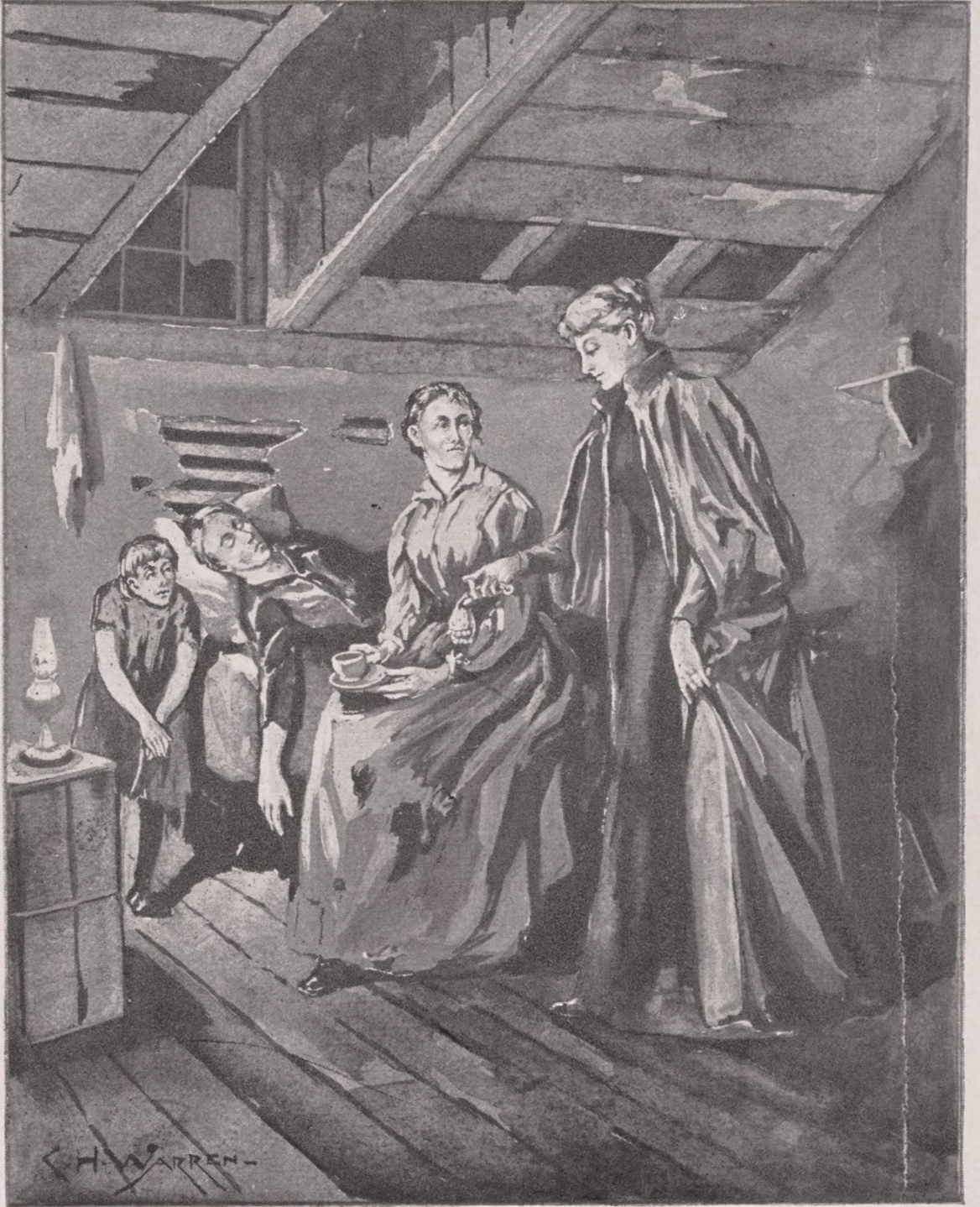


A NEW SAMARITAN







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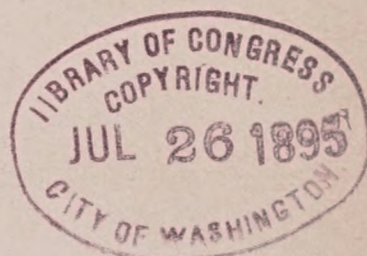
THE STORY OF AN HEIRESS.

BY

JULIA MACNAIR WRIGHT.

AUTHOR OF "ADAM'S DAUGHTERS," "MR. GROSVENOR'S DAUGHTER," "ON A SNOW-BOUND TRAIN," ETC.

"Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord."



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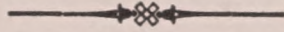
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A NEW SAMARITAN.

CHAPTER I.

POSSESSING ALL THINGS.

“The stream that stagnates in its bed
Turns no man’s wheel: as well be dead
As numb and rigid.”

ONE—two—three—four—five— The strokes from the great bell of St. Stephen’s fell sonorous and reverberant into the moist November air. Persis Thrale counted them. “Only five! And too dark to read already! How long these short last days of November seem!”

Persis was leaning back in a most luxurious chair, her book open in her lap. She rose as she made her comment on the day, and the book slid unnoticed to the carpet. Persis locked her arms behind her, filled her lungs with a deep slow inhalation, and began to pace up and down in the twilight of the room. Then an electric light from the near street corner flashed out, reflected the patterns of the lace curtains in fine tracery upon the wall, lit books, pictures, furniture, bijouterie, and made a splendor greater than the November day had known. In this splendor Persis moved to and fro. As she went and came along the length of the room a

girl met her and duly turned and retreated: a tall girl with chestnut hair wherein lurked little hints of red and gold; dark brown eyes that could deepen into blackness; firm nose, mouth, and chin; cheeks with varying dimples; complexion of vigorous health—a figure young, supple, strong; step easy and swift; a well-endowed girl certainly, yet going and coming in this long pier glass she was a restless, unsatisfied girl.

This was the favored “best room” of a “first-class boarding-house.” Many of its luxuries and ornaments belonged to Persis herself. This picture and this statuette before which she paused, vaguely wondering if their old-world makers had been satisfied in their accomplishment, she had brought from Europe. There had been no lack of money to prevent her from garnishing this cabinet to her taste with shells and minerals. This portfolio of sketches full of spirit and subtle thought-suggestion—her own work; the water color, low down on the wall between the windows, her creation also in a happy hour; this book, all fresh in binding, with the very latest fad in side stamps, a child of her brain; this uncut magazine bore in the table of contents the name of her article upon a question of philanthropy. Persis laid her finger on it scornfully. “Wise am I in philanthropy? What a sham! What am I doing in philanthropy? Do I lift that intolerable burden of suffering with one of my fingers? Oh, nineteenth century Pharisee! It needs the Man of Galilee to score these fair pretensions with the lightning of his soul-deep facts!”

Up and down, up and down, meeting that other

restless girl of twenty-five at each turn, but paying her no heed, and always as she neared her hearing a sound of low passionate weeping. One of life's tragedies had visited that first-class boarding-house that morning.

"I must," said Persis; "I have put it off too long. What a detestable coward I am! