as for his medical skill.

I have often since thought what priceless opportunities are given to the christian doctor; not only can he apply the healing virtues of his art to the

poor, diseased body, but led by the Spirit of God, he can tell of the medicine for the broken heart—the balm that is better than Gilead's, of the Great Physician, who can recover the leprous sinner, and make the sin-sick soul hear from His lips the cheering words, “Thou art made whole.”

“The loving Lord knows it all, Emily, dear one,” said Aunt Mary, soon after the dear sufferer had recovered from a severe attack. “He went through pain and suffering for you, didn't He?”

“Who else is in pain, Mary?” asked the sick woman, a little incoherently.

“You, darling, now,” said Aunt Mary. “Jesus once went through pain for you. He suffered that He might bring you to God.”

“Did He suffer like this for me? Could He have suffered like this for me?” answered Mrs. Grahame. “How He loves me! Yes! How He loves me. He suffered more than this for me.”

Ah! those two watchers in that lonely, lowly, humble chamber felt conscious that a wondrous change was at hand. No return of the pain had taken place for some hours; and the low, gentle breathings of the dying woman were all the sounds to be heard in the apartment. The pale face lay peacefully upon the white pillow, and a quiet

smile was visible upon the parted lips. The hand of death was there. His icy touch was on the palid brow.

The stars of night gradually disappeared in returning daylight, and the busy world began to wake up to its customary routine; but, Mrs. Grahame still slumbered on. It was towards mid-day when she awoke, and then her gaze rested upon her daughter Kate. Aunt Mary had gone downstairs to prepare the children for what she knew must now be very near. Gerald, too, had been sent for, and was hourly expected.

“Kate, is it you, love?” asked Mrs. Grahame, in a low, distinct tone as she looked at her child. “It is, mother darling,” answered Kate, as she leaned over the pale, emaciated form, and imprinted a fond kiss on the peaceful forehead.

“I have had such a sweet sleep, love,” was the next remark.

“I have not left you all night, mother,” said Kate softly, as she strove to control the emotion that almost mastered her.

“*There has been One who has never left me, Kate,*” said the mother. “You know Him, too, Kate?”

“Yes, mother; but not as you do,” was the reply.

“Mine has been a rough voyage,” said the dying mother. “Yes, Kate,” she added; “*I can look back at it from where I now lie, and see His mercy in the waves of sorrow which have beaten upon me.*”

“*Mercy!* mother, you are very weary, I know; but will you tell me why you said *mercy?*” asked Kate, in a low tone.

“My darling, if it had not been for those trials, I should not have known, as I now do, *His perfect love to me.*”

“Mother,” said Kate, “all will be peace *there.*”

“*All is peace now,* my sweet child. *All, all.* The weary voyage is past. The desired haven is in sight; but, best of all, He waits for me. I see Him there!”

Then followed a pause, during which the bright eyes were apparently resting in wondering satisfaction upon some ravishing object near at hand.

“Mother, I will call Aunt Mary,” said Kate, in a low, tremulous tone.

“No, darling!” answered Mrs. Grahame gently. “Let her rest a little; what time is it?”

“Half-past one, mother,” said Kate, as she drew me from my place at her side, and looked at my dial-plate.

“You still value my watch, darling,” said the

mother gently, as she noticed the manner in which Kate was regarding me. "Give it to me for a moment." Once more I was in my dear mistress's hand. "Open it, Kate," she said, as she found she had no strength to accomplish the task. "Those are his marks, darling," she added, as she gazed with tearful eyes upon the scratches which an unsteady hand had left upon me.

"Don't think of that, now, mother darling," pleaded Kate, for she knew full well to what sad times memory had flown.

"Poor boy! Poor Herbert!" murmured Mrs. Grahame softly, as she lifted me to her lips. "Tell him what I did, Kate, love, because he was not here himself. *Tell him with my dying love, that if a mother can forgive and pardon as I do, the love of God in Christ is richer, fuller, freer far beyond mine.*" And the mother's voice trembled, and for one moment a slight shadow was perceptible upon the marble brow.

"Take the watch again now, love, and when you look at it, think what I have often told you—'As long as time lasts, Jesus, the Lord, will be with you, as He has been with me.'"

"I cannot talk more, darling," she added, after another pause. "I should like to sleep again,

Kate. '*He giveth His beloved sleep*,' you know, my child."

Presently, Mr. Grahame entered the chamber, and in a few moments afterwards Aunt Mary followed. Gerald's arrival came soon after. Almost heart-broken was he when he saw there was no hope of restoration. He had not thought his mother quite well the last time he saw her; but no thought of any serious illness had, till recently, entered his mind. Now the conviction that he was looking upon the dear form for the last time made his young heart quiver with emotion.

"Won't mother wake again?" asked he of his father, as they stood side by side in that chamber of death.

"I hope so; I trust so, my dear boy," replied Mr. Grahame, whose heart was wrung with anguish and remorse. A fresh voice in the room aroused the sleeper; and as the eyes gently unclosed and wandered round the room as if in search of some one, they finally rested upon the young man standing near.

"Leave us alone a few moments," she said in a fainter tone than she had before spoken; "Gerald and me."

Never were those precious, solemn moments ob-

literated from the youth's memory. Earnestly, lovingly, and yet with dying fervour, she pleaded with his soul. Gerald had never been brought to the feet of Jesus, there to sit and learn of Him. He was one of those who meant to be a Christian "some day ;" but the words of his mother now sank deep into his heart, convincing him that "*now was the accepted time, now was the day of salvation.*"

"Gerald," said his mother, as his father presently re-entered the room, "promise me one thing."

"Yes, mother, anything," said Gerald, as he knelt by her side and listened.

"You'll never reproach Herbert when you meet. Forgive him, Gerald."

"As I hope to be forgiven, mother," said Gerald, in a solemn tone.

"And tell him I loved and thought of him till the last." And the voice died away, faintly and tenderly, as if her last wish on earth were now gratified.

"Maude, Carrie, Sydney," whispered Mrs. Grahame to her husband a few hours later in the day. And the husband knew that the fond mother would fain see her children once more by her side. They were brought. Tearfully, for a moment, did the mother's gaze rest upon them ; but she smiled at

her husband and said, "Dear William, *He will never fail, I can trust you all to Him.*"

"Are you in pain, dear Emily?" asked aunt Mary, as she noticed the restless movements of the long, wasted fingers a short time afterwards.

"No, Mary; only weary, waiting to go home," was the low, faint answer.

"All is peace, darling?" asked the sorrow-stricken husband.

"*All peace!*" whispered the dying woman in broken words. "*He is my peace, precious Jesus! my Saviour! my Lord!*"

Daylight was passing away. Evening had commenced, and already the weeping children knew that never again would they hear that dear mother's voice speaking to them as of old. Silently, and with reverent awe, they stood there in that chamber of death. And Mrs. Grahame slumbered again. Just before seven o'clock the eyes slowly opened; but this time with a wondering look which changed into a smile of heavenly sweetness. Another glance of recognition at all present, and with the countenance still retaining that look of ravishing delight and satisfaction, the happy spirit had fled.

"*Absent from the body, present with the Lord,*" said aunt Mary, as she saw that all was over. It

was a scene that never could be forgotten. The bereaved husband, the weeping children !

Very tenderly did Kate endeavour to fill that vacant place ; but it might not be. She may soothe the grief of father, brother, sisters ; but only the tender, loving sympathy and compassion of the God-Man, Christ Jesus, could ever pour the balm into those wounded hearts. Worse than all, too, they must now be divided ; Gerald must return to his office, Kate to her duties, and aunt Mary to her home in Derby.

Earnestly had Kate sought guidance of the Lord with reference to her younger sisters ; and He who loves to enter into every care and anxiety of His loved ones heard and answered her in a way that she little expected. "I want you to bring Maude and Carrie with you, when you come," wrote Madame Moret, a few days after Mrs. Grahame's death. "I think your aunt's plan to take Sydney under her care is the best thing that can be done for him. Your father, as you say, will indeed be lonely without you ; but he may be freer to act for himself if unfettered by any home cares. I am waiting to welcome you as soon as you can return."

Tears of gratitude rose to Kate's eyes as she read the letter. A few moments' talk with aunt Mary

about the way in which God had provided for them, and Kate had decided that, for a time at least, she would accept Madame's generosity.

So it was arranged that the lowly spot they had learnt to call home was to be home no longer. Mr. Grahame would still remain in Worcester, as by this time he was becoming better known in the city, besides which he had recently had some prospect of a permanent situation, which, if attained, would place him in more comfortable circumstances than he had been enjoying for the last few months.

“Trust in God, dear father,” said Kate, as they parted about a week after the interment. ‘*All things work together for good to them that love God.*’”

“It is trusting in the dark sometimes, Kate,” replied the father, in a low, desponding tone.

“He can make it light, father,” were the last words Mr. Grahame heard, as the train passed out of the station.



CHAPTER XIV.

MADAME MORET'S SECRETS.



IGHT had succeeded the busy labours of the day, and the curtain of darkness had lulled to slumber most of the inmates of Madame Moret's household. But a lamp was still burning in her own dressing-room, though the hour was close upon midnight. Maude and Carrie, worn out with the excitement of the day's journey, had long since fallen asleep in one of the pleasant dormitories. They were doubtless in happy unconsciousness of the loss that had fallen upon them. Perhaps they were even now living over again happy scenes of their childhood—living over again the dear, old times, when a fond mother was beside them.

“Come to my dressing-room, Miss Grahame, before you retire to your bedroom,” Madame had said to Kate, as she left the schoolroom as soon as the evening duties were over.

“Take this nice low seat by my side, dear,” said Madame, as she rose to receive Kate and placed a soft, luxuriant, reclining chair in a comfortable

position by the fire. "And now, Kate," she continued, "I want you to tell me all about these sad troubles of the last three weeks."

"You gave me a fortnight, Madame," said Kate, "but I was away three weeks."

"Yes! I know that; but it could not be helped. You could not have done better than you did, Kate. And the lessons have been managed. Don't speak of that. I want to hear of your mother." And Madame's voice in the last words had such a touch of tenderness in their accent, that Kate could only listen to them in wonder. And with such a listener, Kate was soon led to talk of much that had passed during the interval of her absence. Words and sayings of the dear departed one were lovingly recalled; and Kate's tears flowed unhinderedly, at times, during the recital. To the gentle, submissive way in which the suffering mother had borne her sorrows, Madame listened with intense interest; and more than once the delicate cambric handkerchief was lifted to wipe away the glistening teardrop from what people generally termed her "hard, grey eyes." They were not hard that night, however.

"Kate," said Madame, after a short pause, "will you do something for me?"

"Oh, yes, Madame; anything to shew my gratitude for all your kindness," was the ready answer.

"Kate, I love you," she whispered. "Will you love me? Can you love me also?"

"I do love you, dear Madame," was all that Kate could find words to say in her surprise.

"And, Kate," continued Madame in the same soft, low voice, "I shall strive to be a mother to you, and you shall be my child." And the grey eyes filled with tears, as she clasped Kate tenderly to her bosom, and imprinted a long, fervent kiss upon her brow.

"Dear Madame, forgive me," said Kate, as they sat and spoke freely of thoughts and feelings long pent up in Madame's own bosom; "forgive me, for ever thinking you cold and reserved."

"I have been a lonely woman, dear Kate," said Madame, in a low, distinct tone. "Once there was one dearer to me than life; but it pleased God to take my idol from my grasp, and I was desolate. He was more to me than my God, and I knew it, Kate."

"You have had sorrow and trial, dear Madame, as well as I then!" said Kate, in a sympathetic tone. "Did it bring you to the feet of Him who sent it?"

“Yes, at last, dear. *The bitterness, the sadness, the loneliness drove me there. It was my only resource.*”

“It was a resource though, dear Madame; have you not found it so?” asked Kate.

“Blessed be His name it was, Kate; but I dared not trust my heart to love again. Better to be sad and alone than to have the joy taken out of life a second time, I thought. And I have foolishly closed my heart against the little rays of sunshine which have been thrown across my path since that time; but God has now taught me that I should open my heart again, and let the springs of affection have their proper course. It shall be open to you, Kate.”

“Not only to me, Madame,” said Kate, “but to all that come under your influence.”

“May be, Kate dear. He can do that also. I have thought little of that part of it: As long as the work was done, and done well, I have cared for little beside.”

“But there is a higher thing than that, is there not, dear Madame?” urged Kate gently. “Dear mother taught me from a child, ‘Whosoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.’”

“It wasn’t so much the hand at fault, Kate, as the heart. But now, my dear,” Madame continued,

as her eyes fell upon the grey ashes in the fireplace, "I must not let you take cold by sitting without a fire. I wonder what time it is."

"Half-past one, dear Madame," said my young mistress, as she drew me from her watch-pocket.

"You have an exquisite little watch, my dear," remarked Madame, as her eye fell upon my chased exterior.

"It is very precious to me, Madame," replied Kate. "It belonged to my dear mother."

"Her dying gift, I suppose, Kate?" asked Madame, as she took me in her hands for a moment.

"I used it a little before that," said Kate; "but she looked at it just a little before her death, and placed it again in my hand, saying words that I shall never forget."

"What were they, dear?" inquired Madame Moret, as she noticed the glistening eyes of the young girl by her side.

"They were these, Madame," replied Kate, in a half-choking voice. "'Take this watch again, love; and when you look at it, think what I have often told you,—*As long as time lasts, Jesus the Lord will be with you as He has been with me.*'"

"The Lord give you to realise it so, dear Kate," said Madame fervently

“And now, Kate,” she added a few moments after, “remember, if I am to be allowed the joy of helping to fill up your lonely heart, you must have confidence in me at all times. You are welcome to my room at any hour. Don’t misjudge me and think me hard and cold. So good night, dear.” And with one long, fervent embrace, telling of a long-lain latent love, now once more re-kindling into life, Madame Moret permitted Kate to depart.

Very thankful was my young mistress to find herself alone in her own chamber. Late as it was, and weary as she had grown with the journey and excitement of the day, there was One to whom she must turn, and tell out all that was in her full heart. Thanksgiving and supplication blended together in that hour of communion with her Lord and Saviour; thanksgiving for unexpected mercies—supplication for strength, wisdom, and guidance to carry out His will, and that she might be kept close to the Good Shepherd’s side.

“What a stupid book!” said Mademoiselle to Fräulein, in a half whisper, one evening as Kate was, in accordance with Madame’s request, reading from an interesting volume to the pupils. “I do wish Madame would choose more entertaining books for the young ladies—not religious ones.”

“Very stoopid,” replied Fräulein, who had not yet acquired Mademoiselle’s proficiency in the English language. “But we need not listen if we do not like.”

“If it were a new French novel, or some good German poems, it would be different,” said Mademoiselle, with a significant shrug of her shoulders.

“I have Goethe up in my box,” said Fräulein, after a few moments’ pause. “If you like, I will fetch it to you, Mademoiselle.”

“Do, *ma fille*,” replied Mademoiselle, who was in the habit of patronising all who had to do with her. And Fräulein quitted the schoolroom, shortly to return with the book in her hand.

“This will be exceedingly better,” said Mademoiselle, as she turned over the leaves of the volume, and commenced reading. “That nonsense is not worth listening to.”

Kate had heard the greater part of the conversation, which had been carried on almost close to her side; and now as the last remark was uttered in a tone sufficiently audible for all the young ladies to hear, the hot blood mounted to her temples, and her first impulse was to close the book, and take up a piece of work which lay upon the table at her side.

It was well that in that moment of annoyance,

Kate had a strong tower into which she might run for defence. Conscious that she was no match for the enemy in this subtle form, she lifted her heart in silent prayer for grace to keep down the rising temper—grace to do the “thing that was right,” and not to give the advantage to those who sought in her “occasion for stumbling.” And though her cheeks for a little while remained hot, and her heart throbbed painfully with the effort, Kate read on in a clear, steady voice, till the hour appointed for other duties.

Well did the Spirit of God write, “*The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is set aloft.*” (Marg.) Yes, “aloft” where the petty annoyances of the lower atmosphere lose their power to disturb, and “*the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps the heart and mind by Christ Jesus.*”



CHAPTER XV.

MANY, MANY CHANGES.

IX long years passed away since the event narrated at the commencement of our last chapter, and still Kate retained her post of English teacher in Madame Moret's establishment. Many a change had taken place during the interval. Maude and Carrie had been removed from Madame's care. A kind uncle having volunteered to pay the premium required to apprentice them to any business they preferred, Maude had entered a stationer's warehouse; and Carrie, inheriting much of her mother's taste in needlework, had requested that she might be allowed to learn the secrets of Berlin wool and fancy work. Comfortable homes had been found for them; and Kate had more than one letter in her possession speaking of the satisfaction each girl gave to her employer.

Sydney, too, had completed his last term at school; and through the kind interest of a friend of aunt Mary, had been entered as one of the junior clerks in the telegraph office. Gerald had

married about two years before ; and judging from the smile that generally rested upon my young mistress's lips as she perused his letters, there was no reason to suppose that the marriage, though rather premature, was anything but a happy one.

From Mr. Grahame Kate heard but seldom ; and even his letters conveyed but little definite information as to his occupation, or manner of living. He had, it would appear, long since quitted the lodging in Mary street, and was now sharing apartments with an old acquaintance in a better part of the city. Of Kate herself I will only say that during those six years she had learned much of that God-given secret—“ *the peace of God which passeth understanding.*”

And Madame Moret ? You would like to hear something more of her. Her affection for my young mistress had developed into warm, earnest love. True to her promise, she had indeed striven to be a mother to the lonely girl. Madame Moret had been a true friend to the motherless family. And as she reaped the sweet effects of her altered course of action, she resolved to strive more earnestly against her natural inclination to reserve and silence. “ How many blessings I have missed ! ” she said to Kate one day as she perused a letter from

one of her late pupils. "How grateful Ethel Atherton is for that little assistance of mine with her private Bible readings."

Happily for the good of the children connected with the establishment, the baneful influences of Mademoiselle Dulan and Fräulein Schmidt had long since come to an end. In a moment of annoyance at some innovation of what they had grown to consider as their "schoolroom rights," they had rather unceremoniously informed Madame Moret that "their engagement with her must terminate at the earliest opportunity." Startled and surprised as Madame Moret had been at the abruptness of the intimation, she had by that time become somewhat enlightened as to the principles of the ladies with whom she had to do; and much to their surprise and astonishment the lady principal made no objection to their wishes.

But of all the changes that had passed over this busy dwelling-house, none was so great as the one the household was shortly anticipating. Only another fortnight, and Madame was to become the wife of a Christian gentleman, who had for a considerable time been well-known to most of the members of the establishment. Easter was approaching, and the marriage was arranged to take

place during the recess. The school was also to be transferred to other hands during that period, as Mr. Ashworth did not approve of Madame continuing her profession after their union; declaring that he had so much work in store for her, that she would not have time "to do justice to her pupils."

It was Madame's wish that Kate should share her new home, and be to her as she had been before; but my dear young mistress instinctively felt there were many obstacles to such a proposal. It certainly required a little effort on the part of the gentle, clinging Kate to refuse the offer so kindly made by her much-loved friend. But there were others to be considered as well as herself; and the thought of the dear ones even now partially dependent upon her for support, at once decided her course of action.

"The Lord has been very good to me, and has guided me so far," she said to herself one evening, as she rose from her kneeling posture by the bedside. "I will trust Him fully to guide me now in whatever may be His will concerning me." And He who ever hears the prayer of faith sent the sweet word of His consolation into her soul. He gave the answer to the dependent spirit. For not by

chance did her eager eyes rest upon the blessed words in Psalm xxxii. 8-11.

“I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go ; I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding ; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.”

“Yes,” exclaimed Kate, as she closed her well-used Bible, “I, too, can rejoice, and know that this is the same Lord that loves and cares for me. He will guide me by His eye, if only I am near enough to Him to read His direction aright. I suppose,” she continued, as she mused upon the verses she had been reading, “the horse naturally is inclined to go too fast, while the mule, unless urged forward, would go too slowly. Yes! I see the meaning of that verse as I never did before. We must not go before the Lord, and plan out our own pathway, neither must we lag behind as the slow-pacing mule; but we must be with Him, by His side, ready to follow where He may lead.”

“Kate,” said Madame to my young mistress one

evening, "the more I think of your proposal to leave me the less I like it." They were in the comfortable dressing-room again, the pupils having retired to rest some time previous to this. "I cannot bear to think of the way in which I shall miss you."

"It will be all right, dear Madame," said Kate, as she drew her chair close to Madame's side, and placed her hand confidingly in hers. "I feel it is the Lord's mind for me to find work elsewhere."

"I am not sure of that, my dear," said Madame, as she turned and cast a searching glance on the eager, wishful face at her side.

"But I am," was the low, yet earnest response. "Dear Madame, your goodness is very sweet to me; but I am young and strong to work. There are others who need what I can earn."

"Since you have tried composing, you always have had a little to spend in buying presents for Maude, Carrie, and your father! And besides, I can give you a little assistance still, whenever you require it."

"I must not trust to my music, Madame."

"But you're not going to give that up too, are you, Kate?" asked Madame, in an uneasy tone. "These last two years you have earned a fair sum by selling your copyrights."

“Oh no! Madame,” replied my young mistress quickly. “I love music too well to give it up so easily; but I am not sure of always being so successful. I may want money for my father.”

“Mr. Ashworth is very liberal, dear Kate,” urged Madame, after a pause. “He would become as interested in you and your family as I am. Do you fear him?”

“He is most kind, dear Madame,” said Kate, as the tears glistened in her speaking eyes. “But my Bible tells me that it is right to work with one’s hands the thing which is good, that one may have to give to him that needeth.”

“Perhaps you are right, darling,” said Madame, as she sat looking into the fire. “Maude and Carrie will be out of their apprenticeship in another year. You’ll be able to come back to me then, won’t you?”

“Even when they are earning money for themselves, there will be Sydney and father, Madame,” said Kate, in a quiet, resolute tone.

“But your aunt Mary has the charge of Sydney!” said Madame Moret.

“We have no right to expect she will always have him, dear Madame,” replied my young mistress. “God has given me health and strength, and the will to work for those dear to me; and it would

not be worthy of Him if I shunned my responsibilities."

"And must I tell Mr. Ashworth, when he comes to-morrow, that you have decided to give up your old place in my affection, Kate?" asked Madame.

"Not that, dear Madame. Only tell him with my grateful thanks, that I feel I can look out for the Lord's blessing on my labours with more certainty than if I were living upon his bounty."

"Look up, my child," Madame said, as she pressed Kate in her arms for a parting embrace. "If it is His will for you to go, the way will be made very plain. I may wish it otherwise, but He knows best." And Kate could only bow in acquiescence to what her own heart had long since given assent.



CHAPTER XVI.

MADAME'S WEDDING AND KATE'S FAREWELL.

MADEMOISELLE Gabert, Fräulein Friedel, and my dear young mistress were now the sole occupants of the rather quaintly-furnished dining-room. Examinations were over; and now the vacant spaces, and generally empty appearance of the old lumber room, proved that for the present, at least, the merry little folks were luxuriating in other quarters. Already Mr. and Mrs. Ashworth were on their way to Venice.

Very busy had Kate been during the latter part of the day. Books, music, and boxes had been carefully collected from their usual receptacles, and placed in her own room, preparatory to the operation of packing; for this would be Kate's last night under the roof that had sheltered her for the past eight years. A long, parting look had been given to the old familiar benches in the class rooms, and the seat from which so many of her own lessons had been given. Each object in the well-known room was invested with a history all its own, reminding her of the wonderful way in which she had been

shielded and sheltered since her first entrance to the school dwelling. Madame's unexpected kindness, and the interest she had taken in all connected with her came distinctly again to Kate's memory.

Then the kind offer of a quiet home with her as her adopted child came afresh to her thoughts; and with all this, that happy, peaceful, calm sense in her soul of *Who* had been the author and giver of all this love and care for His clinging child. While the loud ringing of the supper bell put an end to Kate's meditations, yet nothing could disturb the sweet peace then reigning in her heart. Ah! "there is a joy that a stranger intermeddleth not with." And Kate experienced what that joy was.

"You look pale, Miss Grahame," said Mademoiselle Gabert to her, as the three ladies gathered for the last time round the well-supplied supper table.

"It is because she has lost her Madame," remarked Fräulein Friedel, in a sympathising tone. "Is it not, Mademoiselle?"

"Not exactly," replied Kate with a smile. "I have only been down in the schoolroom saying 'good bye' to things in general."

"Ah! that is not always pleasant," said Mademoiselle Gabert with a sigh.

"I am very sorry you are going away from us, Miss Grahame," remarked Fräulein, after a pause.

"Not as sorry as I am, Fräulein," replied Kate. "But when the Lord marks out a path for us, He wants us to walk in it without murmuring."

"I do not understand you English Christians here," said Fräulein, as she saw that Kate's eyes were fixed upon her, evidently awaiting a reply.

"I am not sure that we fully understand ourselves," said Kate, as she noticed the inquiring look which had accompanied the words. "But we 'English Christians' as you are pleased to call us, know, believe, and rest upon the word of God Himself; then follows the '*peace which passeth understanding*,' Fräulein."

"But, Miss Grahame," inquired Mademoiselle Gabert, who was a little given to argument, "can you tell me any verse in your book for what you have said that we should not regret the past?"

"I think of only one, just now," replied Kate, in a slow distinct tone. "But it is a very forcible one to my mind. It is this: 'Forgetting the things that are behind.'"

"Is that the end of it?" inquired Fräulein.

"No. I was thinking of the other part of the verse," answered Kate, quickly recollecting her-

self. “‘ Pressing forward to those things that are before,’ ”

“ Do you ever feel satisfied,” inquired Mademoiselle Gabert, with a searching glance at Kate’s expressive countenance, “ with such a hope as that?”

“ Oh yes, dear Mademoiselle,” was the ready answer. “ Satisfied with the Lord Jesus, satisfied with His love; but satisfied with myself, my attainments, never.”

“ It is a beautiful ideal you have, Mademoiselle!” remarked Fräulein quietly.

“ Not an ideal, Fräulein,” replied Kate firmly; “ but a real, living faith that has the capacity to enjoy God who gave it. I wish you both knew it for your own joy and comfort.” And Kate, encouraged by the evident interest and attention displayed by both her hearers, spoke to them, for some time, of the blessed Gospel of Peace, and the great work of the Saviour’s atonement. Those earnest words of Kate Grahame’s were not soon forgotten by her two interesting hearers.

“ I wanted to ask a little favour of you both,” said Kate to Fräulein and Mademoiselle next morning, as they assisted her in putting on her travelling cloak, and aided her in sundry little items upon which the comfort of a traveller so much depends.

"Anything, dear Mademoiselle," said both the ladies in the same breath.

"I wanted to ask you not to hinder Adeline. You know she is to remain here with Miss Williams. As long as you live with her in this house, you can do much either to help or hinder her. You know what I mean, I am sure."

"We promise it, for your sake, Miss Grahame," replied Mademoiselle. And Fräulein acquiesced.

"You must make yourselves as comfortable as possible during this short recess," said Kate to them a few minutes later, as she stepped into the cab that was to bear her to the railway station. "There are some nice, new volumes in the library to pass away the long evenings for you; and don't forget last night! and Addie!"

The Markton establishment was now left behind for ever. Five miles lay between the country town of Markton and the nearest railway station; and very thankful did Kate Grahame feel for that quiet drive in the early morning. The delicate tints on hedges and trees whispered their own message of comfort to her heart. "*If God so clothe the grass of the field, how much more will he clothe you?*" This thought helped to keep down many a fear which in the after part of that day might have arisen.

CHAPTER XVII.

ONE STEP BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

OUR other passengers were travelling in the same compartment with Kate, on her way to the ancient city of Worcester. One, an old lady of apparently seventy-five years of age, caused much quiet amusement; but it was easy to restrain the smile which involuntarily rose to one's lips, when the unaccustomed traveller gravely told her companions that she had never travelled by rail before, but that she was now "risking her life" in this way, in order to see her son who was dying of consumption at Ashchurch.

"God can take care of you in the train as well as on the high road," remarked a tall, intellectual-looking gentleman, who occupied a seat just opposite to that in which the old lady was seated.

"I know that, sir," she replied; "but I'd a sight rather be driving behind the slowest donkey in the country than spinning at this rate through the air." And the old lady visibly shuddered, as she gazed

for a moment through the open window at the fields and trees so rapidly receding from her view.

"You will get used to the movement presently," remarked a quiet-looking lady in a sympathising tone. "We mothers will suffer anything for our children, won't we?"

"You've had children of your own then, ma'am, I s'pose," remarked the old lady, as she turned towards the last speaker, and marked the garb of mourning in which she was attired.

"I have just lost one, a little child of barely three years old." And the tears rose to the lady's eyes as she spoke.

"May I suggest not lost, but gone before, Madam?" said the gentleman who had first spoken. And his eyes had a depth of meaning in them as he spoke, so that Kate could not but feel that he, too, had known what it was at some time or other to mourn the loss of a friend.

"Sometimes I say that to myself," replied the lady courteously; "but more frequently I use the other term."

"It is not a happy term," continued the gentleman. "When we read of the Saviour leaving the bright home on high to save the little ones, we should never speak of them as lost."

"I suppose you are right," replied the lady, with a slightly puzzled look.

"Well, mother," said a rough-looking countryman who, up till this moment, had remained apparently half asleep in his seat, "I should think as this rate would suit you. It isn't much faster than your donkey as you just talked about, is it?"

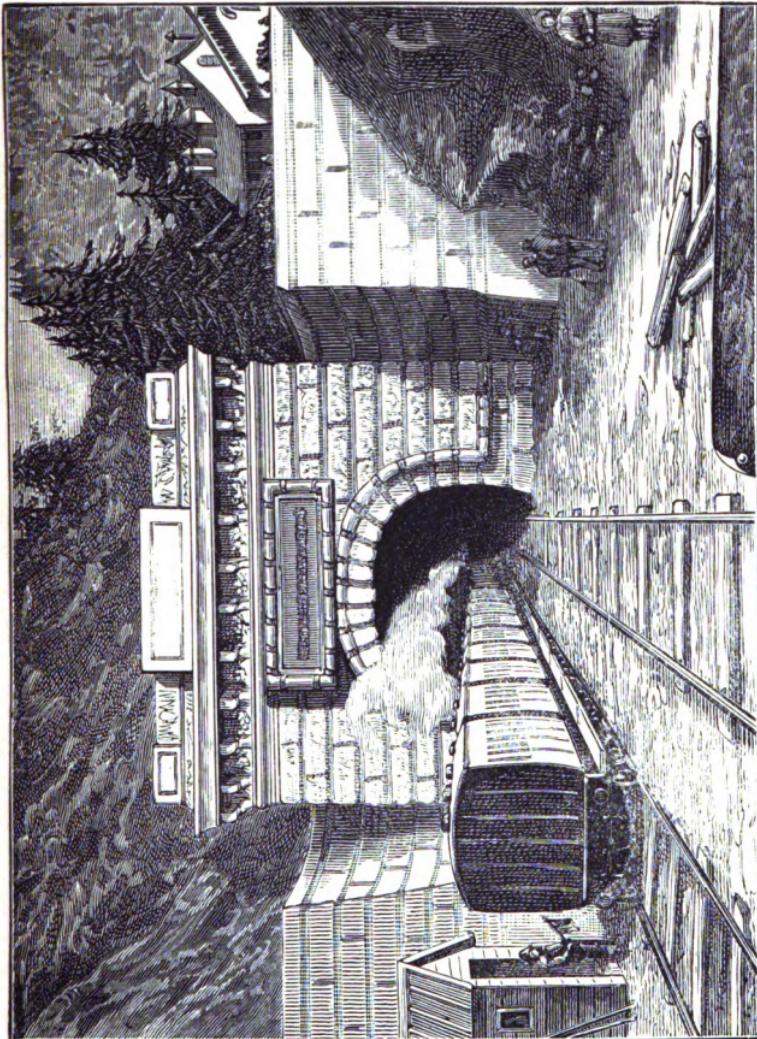
"This is really a lot better," said the old lady with satisfaction, as she perceived the much slower rate at which the train had been proceeding during the last few minutes of the conversation.

"We ain't far from Networth tunnel," said the man with a coarse laugh. "Ever been in a tunnel in your life, mother? I should say we should be a good half-hour going through at this rate!"

"Is it worser than other parts, sir?" asked the frightened old lady, as the train gradually decreased in speed.

"My good woman, I have told you before that God's care over His creatures is the same in all places." And turning to the uncourteous countryman, who, to judge by his appearance, was about twenty-five years of age, he said in a grave tone, "Young man, I fear you have no mother; or if you have, you certainly do not know how to behave to her. I pity you." And the deep-set eyes were re-

NETWORTH TUNNEL.



taining their fixed, steady gaze upon the reddening face of the offender.

“ Didn’t mean any harm by the joke,” muttered the countryman awkwardly. “ Can’t a fellow have a laugh when he chooses ? ”

“ Not at the weaknesses of old age, surely,” said the gentleman decidedly.

“ I’ll remember my manners better the next time as I travels with you, which won’t be yet a while,” returned the man uncivilly.

“ I fear there is something wrong,” said the gentleman a minute or two afterwards. “ It is unusual for us to enter the tunnel at this pace, and we must be almost close to it now.” And at this moment the engine, which for the last few minutes had been lessening its speed, suddenly came to a standstill.

“ Allow me, my good woman,” said the gentleman decidedly, as he placed his hand firmly on the shoulder of the old lady, whose first impulse had been to take a survey from the window.

“ I expects they be all tired,” said she for the benefit of her hearers. “ Tisn’t likely they can pull at that rate long ; it almost makes me giddy to think of it. ‘ Twas ever so much better the last mile or so.” And the speaker smiled with a sense

of satisfaction at her idea of what railway travelling ought to be. But Mr. Martin, for that was the gentleman's name, had ascertained from one of the guards what had been the cause of the stoppage.

"One of the principal valves of the engine has burst," he said quietly, as he took his seat in the corner the old lady had vacated for him. And as he spoke, the deep, earnest eyes rested by turns upon each member of the little company.

"Any danger, sir,?" inquired the countryman, forgetting his pique in the excitement of the announcement.

"There is," was the decided reply; and the firmly-set lips proved that he anticipated it.

"Can't they get on without va's?" asked the old lady in a half-puzzled tone. "Course I don't know what they are, but I should have thought they might manage. Nobody knows what they can do till they try."

"Ladies," said Mr. Martin, and he directed his attention to where my young mistress sat, "it would be cruel to deceive you at such a moment as this. The break-down of the engine is not a very bad affair in itself; there is something worse than that. The 9.50 down express is on our track, and humanly speaking there is little hope of escape."

“I shall get out of the window!” said the countryman impetuously, as he proceeded to put his plan into execution.

“Stay here, my man,” said the quiet voice of Mr. Martin, as he placed himself across the open window. “Put your trust in God, and stay quietly where you are; that is the safest thing for us all to do at such a moment.” And the young man, awed by the quiet, but commanding tone in which he had been addressed, sat down, with a half-dazed look upon his countenance, in the seat from which he had risen. Happily for the poor old lady, she did not know the difference between express and ordinary trains, so that her ignorant mind was unable to grasp the idea of the danger which was so imminently threatening.

Several men, strong, swift runners, had been sent along the line to do all they could by signs and gesticulations to attract the attention of the driver of the expected train, immediately it should be in sight. Coloured handkerchiefs of every description were voluntarily bestowed on them as they started on their almost hopeless mission. The nearest signal box was more than two miles distant, and the mouth of the yawning tunnel lay at only a distance of about fifty yards before them.

The scene of terror and dismay among the awe-stricken passengers was beyond description. Some vainly endeavoured to force their way through the windows, while others spent their strength in attempting to batter or burst open the firmly-locked doors. But the faithful guards did their duty, in spite of the volleys of abuse that fell upon them from unholy lips and conscience-stricken hearts.

“We won’t die shut up in these carriages,” said a burly-looking farmer, as he sought again to force his way through the window from which he had just been repulsed. And timid women and children now joined their shrieks and cries to add to the horror of that solemn moment.

“Can any one tell the time?” inquired Mr. Martin, as he looked anxiously again from the window. “My watch has stopped through some cause or other.”

“I never use mine when travelling,” replied the lady in mourning. But I was produced in a moment, and placed in Mr. Martin’s hands without a word.

“Nine fifty-five!” said he, as he gazed earnestly upon my dial-plate. “The runners have had seven minutes; if they have succeeded in attracting the attention of the engine driver, or guard, the colli-

sion may be a much slighter one; but *if not*”—and his upturned gaze shewed that the remainder of the sentence needed not to be repeated.

“There’s the whistle,” shrieked the countryman wildly, as a long, shrill blast was heard in the distance.

“Let us commend the keeping of our souls to God,” said Mr. Martin solemnly, as the rush of the advancing train was heard approaching. “To those who are not ready to die, I say, ‘*He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.*’ And to those who know Him, I remind them that *He plans all that happens to his children.*” And as he spoke, he replaced me in my dear young mistress’s hands, and whispered, “You can trust yourself to His love?”

“I can,” replied Kate, as she received me from Mr. Martin’s hand. And as her eye fell upon me for an instant, I heard her repeat as if to herself, “*As long as time lasts, He will be with me as He was with her.*”

How shall I describe the awful moment of suspense which were experienced by those two hundred passengers, as the express came nearer and nearer towards them! Many fainted from fear, and strong hearts grew cowardly, as death stared them in

the face. Amongst those who had fainted were the lady in mourning, and the old lady now in the corner by her side.

“Thank God all her brake power is on,” said Mr. Martin, when he discerned the first carriage as it rounded the curve about five hundred yards distant from them.

“Is there any hope?” gasped the terror-stricken countryman, as he caught hold of Mr. Martin’s arm. Kate, very pale but calm, sat quietly waiting for—what God should see fit. On round the smooth, level curve; on through the deep cuttings of the hard, jagged rocks; on to swift destruction of life and limb—had not the mighty hand of the living God interposed. Close up to within half-a-dozen yards did the express train come, when one of the hinder carriages of the express got off the line, and so retarded the mighty engine in her movements. One or two plunges she still made, each bringing her nearer to the dreaded danger; but finally she stood, firm and steady, within *half-a-yard* of the guard’s van.

“Saved!” said Mr. Martin, in a deep, earnest, thankful voice, as he turned and looked at my young mistress’s pale face. “*Saved!*” echoed the passengers, as they took up his word and a grate-

ful shout was instantly raised of "Thank God for His goodness to us to-day!" He had been good indeed to many of those sin-stricken men and women that day. Well might tears of gratitude flow from many an eye as they afterwards read that touching verse, "*He willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.*"

After a few hours' delay, during which a fresh engine was forwarded to take on the disabled train, Kate and her fellow-travellers were on their way through the tunnel to the next station.

"You are a friend of the Great Engineer, I perceive," said Mr. Martin to Kate, as she strove to arrange the shawls and wraps of the lady in mourning, who was now gratefully thanking Kate for her services.

"He is a Friend of mine!" said Kate earnestly, as she comprehended his meaning.

"You have never been so near death before," said Mr. Martin, as he quitted the train an hour later. "May you always be enabled to look upon it with such calmness," and warmly pressing the hand of my young mistress, he disappeared among the crowd upon the platform.

With what grateful feelings did Kate lay her

aching head that night upon the pillow in Mrs. Brooks's spare bed-room! Too tired to talk much, after the unusual strain and excitement of the day, she had done little else all the evening but lie upon the old leather couch in her father's apartment, and listen to his oft-repeated utterances of gratitude and thankfulness that his daughter's life had been spared. But bed-time had come, and sleep had eased the weary brain and throbbing nerves. And though more than once in her dreams the scene of the day was partially re-enacted, yet Kate never lost the consciousness that she was ready for what God saw best.



CHAPTER XVIII.

ALL THIS AND CHRIST.

ATE," said Mr. Grahame to his daughter, as they were seated together in the quiet twilight about two days after her arrival, "while I was at the Priory this morning, Mrs. Monkton asked me if it were true that you had returned."

"Who is Mrs. Monkton, father?" inquired my young mistress. "I do not even know the name."

"No; I forgot. She is a lady with whom I have had a great deal to do lately. There has been some complication of affairs connected with one of her stewards, and I have been engaged dissecting the accounts."

"Why did she ask about me, father?" asked Kate with a half smile. "Does Mrs. Monkton think I can be of any service to her in the same way?"

"No, dear; she was telling me the trouble she had with her last governess. It seems she was a French lady, clever and proficient in all she taught; but thoroughly unprincipled in her training of the little ones."

"Has she a more suitable lady now, father?" inquired Kate, as her thoughts reverted to her own experience on such a subject.

"No; she was asking me if I thought you might know of any one. Mrs. Brooks, who used to be housekeeper in the family, told her that you were on a visit here. It seems she has taken a fancy to you."

"Do you think the work would do for me?" asked Kate, as a new thought came into her mind.

"No, Kate," answered Mr. Grahame readily; "it is a daily governess Mrs. Monkton requires."

"Do you know how many pupils there would be, father?" inquired my young mistress after a pause, during which she had been thinking of the anxious expression of her father's countenance. Even in that short time, though Mr. Grahame had done his best to appear as cheerful as possible in the society of his daughter, she was not mistaken in supposing that the half-abstracted look which so frequently settled upon his face, was not the result of any imaginary evil.

"I think Mrs. Monkton said there were three little girls of her own," replied the father; "and I fancy she said something about another little girl who lived near, joining them in their lessons."

"I should like to see Mrs. Monkton, if you could obtain me an interview with her," replied Kate quietly.

"If all is well I shall be at the Priory to-morrow morning, when I will mention your wish," said Mr. Grahame. And the conversation turned upon other subjects. True to his promise, Mr. Grahame mentioned to Mrs. Monkton his daughter's desire for an interview, to which request the lady readily agreed. She intimated that she should be at liberty to receive Kate any time during the course of the evening; and in a prayerful, dependent spirit, Kate went. Greatly pleased with her appearance and conversation, Mrs. Monkton was the first to suggest that if Miss Grahame had no present engagement, could she not arrange, for a time at least, to undertake the charge of her little daughters?

"You will find daily instruction rather different from the methodical way of teaching carried on in boarding schools," said Mrs. Monkton, after making the necessary arrangements with my young mistress. "But you must buy experience in this as well as in other matters. I do not care for the children to re-commence duties just yet," added Mrs. Monkton as the interview terminated. "The little folks look for a few days at Easter; and to judge by

your pale face, a few days more rest will not do you any harm."

"I am well, I thank you, Madam," replied Kate courteously; "but I shall not object to a few days' respite. When would you like the young ladies to commence their studies?"

"Suppose we say this day fortnight," said Mrs. Monkton pleasantly; "that will suit both parties concerned."

"Furnished or unfurnished rooms, Kate?" asked her father, as next morning they agreed to take fresh lodgings suitable for both.

"We could not live in empty rooms, father," said Kate, in some astonishment.

"No; but some of my furniture is still left at Mrs. Gray's. I told her she might use it until I required it again." After many careful surveys of various houses where apartments of all descriptions were on view, Mr. Grahame and Kate finally decided upon three moderately-sized rooms, which occupied the second story of a respectable-looking house in Berkeley Street.

"Seven shillings and sixpence a week, you asked, I think?" Kate inquired of the neat-looking woman who conducted them upstairs.

"Yes, Miss," answered the woman in a civil tone.

"You keep a servant, I suppose?" asked Kate, scarcely knowing what she ought to inquire about on the occasion.

"Yes, Miss; but there's no attendance. You'd have all your rooms to yourself." That would be all the better, thought Kate to herself, not understanding the drift of the remark. So the matter was settled. In another week they would enter their new dwelling; Mrs. Brooks requiring that period for the customary notice of removal.

There was much to do during that interval. Mrs. Gray had to be seen, and made acquainted with their desire for the restoration of Mr. Grahame's furniture. She readily promised to assist Kate to "put the bits of things in their proper places." And a very great help Kate found her to be, when the day appointed for moving really arrived.

"How much you remind me of your precious mother, Miss Kate!" said Mrs. Gray, as she looked for a moment at my young mistress, while she smoothed the pillows of the small, but comfortable bed in which it was arranged that her father should sleep. Kate had taken the back-room for her own use, as she knew how accustomed Mr. Grahame had grown to the morning sunlight in his bed chamber.

"You have not forgotten my dear mother, I see," said Kate, with a grateful look towards Mrs. Gray.

"No, never, Miss Kate; and I never shall."

But now after all was done, a stranger would not have thought much of those humble arrangements. The carpet was not sufficiently large to cover the whole of the room; and though the defect was supplied by a narrow strip of canvas, yet there was no need to tell Kate's educated eye that it certainly looked "patchy." A few pictures, some of them the products of her own pencils, decorated the walls; while her choicest books were arranged neatly on a small table in a corner of the room. There was little furniture in the apartment, for Mr. Grahame's store had not proved as great as his daughter had anticipated; but a bright fire blazing on the hearth, gave a cheerful look to the scantily-furnished apartment, which otherwise was considerably lacking in household comforts.

"What are you thinking of, Kate?" asked her father, as they sat for a few minutes after supper by the pleasant fireside; for though the time of year was Easter, it was unusually cold.

"I was thinking, dear father, of a picture I once heard described," said Kate, rousing from the reverie into which she had fallen. "I never heard the

name of the painter; though I should like dearly to know him. His subject was this:—

“An old woman in poor, but cleanly garments, is seated by a small three-legged deal table. The stool upon which she is seated and the table by her side, are the only furniture in the room. A small crust of dry-looking, coarse, brown bread is being raised to her lips; but some thought arrests her in the performance of the action, and as she gazes upon the piece of bread in her old and wrinkled hand, the wonderful expression of perfect contentment depicted upon her countenance tells its own tale, as she murmurs—“ALL THIS AND CHRIST.”



CHAPTER XIX.

“NO ATTENDANCE,” AND ITS ISSUES.

OU are late in doing the fire this morning, Mary,” said Kate to the young servant who was passing her on the stairs. For my young mistress had left her chamber half-an-hour previously, and had been anxiously waiting for the maid to make her appearance. Now, hearing the girl upon the landing, she had come out to speak to her.

“I haven’t had any orders about your fire, Miss,” replied the girl, as she looked at Kate in surprise.

“You had better go and get them then, from your mistress at once,” said Kate. “Tell her we should like the fire lighted always by half-past seven.”

“Missis says as you’ve got to see to the fire, Miss!” said the girl in a respectful tone, as she entered the room a few minutes afterwards; “but I may bring the wood and coal up for you this morning.”

“Does she mean that I shall have to attend to the fire in the morning?” asked Kate, with a flush

on her countenance; "and bring up the wood and coal for myself?"

"'Rangements was 'rangements,' she said, Miss," answered the girl, as she prepared to go for the requisite articles. "Missis said she told you 'no 'tendance; ' you'd have it all to yourself."

"I did not understand that," said Kate to herself, as she entered the now cheerless room, and glanced at the disorderly fireplace. "But it won't do to be taken aback in this fashion at the first disagreeable thing I experience," said she half aloud. "If it has to be done, it must be my doing, I suppose." It was years, if indeed ever before, since Kate had done such a thing; and it was some trouble to make the grate look as it ought to do.

Rebellious thoughts came into her mind, too, as she brushed away at the dull-looking bars; but they did not hold their place very long. Wood and coal had now been placed at her side by the obliging servant, who was at this instant just on the point of quitting the room; but as she turned away, an awkward movement on Kate's part attracted the girl's attention, and she advanced a little towards her.

"If you wouldn't mind, ma'am," said she with a smile, "I'd show you how to do it easier than that.

That's a thing I takes a pride in, cleaning a grate." A few brandishes of her strong arms, and the grate soon resumed its ordinary complexion. Mr. Grahame slept a little later than usual that morning, so that all traces of the difficulty had vanished long before he took his seat at the breakfast table.

"I think the roses are coming back a little," said Mr. Grahame playfully, as he pinched Kate's cheeks before starting to his morning duties. And Kate as she returned his smile, though she could have done so, did not think it prudent to tell him what had brought them into bloom.

It did not take my young mistress many days to discover the meaning of the terms upon which she had ignorantly entered. "No attendance," put into plain English, she found to mean much more than she suspected. It meant the performance of many an act for which her former mode of life naturally unfitted her. But rooms, if inhabited at all, must be kept clean and orderly; and if there were windows in them, the clear, blue sky ought to be seen on the other side; to say nothing of the sundry boxes of coal, and pails of water, that were required for use on the first landing. Easily tired, too, did my young mistress grow at these unwonted tasks; but she bore up bravely for her father's sake.

Kate had, however, yet to learn more fully the widely extensive application of the "no attendance" system. It was Saturday, and she had risen earlier than usual in order to perform the little extra duties she thought best to fulfil on that busiest of all days. The wet boards in her own chamber were clear proofs that she had already cleansed them from the week's accumulation of dust; while the landing, with all its glory of shining canvas, silently testified that it also had received a due share of attention. Not a speck of dust was to be seen in the pleasant-looking sitting-room, though the bright rays of the morning sun were streaming into the apartment exposing all that was there.

Kate, somewhat wearied by the exertion necessary to accomplish so many little details, was now seated quietly at the breakfast table, enjoying the rest she had so well earned. Mr. Grahame had not yet quitted his chamber; but the fragrant coffee upon the table, and the breakfast equipage in complete order, shewed that it was quite time for him to do so. A slight tap at the door, followed by the entrance of Mrs. Barnes, the landlady, rather disturbed Kate's pleasant musings.

"Please, Miss Grahame," said the woman, as she advanced a step or two towards the table at which

Kate was seated, "I thought p'raps you'd rather I told you myself, than sent Mary up to do it. It'll be your turn to do the stairs to-day."

"The stairs!" said Kate in bewilderment; "I don't quite understand what you mean, Mrs. Barnes."

"The lodgers takes it in turns to wash the stairs down on Saturdays," explained the landlady. "One week it's the downstairs' duty, and the next week it's the up's."

"That is not a customary arrangement, is it?" asked Kate, rather quickly.

"Oh yes; it's a usual thing when there's 'no attendance.' I likes the place kept nice and orderly myself, and I expect you to do so too, Miss." And so saying Mrs. Barnes quitted the apartment, leaving its occupant to wonder how much more experience she was going to get of the meaning of words so elastic. Kate's first impulse was to tell her father that on Saturday, at least, it would be desirable to procure the services of a charwoman; but as she thought more calmly over the matter, ere Mr. Grahame had taken his seat at the breakfast table, she had decided that for a time, at least, the stairs had better be added to her other duties.

"What a blessed comforter the word of God is!"

said Kate to herself, as about an hour later in the day, having seen her father safely out of the house, and the coast clear for her operations, she was busily engaged washing step after step of the two flights of stairs that led to their apartments. "What is there that we have to do, in which some ray of comfort or advice does not fall upon our listening ears? I wonder did such humble tasks as these ever enter the mind of him who penned the comprehensive words, 'Do all things without murmuring'?" And with this verse in her mind, Kate dusted a bracket in the hall, which could not be supposed to be included in the "stairs" business.

There were other verses also which presented themselves to her mind, as she mounted the finished staircase. And Kate, as she seated herself in her chamber with the sweet, fresh air coming in through the open window, took her Bible and turned to some of them: "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Surely beneath those blessed words from the Master's own lips, there must be a principle that would apply to her own path. And Kate felt glad that the bracket had not escaped her attention.

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I should like Sarah to read what I have said about Kate in this chapter ; but I fear she would not take the trouble to do so. I often think of the contrast between those clean, orderly apartments, over which Kate had the charge, and these in which my last days are now being spent. Here, there is dirt, disorder, and dissatisfaction. There, at least, was to be found purity, prayer, and peace.

Of all things in this world that call one's powers of contempt into full play, it is the sight of a slatternly woman. Oh ! if I only had the ability to use a needle and thread, how many a stitch would I set in the garments which Sarah McLean calls her "morning attire" ! Her father, though living in a humble style, is very rich for a working man, and he has not limited his only daughter's wardrobe. And Sarah, after an hour spent upon her toilet in the afternoon hours, will frequently arouse the envy of the simple village girls by the astonishing amount of finery she can produce upon certain occasions.

But for my part I think that if some of the time spent in arraying herself in these unnecessary adornments, were devoted to repairing her morning gowns, it would help to render her appearance more decent and becoming ; but I must not speak

too much of Sarah McLean. It is not wise to talk too freely upon such a sore subject; for long before one is aware of it, such talks lead to harsh and unkind feelings, and we may even, in describing the faults and failings of others, speak of them in such a way as to generate "roots of bitterness," which "springing up" may give much "trouble" to ourselves and others. Of the manner in which I came into Sarah's possession you will hear later on.



CHAPTER XX.

THE RENT BECOMES DUE.



ATHER," said Kate, a little nervously one morning, "do you know our rent is due to-morrow?"

"Due to-morrow, Kate!" repeated Mr. Grahame, with a slight start. "We have not been here three months."

"Three months to-morrow, father," said Kate quietly. "And Mrs. Barnes came up last night to tell me that she should be glad of the rent before four o'clock in the afternoon."

"How much is it, Kate? I almost forget," said Mr. Grahame, with an anxious look.

"Four pounds, seventeen shillings, and sixpence," answered Kate quietly.

"I don't know what I shall do about it, Kate," said her father, after a few moments' awkward silence. "I had no idea it was so nearly due as that." And he gave a glance towards his daughter which clearly proved that the matter had come upon him unawares.

"I was afraid you might have forgotten it, father,"

said Kate, as she glanced at the anxious brow, and the troubled expression of his countenance.

“Kate,” said Mr. Grahame, with a great deal of reluctance in his tone, after another awkward pause of several minutes’ duration, “couldn’t you lend me the money for a little while?”

“Willingly, father, if I had it,” replied my young mistress readily; “but Maude and Carrie’s things have cost me so much this week, that I have only one sovereign left.”

“What things do you mean, dear?” inquired Mr. Grahame with a little surprise.

“I always send them their summer dresses, when it is time to leave off their winter ones,” replied Kate. “Do you not get well paid for your work, father?” asked Kate, as he was about to quit the table some minutes afterwards. A strange look of hesitation and evident reluctance to answer the question put to him passed over his features; but the usual expression was rapidly assumed as Mr. Grahame turned to my young mistress, saying,

“What makes you ask such a question as that, Kate?”

“I thought I had been so careful,” replied my young mistress, as the tears glistened in her eyes. “I could not think where the money had gone.”

“Kate,” responded her father as he drew her to his side, and his manly lips quivered with pain as he spoke. “Kate, I will not deceive you any longer. I have tried to keep something from you, but it is better you should know it. I wouldn’t have told you, Kate, but for this. You remember Smart, with whom I lodged just before we came here; he got me to put my name to a bill for him, in fact I was surety for him. Some weeks ago he disappeared from Worcester, and, as you may suppose, the payment fell upon me.”

“Was it much, father?” asked Kate, as she understood now what had been her father’s trouble.

“Forty pounds, dear; if it had not been for that, I should not have allowed you to deny yourself as you have done since we came here. I am not blind, Kate.”

“Oh! father,” said Kate, as she clasped his arm within her own, “how thankful I am that we have not spent more than we could help. I wish that my salary were due at the Priory!”

“Your salary, Kate!” repeated Mr. Grahame, as if a ray of hope had shone through the darkness. “That must be due; you went there the same time that we came here.”

“No, father, a fortnight later; and I could not

ask for it beforehand." And Kate's tremulous voice spoke volumes. Eagerly and anxiously did she scan her father's face as he re-entered the room at the usual hour for dinner; but no beams of hope shone from the clouded countenance, to give notice that a remedy had been discovered. And very silently the meal passed away. Both were busy with their own thoughts, not knowing what was best to say for the other's comfort.

"Isn't there something in the Bible, father," asked Kate timidly, later on in the evening, "about what you said this morning."

"What do you mean, my child?" asked Mr. Grahame with a start, for, buried in his own reflections, he had forgotten his daughter's presence.

"I did not quite understand what you said about putting your name to a bill; but you used another term. You said you had been 'surety' for the man you mentioned."

"Yes, Kate," replied the father sadly; "I ought to have been wiser. There is something somewhere in the scriptures about the subject, but I don't remember where. If I had thought of that, it might have saved me from all this perhaps."

"Shall I find it, father? it might help you another time."

"I shouldn't do such a thing again, Kate; I have had enough experience of this matter."

"I should like to find it for both our sakes, dear father," said Kate in a low, clear tone. "We never know how a verse of the Bible may keep us in our every-day life, until we stand in need of it."

"There's one verse I have thought of many a time since I have had to pay this sum, Kate," said Mr. Grahame mournfully. "It has been in my mind sleeping and waking: 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' I have found it very true in my own case."

With her heart full of tender pity for her father, Kate rose from her seat in search of the volume she needed. It took some time to find the passage, for though she had an indistinct impression that there were words of counsel on the subject, she was not sure which would be the most probable place to find them recorded. But it is good to search the scriptures, and persevering research brings its own reward. Sooner or later we find what we seek; and Kate's eyes rested at last upon Proverbs vi. 1-5.

"My son if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the

words of thy mouth. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go humble thyself and make sure thy friend. Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler."

She also found in her Bible the following verses.

"He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it, and he that hateth suretyship is sure. A man that is void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend. Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts."

"Father," said my dear young mistress to Mr. Grahame, as he was on the point of quitting the breakfast table next morning, "I can think of only one way to help you out of this difficulty." And as she spoke, she placed me gently in her father's hand. Her face was very pale, and from the tremulous tone of her voice, it was evident that the surrender must have cost her not a little.

"Kate, my child! my kind Kate!" was all that Mr. Grahame could utter in his astonishment. "You must not do this."

"Father, I must," replied Kate in a low but firm tone. "It is the only way now. I will buy it back

at the first opportunity." And with a few more lowly-spoken, but earnest words, Mr. Grahame was prevailed upon to receive me into his possession.

Soon I was borne along Foregate street, past the busy post-office, near Shrub Hill, until at length I found myself in the hands of a stranger. Around me, in all corners of the place I had entered, were articles of various sorts, some arranged on shelves, and some lying in terrible disorder, looking as if they had been the resting-place for the surly cur who was doing duty at the door-step. Very carefully the sinister-looking shopman examined me for a minute or so, and after handing Mr. Grahame some gold, I was left laid on the shelf of his dirty uncomfortable shop.



CHAPTER XXI.

SCENES WHICH I SAW FROM MY CORNER.



S I grew more accustomed to the peculiar light of the dismal-looking place into which I had entered, I began to see more clearly the class of articles by which I was surrounded. Garments of all description—some astonishing me by the richness of their texture—lay around me upon all sides. Here was the sable cloak, there the velvet robe. Here the set of real Brussels lace, there the ivory fan. Here the set of choicely-bound volumes, there the vases of rare china. And in and out amongst the curious medley were to be found, commoner garments of coarser manufacture.

Brooches, bracelets, lockets, scarf-pins, and rings of every description lay in profusion in the glass case adjoining the one in which I had been placed. Guns, swords, pistols, richly-chased powder-flasks, men's clothes, blankets, sheets, table-cloths and counterpanes were in abundance; but what particularly struck me was, that no customers seemed to avail themselves of this comprehensive store.

Not a single person had entered the shop either in the morning or afternoon of the day since the departure of Mr. Grahame; but as the evening drew on, one and another stole in.

Oh, the tale of want and misery I read upon some of those human faces! Pale, sickly women, with starving children; old, decrepit men, with scarcely strength to enter; a few shabbily-dressed people bearing the marks of better days. As the daylight died away, and the newly-lighted street lamps shone out in the dull, narrow thoroughfare, visitors became more frequent; and before the shutters were put up for the night, I had discovered that the various customers, though of different external appearances, came but with one object—to sell and not to buy.

“If we don’t do much in the day, we make up for it at night,” the owner was heard to say to his wife, one night after an unusually busy evening. “What a sale we shall have at the close of the year!”

With very slight exceptions, each day’s scenes appeared to be but a repetition of the one before. Nothing to break the monotony of the weary hours. No bright face to remind me of my much-loved Kate; no soft, sweet voice to tell me that she was

near. Three weeks passed away, when one morning Mr. Grahame stepped into the almost empty shop. Laying some pieces of gold upon the counter, he silently produced a small paper, which the sinister-looking shop-keeper proceeded to study with evident reluctance; but after a time he appeared to be satisfied with its contents, and after another few moments, I was rather roughly taken from the case in which I had remained during the whole of the three weeks.

“There, dear Kate,” said Mr. Grahame, as he placed me in his daughter’s hands; “I had a little difficulty in getting it again; but I trust that never more you may be caused such a sacrifice through me.” And as Kate clasped me tightly in her hand, I saw the bright eyes dimmed with tears which were with difficulty restrained from falling.

From the conversation which took place on that pleasant July evening, I learned that Kate had only that morning received her quarter’s salary from Mrs. Monkton, of the Priory, and that the first use she had made of it had been to restore me to her own keeping. It was not that she valued me for ornament; but links of memory connected with my presence were very precious to her affectionate heart.

Few changes had taken place during my brief absence ; and in a short time after my restoration, a pleasant restful period of five weeks' holidays followed, which Kate was to spend in the "little spot in Surrey where she would always be welcome." Delightful visits to places of interest in the surrounding neighbourhood, made deeply interesting by Mr. Ashworth's animated descriptions of events connected with them, occupied much of their time. But Kate's sweetest enjoyment was to sit out on one of the luxurious garden-chairs, and to hold conversations with her dear old friend, concerning the sayings and doings of former times.

"Well, darling, when are you coming back to my nest ?" asked Madame playfully of Kate, on the morning of the day appointed for her return.

"When I see no other work for me to do, dear Madame," was the reply.

"And when will that be ?" inquired Madame, as she with her own hands prepared some sandwiches, and placed them in Kate's travelling-bag.

"When the Lord sees fit; not before, dear Madame," replied Kate, as she warmly thanked her friend for her kindness.

"You have enjoyed this nest of mine, have you,

darling?" asked Madame, as she closed the door of the cab which my young mistress had entered.

"I cannot tell you how much; thanks, and thanks, and thanks," was the hearty response.

"Well then, we shall look out for you again soon, darling." And with a parting wave of the hand, Elmtree was left behind.



CHAPTER XXII.

A TRIP TO MALVERN HILLS WITH THE "NEW PUPILS."



OU look much better for the change, dear," said Mr. Grahame, as he and his daughter sat together over the tea-table.
"Do you feel stronger, Kate?"

"Much stronger, and so rested, father," replied Kate, as she resumed her old task of making tea.
"I feel ready for work again."

"I am glad of it," said Mr. Grahame with a smile. "There is work in store for you, if you are prepared to undertake the charge of two rather overgrown pupils."

"Two more pupils! Who are they?" asked Kate with a puzzled look, as she tried to read the playful expression on her father's face.

"Maude and Carrie are coming up for a week's holiday," said Mr. Grahame, with a merry laugh. "I thought you would be surprised. I have asked Mrs. Barnes if she could spare us another bedroom for that time, and she says she can. So to-morrow your new pupils will arrive."

"That is good news, father," responded Kate;

"but how is it they can come now? I thought their first holidays were arranged for Christmas."

"It seems some alterations are being made where Maude is," said her father; "and as they are short of sleeping room during the changes, Mr. Rushton decided that four or five of the assistants might have a week's holiday at once."

"And Carrie, father?" asked Kate.

"Ah! That is my doing," said Mr. Grahame. "When I found Maude was coming, I wrote to Mrs. Clarke begging for the same treat for Carrie; and she very kindly consented."

"How pleasant it will be for us all to be together!" remarked Kate, as, the repast over, she rose and commenced her customary duties.

Maude and Carrie, now grown into fine, strong girls, arrived late on the following evening. Unlike my quiet, gentle, young mistress, they were both a little boisterous in the expression of their happiness; and once or twice in the course of the evening I wondered if they would never grow tired of the merry peals of laughter in which they continually indulged. But in spite of it all, every one seemed very happy, and while they were with us the days passed as if by magic.

"Girls," said Mr. Grahame, a day or two after

their arrival, "it would do us all good to have a day at Malvern. What do you say to setting off this lovely morning?"

"Oh, father!" "Will you take us?" "How beautiful!" were the varied exclamations; but I saw Kate give an earnest, inquiring glance at her father's face, which he seemed to understand.

"It's all right, dear," he said in answer to her questioning eyes. "I finished paying that while you were away. Suppose I make you cashier for the day. I have not had my holiday yet, so I'm going to have one to-day." And as Mr. Grahame spoke he placed a half-sovereign in Kate's hands. It was, indeed, a happy party that quitted the house about an hour later. Past the station of Henley, past pleasant-looking, little villas lying so peacefully in their gay gardens, and the train drew up at the Malvern Railway Station.

Oh, the pleasant, little adventures, as they climbed the steep hill; and the grateful rest at the famous St. Anne's well! Oh, the refreshing draughts of the clear, cold, sparkling water, which, as Kate remarked, seemed to incite them to fresh attempts in climbing! Once at the top their eyes might wander uninterruptedly over the magnificent expanse of country seen to such advantage from

the spot where they were seated. Mr. Grahame could point out to his daughters the landmarks by which some adjoining county could be distinguished. A spire here, a tower or monument there, all of which, the day being very clear, were easily discernible.

"How far do these hills extend, father?" asked Carrie, after they had feasted their eyes for some time in this manner.

"I think they cover a distance of nearly ten miles," said her father, as he pointed out the Herefordshire Beacon to Maude, who had been inquiring about it.

"Isn't there something about these hills in that piece we learnt at Madame Moret's, Carrie?" asked Maude a moment later.

"Yes, something about 'twelve counties;' but I don't remember what," said Carrie, as she took another long, thoughtful look from east to west. "Kate can tell us, I dare say."

"I hope you remember other things you learnt at school better than you seem to remember poetry," said Kate with a smile.

"What do they mean, Kate?" asked Mr. Grahame, turning to his eldest daughter.

"I suspect they are referring to Macaulay's poem

on ‘The Armada,’ ” replied Kate. “ One of the stanzas is :

‘And on, and on, without a pause, untired they bounded still ;
All night from tower to tower they sprang, all night from hill
to hill ;
Till the proud peak unfurled the flag o’er Derwent’s rocky dales ;
Till, like volcanoes, flared to heaven the stormy hills of Wales ;
Till *twelve fair counties* saw the blaze on *Malvern’s lonely height* ;
Till streamed in crimson in the wind, the Wrekin’s crest of light.”

“ Are twelve counties really to be seen from here ? ” asked Maude, as Kate finished her recital.

“ Yes,” replied her father ; “ but I cannot point them all out to you.”

“ What is the height of the loftiest peak ? ” asked Carrie.

“ Well, really, I am not sure that I ever heard,” replied Mr. Grahame ; “ but I dare say our little schoolmistress here could tell us. Could you, Kate ? ”

“ I have read that the hill, at its greatest height, is one thousand four hundred and forty-four feet,” answered Kate.

“ What place is that, father ? ” asked Carrie, who seemed to have unlimited questions at command. And she pointed as she spoke to a building half-hidden from view, far beneath them at the foot of the mountain.

"That is the old abbey," replied Mr. Grahame, as he followed the direction of her finger. Formerly there were two abbeys about three miles apart; but since the dissolution nothing remains of this one except the gateway of the abbey, and the church. Part of it was a religious cell for hermits before the time of William the Conqueror; and the tower was built during his reign. I have been told it is as broad as it is high; but I am not sure of that fact. Sixty-three feet, I think."

"You have a good memory, father," said Maude, as she nestled up close to her father's side.

"Not a very bad one, dear," said Mr. Grahame, as he took the laughing girl's hand in his own, and looked into the bright, young face; "but it cost me a good bit of trouble as a boy to cultivate it."

"Cultivate memory, father!" repeated Carrie in surprise.

"Yes; when I was a lad, my brother John and I would walk rapidly past a shop window, give a glance at the contents in passing, and then vie with each other in endeavouring to remember the greatest number of articles exposed there."

"I never heard of such a thing," said Maude; "but how could you decide?"

"When each had enumerated all that he could

remember, we used to walk back again, stand for a few moments, and see what we had omitted. We did this so often, that at length I found my memory much strengthened. It was capital exercise, I can assure you."

"I should think it was," echoed both the girls in a breath.

"I wonder what Kate is thinking about," said Maude, as they were seated on another part of the hill in the latter part of the afternoon. "What is it, Kate?" And Kate, whose eyes had been enjoying the varied features of the landscape, now lit up with the rays of the declining sun, was roused from the reverie into which she had fallen, and responded to her sister's inquiry.

"I was thinking of Moses on the heights of Mount Nebo, when he was taking a look at the Promised Land. It came into my mind what a beautiful country lies stretched out before us! And if this is so lovely, what must have been the Land of Promise which God Himself pointed out to His servant Moses!"



CHAPTER XXIII.

OLD MR. HARBURY AGAIN.

OVING hearts had been gathered by the mighty Spirit, God the Holy Ghost, to celebrate the death of their Redeemer. No spacious or costly building marked the spot chosen for such a holy purpose. No wonderfully-carved, massive pillars supported the roof beneath which those loyal hearts had assembled. The lofty tones of the majestic organ pealed not upon their ears; neither did the light, streaming in through richly-stained glass windows, arrest the eye by its effect upon the marble pavement.

The building into which I had entered in company with my dear, young mistress, bore no external marks of the purpose to which it was devoted. Except for an announcement at the door, printed in large, clear, black letters, that the Gospel of the Grace of God would be preached there in the evening, it would have been easy to have passed that unpretending entrance, deeming it none other than an ordinary dwelling-place.

Rows of plain wooden benches, arranged in regular order from side to side, extended over the greater part of the room. But beyond these, on a table covered with a spotlessly-white cloth, lay the emblems of the death of the Holy One that redeemed company had met to remember.

A hallowed sense that He Himself was present in their "midst," seemed to pervade the hearts of all who shared in that simple service. Although on our way hither we had passed so many hundreds of people, of all ages, ranks, and conditions, not more than eighty persons had been attracted to this unpretending spot; but upon the countenances of these, in a greater or lesser degree, there was an expression of some inward joy of which they and their Lord alone were fully conscious.

Here and there, I did see one or two sad-looking faces. These, I thought to myself, looked like persons who bore their own burdens, instead of "casting them upon him who cared for them;" but even these forgot, for a time at least, themselves and their daily anxieties. Holy passages of the living word were read in tones that told of the way they spoke to the reader's own heart; joyful, grateful thanksgivings flowed spontaneously from lips ready to "give God the glory"; and sweet

strains of heart-music rose in harmony from the voices of the worshippers.

Then came that precious, sweetly solemn moment when, with bowed heads and hearts, those faithful few "celebrated the Lord's death." The broken bread, the poured out wine, His own divinely instituted symbols of what it cost Him to work out their redemption. Holy, hallowing, chastened joy filled their hearts as they thought of the wondrous love of Him who died for them. No sound broke the sweet, solemn stillness which succeeded the celebration. Sweeter than any words of theirs was it to hear the Lord's own voice, repeating in their ears, "*Eat, O friends; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*" Silently they, indeed, "*sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to their taste.*"

Quite a quarter of an hour had elapsed when a clear, manly, well-remembered voice gave vent to the blissful gratitude of the worshipping hearts present. I felt Kate give a slight start, as she recognised the voice of my dear old friend, Mr. Harbury, of Barton, who, with a voice that had the same native originality of accent as of old, proceeded slowly and reverently to read the hymn :—

"Thy Name we bless, Lord Jesus,
That Name all names excelling,

How great Thy love all praise above,
Should every tongue be telling.
The Father's loving kindness,
In giving Thee, was shewn us ;
Now by Thy blood redeem'd to God,
As children He doth own us.

“ From that eternal glory
Thou hadst with God the Father,
He gave His Son that He in one
His children all might gather ;
Our sins were all laid on Thee,
God's wrath Thou hast endurèd ;
It was for us Thou sufferedst thus,
And hast our peace securèd.

“ Thou from the dead wast raisèd—
And from all condemnation
Thy saints are free, as risen in Thee,
Head of the new creation !
On high Thou hast ascended,
To God's right hand in heaven,
The Lamb once slain, alive again,—
To Thee all power is given.”

Then every member of that redeemed congregation rose, and such a strain of heart-felt adoration welled forth from their glad hearts, that one could fain have listened to it again and again. Another joyful lifting up of holy hands in thanksgiving, adoration and prayer, and the members of that

peaceful assembly must needs depart to their varied homes, yet they left with hearts strengthened, and spirits refreshed, encouraged to tread yet more firmly the desert path which lay between them and the “rest that remaineth.”

Kate was now advancing towards Mr. Harbury. Ah! there was the honest face; the silver grey hair that only partially covered the bald head; and also the same cheerful expression of countenance which had characterised him in the days of our first acquaintance. No glance of recognition, however, passed over the pleasant face, as Kate held out her hand to him saying:

“I suppose you have forgotten me, Mr. Harbury, though I have not forgotten you.” A slightly puzzled look, as if some very indistinct remembrance of face or feature were recalled to his mind, passed over the venerable face, as with a deferential manner he replied,

“I hope you’ll excuse me getting up to speak to you, Miss; but I can’t give myself the pleasure of recollecting you.”

“You would have remembered my dear mother, Mr. Harbury,” replied Kate. “You have not forgotten Mrs. Grahame of Claverton.”

“Never!” said Mr. Harbury emphatically, as he

gazed at my young mistress with a keen, searching look. And a smile of slight recognition played upon his lips as he added, "You are her —"

"Yes, I am her daughter, Kate Grahame," replied Kate, finishing the sentence which the old man had commenced. "You do not recollect me, do you?"

"You were only a child last time I saw your dear mother, Miss; that was many years agone."

"Yes; I know it is a long time ago, Mr. Harbury," said Kate. "Many things have happened since you were at Claverton last."

"And amongst them, I heard that your dear mother had been taken to rest," said my old master in a gentle tone. "She's at rest now, Miss, with the Lord who died for her."

"Do you remember this little watch you sold her?" asked Kate, as she drew me from her pocket.

"Aye, aye; very well!" replied Mr. Harbury, as he took me in his hands and examined me. "This was the last purchase she made from me. Troubles had come before my next visit to Claverton, Miss."

"You heard that, too, did you?" responded Kate; "but the Lord was very good to us. We have much to bless Him for."

"Yes, yes; bless Him for it!" ejaculated Mr. Harbury warmly. "And how did the watch work,

Miss ? " he inquired after a moment's pause, during which he had been turning me over and over in his hands with great care.

" It could not have worked better than it has, Mr. Harbury," said Kate, as she took me from his hand. " It has been such a comfort to me in more ways than one."

" I am so glad, Miss ; so glad ! Who would have thought after so many years agone, I should have met Mrs. Grahame's daughter in such a manner ? But I am so glad to see you, Miss ; so glad ! And I am very pleased to know the watch went all right ; I felt sure it would do so, when I recommended it."

" Have you been unwell long ? " asked Kate, as she cast an inquiring glance at a pair of crutches lying close at hand.

" I have taken to use them for nearly two years agone, Miss," replied my old master. " It was a sore trial to find my strength going, as I did at first ; but now I can get about when I'm helped to start properly with their assistance. And that's a mercy I praise Him for every day." And with another hearty shake of the hand, and an invitation to Mr. Harbury to call in and see her father at their present lodging in Berkeley Street, we parted.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“REPENTANCE NOT TO BE REPENTED OF.”



MUST touch but briefly upon the few years which followed my encounter with my old friend, Mr. Harbury, in that quiet building in Worcester. My dear young mistress (I scarcely think I ought to call her *young* now; but I have grown so accustomed to the term, that you will forgive me) no longer resided in the old, respectable-looking house in Berkeley Street. Acting upon the suggestion of some of her friends, Kate had, three or four years before the time to which I must now refer, opened a day-school not far from the Priory.

Quite a year before this, Mrs. Monkton's daughters, now developed into well-bred and fairly educated young ladies, had been sent to the Continent, in order to acquire that perfection of accent in continental languages which can be attained only by intercourse in foreign society. But if they were gone, there were other pupils to take their places under Kate's care.

A sister of Mr. Monkton, residing in the vicinity,

hearing of the plan, at once declared that Kate should have all her children—four in number—on the condition that Miss Grahame should effect as great an improvement in mind and manners in them, as she had seen produced in such wilful, pleasure-loving, little ladies, as her three nieces had formerly been. And Kate had blushingly promised to do her best. Only six, eager, little faces looked into the countenance of the “new mistress” upon the first morning of Kate’s school responsibilities ; but the earnestness with which she addressed that little party, at the close of the morning chapter, shewed what a precious charge she thought each little one to be.

And as the lessons over, Kate drew me out of her pocket, and thought of her own incompetency to fulfil her new duties, unless continually guided and kept by her loving Lord, she softly repeated to herself, “*Yes, He will be with me in this new path. As long as time lasts, He will be with me, as He was with her.*”

Only a few moments later, and one of the little group stepped forward and asked permission to replace Kate’s Bible upon the bookshelf ; and in doing so a faded sprig of mignonette fell upon the table. Lovingly, tenderly, was the faded blossom

restored to the leaves between which it had lain for so long a period, and the remembrance of precious words spoken at the time when it had been placed in her hands by the beloved departed one, retained a hallowed influence over Kate throughout that memorable day.

Kate's school soon prospered. There was no need now for the household duties to fall upon her shoulders; for a neat-looking young woman of robust appearance, who might generally be seen actively engaged in the comfortable kitchen, appeared quite competent to do all that was necessary for the comfort of that small household.

And Carrie, Maude, Sydney? you will ask, what of them? Ah! Maude's once bright face now lay beneath the sod close to her mother's side. Only a short but rapid decline, following a cold, which had seemed, as she herself expressed it, of "very little consequence." But short as those few days of illness had seemed to the loving ones who gathered round the young girl's death-bed, they were long enough to test the reality of the faith of that young girl in Him who had died for her sins, and who rose again for her justification. Ah! Maude's early death cast, indeed, another shadow over the Grahame family; but He who sent the

sorrow, knew how to fill their aching hearts with the sense of His own love.

Carrie was still very happy in the same occupation, though not in the same spot where we last saw her. Gerald's wife had earnestly solicited that Carrie should take up her residence with them for a time, and look out for an engagement in the town of Swindon. In this she had been successful; and very pleasant it was for her to know that a kind, loving welcome always awaited her, at her brother's dwelling. Gerald's children, too, soon learned to look forward to the days when aunt Carrie might be expected to pay a visit to them; and very merry were the shouts of greeting always awaiting her arrival.

Another visitor had also been entertained in Gerald's home during the summer of the preceding year. The visitor was, a tall, fine-looking man, whose features bore a strong resemblance to those of his generous host; but a look of sadness upon his countenance, even when lit up with a smile at some of Gerald's playful sallies as to his "Americanisms," could not but impress a stranger with the thought that the remembrance of some sad page of life's history was seldom absent from his mind.

Yes, it was Herbert! Very much had he to tell of the long, long years of exile in the New World, during which his heart yearned with an intense craving for another look at the dear, familiar faces. Gaining leave of absence from the government works, with which he had now been connected for seven years, with a full heart he had set sail for the dearly-loved shores of old England. Mr. Grahame, Kate, Carrie, and Sydney had all met together at Gerald's home; the first time of a family reunion since Mrs. Grahame's death.

Yes! They had met once more; but not as in the days of old. Two loved ones were absent. And Herbert, big, strong Herbert, leaned his head on his hands, and sobbed like a child, when Kate, with her arm round his sunburnt neck, told him of his mother's dying message.

"She thought of me almost to the last then?" Herbert asked of his gentle sister.

"Yes; almost with her dying breath, your name was upon her lips, Herbert," Kate had replied.

"Ah! Kate," he had said in a tone that went to her heart, "*Only God knows what remorse I have suffered for those days. But He is merciful, and full of compassion. And as a poor lost sinner I have cast*



SCENERY NEAR ELMTREE.

Face page 179.

*myself at the Saviour's feet, and have heard Him say,
‘Thy sins be forgiven thee.’”*

The days of his brief visit were, however, over, and after his return to America, letters of a more hopeful tone had found their way more frequently than before to the various dwellings of his sisters and brother.

* * * *

The pleasant home at Elmtree, in Surrey, now owned a little fair-haired girl of nine years old, whose merry laugh and childish mirth, only made it pleasanter still. For Kate had had many a romp with her little namesake in the dear old garden ; and many a kiss had “auntie Kate” had from the cherry lips behind the garden seat.

With pleased eyes, Mr. and Mrs. Ashworth would look on, and the fond mother would sometimes lean forward and whisper in Kate’s ears, “Why don’t you come and live with your little sister, darling ?” And Kate would look up with a sunny smile and answer, “When my work is done, dear Madame ; but I don’t see the end of it yet.”



CHAPTER XXV.

MY LAST DAYS.

HE bright days of autumn had passed away, and already the cold winter winds were beginning to make themselves felt. Pleasant-looking fires were blazing in many a home; but perhaps in none did it look more cheery than in the large, airy schoolroom in which Kate was seated at her desk, busily occupied in correcting a pile of exercise books which lay before her. At another table in the same apartment, was seated a tall, rather slightly made, young lady, similarly engaged.

A look at the gentle, refined face, and you would have recognised Adeline Montague. Yes; she had been Kate's assistant teacher for some time; and it was manifest that the good work commenced at Markton had been carried on in her soul, and that she was indeed a true and lowly disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. But her usually pale face is very pale to-night; and the contrast between it and the deep mourning robe she has worn since her sister's death is very striking.

My dear young mistress had noticed the anxious look upon the young girl's usually cheerful countenance, and placing herself by her side, gently asked, "Adeline dear, what is it that causes you so much distress?" A sob was the only answer for a moment; and Kate, after a kind touch of her gentle hand upon the bowed head, continued kindly, "Did your letter of this morning contain anything that troubles you?"

"Yes, dear Miss Grahame," replied Adeline, as she drew a black-edged letter from her pocket, and striving to recover self-possession placed it in the hands of my young mistress. "I cannot tell you, but will you read it for yourself?"

And Kate, with one hand resting encouragingly upon Adeline Montague's shoulder, made herself acquainted with the contents of the letter. The writing was that of a man; but judging by the feeble, irregular, broken sentences of which the letter was composed, the hand that penned it must have been weak and failing. Indeed it was an effort to Kate to grasp the meaning of the incoherent sentences.

"My poor child," she said, as she replaced the letter in Adeline's hands, "the Lord will help you to bear this great trouble; only He can comfort you."

“Miss Grahame,” said Adeline, in a tremulous voice, “if my father does not pay that debt by the appointed day, can they—will they—make him leave the house?” And Adeline’s sobs broke forth afresh at the thought of her aged father in such a condition.

“I know little of these things, dear Adeline,” said Kate, in a gentle, sympathising voice; “but I fear so. What kind of man is the landlord who has threatened this?”

“Hard, selfish, unkind, I fear,” was the reply.

“Then I think, Adeline, there is, humanly speaking, little hope. He will, I fear, carry out his threat. What has been the cause of your father getting behind in his payments to him?”

“Illness, Miss Grahame; my two youngest brothers have always been very delicate, but they have been very ill this last summer. Expensive nourishment was ordered for them both, and my father procured it for them. And Margaret’s death—”

“How are the boys now, Adeline?” inquired Kate, as the young girl paused and turned towards her.

“They can never be much better in this world, Miss Grahame,” responded Adeline in a sad tone;

“but I was thinking I have no right to trouble you with my sorrow.”

“I wish I could help you, dear Adeline,” said my young mistress kindly.

“You are too good to me, Miss Grahame,” replied Adeline.

“One thing is certain, dear; and that is that the Lord will not allow anything to come upon His children unless He sees fit. Your father is one of His children, Addie; is he not?”

“Oh yes! but I cannot bear to think of him being turned out of the house in which he has lived for so many years. If it were only in my power to save him from this fresh trouble!” And Adeline’s grief again overcame her powers of utterance.

“Dear Addie,” said Kate, in a low, tender voice, “I feel for you very much. You know that during these last few months some of the school accounts have been paid so irregularly that I have had a little difficulty in meeting my own expenses. People so often forget school bills. Were it not for this, I might have helped you; but let us pray about it, dear. The prayer of faith in a living, loving Lord, Addie, is a wonderful lever to lift troubles off our tried spirits. ‘*Casting all your care upon Him,*’ He

says. But we must get very near to Him, to do it, dear ; shall we ask Him now, Addie ? ”

“ The Lord will bless you for your kindness,” said Adeline Montague, as they knelt side by side in the quiet schoolroom. “ Ask for help for my dear father, and also that I may be made subject to His will in all things.”

Not many sentences, not continually repeated pleadings, but only a few earnest, yet simple words, telling the blessed Hearer and Answerer of prayer the trouble that lay on her young teacher’s heart, and committing all the circumstances connected with it into the loving care of Him who loved her and gave Himself for her, both rose from their knees with the peace of God filling their hearts.

“ There is one thing more to do, Adeline,” said Kate, in a low, sweet tone, as she prepared to quit the apartment. “ Do you remember what David said, ‘ In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will *look up* ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Look up,’ dear Miss Grahame ; has that any special meaning there ? ”

“ Yes, dear ; it seems to my mind to imply that David not only made his prayer to the Lord, but he also looked up, or in other words waited and

looked for the answer. That is your part now, Addie."

Kate had retired to her bedchamber more than an hour, and doubtless all other members of the household were fast asleep, except my dear young mistress. Her mind was dwelling upon the sorrow which Adeline's letter had disclosed. After leaving the schoolroom she had taken another survey of the few coins in her purse.

But the purse had been closed firmly; yet with much inward regret, as I heard her say, "It would not be honest to take it from that. I could not pay for the things I require, and my Bible tells me to 'owe no man anything . . . Obedience is better than sacrifice.' The Lord can do the best thing for him without my help."

Yes, He could; but in the days of His manifestation in flesh, did not the Lord Jesus ever delight to make His disciples sharers of His joy in distributing His bounties? And Kate's thoughts reverted to this fact, as she lay musing and wakeful far into the still, quiet hours of the night. Was there nothing she could give up which might help the aged Christian in his extremity?

Jewellery she had none; no rings, brooches, ear-rings, or bracelets formed any part of her simple

toilet. For Kate had learned to love that inner adornment of the "*meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.*" But as she had extinguished the lamp by her side, her eye fell upon me, and as it did so, a sudden thought had been awakened in her mind by my presence. Clasping me in her hands very tightly, she laid her head upon her pillow, and the firm, yet gentle, pressure with which her fingers retained their hold, proved that her thoughts were still concerning me.

After a few minutes' deep, earnest thought, she was heard to say, "Precious Lord Jesus, this watch is but a small thing, but I joyfully give it *for Thy sake*. Hast Thou not said, '*Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me*'? To-morrow morning, Adeline shall send it to her father."

And with sweet thoughts of what Mr. Montague might be saved from, Kate slept at last. But her hand did not loosen its hold of me till the morning sun streaming in through her chamber window awakened her to a consciousness that another day's duties were before her. An hour later I gazed for the last time upon the peaceful countenance of my dear young mistress, my much-loved Kate, as she placed me in Adeline Montague's hand, with

a small wooden box containing a quantity of pink wadding, saying :

“There, Addie dear ; there is the answer to what we asked last night. How sufficient He is for all things. Nothing is too hard for the Lord.”

* * * *

I will not attempt to describe the wonder and surprise of Mr. Montague, as the postman introduced me into his house two days after I bade a last farewell to my dear young mistress. I found I had, through the medium of the post-office letter-bag, travelled safely to a small town in the north of Scotland. It was with great difficulty even after I had been carefully unpacked, and examined over and over again, that the poor old gentleman could comprehend that I was indeed his lawful possession.

“Read dear Addie’s letter again, wife,” he said, as he looked in wondering astonishment at the two sickly youths seated at the breakfast table.

“I said help would come if we asked for it, father,” said the elder of the two lads, whose deep, hollow cough was sufficient proof that his earthly days were numbered.

“You’re often right, Gordon,” rejoined his brother in an undertone, “about those sort of things, I mean.”

“We can’t go far wrong, Sandy, when we think what we are to Him. Don’t you remember directly the children of Israel were under the shelter of the blood in the land of Egypt, how God began to say, ‘this is mine,’ and ‘that is mine’? Those words comforted me when I feared Mr. McLean would come and carry off father’s things. Said I to myself, ‘If father belongs to the Lord, He won’t let anybody take his things away without his leave.’”

“I was almost too fearful to think of that,” said the old man slowly; “but I can see it now. And more than that, the money will be all paid yet. This will satisfy him till I can take him a little cash. Let us bless the Lord for all His mercies; and you, wife, while I go and take the watch up the glen, you write a bit of a note to thank the lady for her goodness to us. She will get a blessing for it presently, somehow or other.”

Very gladly would I have lingered a little longer in that interesting family; but evidently Mr. Montague was not willing that I should do so.

“Then you won’t sell the watch as Addie says, and take the money?” asked his wife, as he took me in his hand, and prepared to depart.

“No, wife; I think this’ll please him best. He’s

mighty fond of his daughter Sarah ; and though it looks much too good for a thoughtless girl as she is, it may likely enough please him to give it to her." Mr. Montague was right in his surmise. Mr. McLean, with all his harshness and unkindness, had nevertheless one vulnerable point, and that was, as Mr. Montague had intimated, his love for his daughter Sarah. Only a few moments after my new friend's departure, and I was placed round the neck of Sarah McLean. And in her possession I remain to the present day.

And now in taking my leave of you, dear readers, I render you my dying thanks for the interest you have taken in my simple story. That you should have been so tolerant to the words and crotchets of an *old watch*, is indeed a proof of your kind consideration towards me, which demands my gratitude.

But what good will it do, if you do not take to heart the lessons which I have tried to teach? Can you not gather some crumbs of truth and wisdom from my unadorned narration?

And as I take my last, lingering glances at the characters I have brought before you, I can only trust that my simple story will not have been in vain. Depend upon it that the Herberts, the

Adelines, the Kates, are *nearer* to you than you imagine. But there is another and a sweeter thought also, that there is a loving, tender heart waiting to receive you, a pitying, compassionate Saviour; beneath the shelter of whose wings you may pass through this world without a fear, without a care, without a wave to ruffle the peace which He bestoweth; and which is but the sweet earnest of that ocean of love and delight into which He Himself will usher all who rest in His love, for eternity.

But I am tired and weary; surely the wheel must be breaking at the cistern—the golden bowl be breaking at the fountain. Yes; I see that the doors are being shut in the streets, that the sound of the grinding is low. The daughters of music are brought low; but for me there is no fear of that which is high.



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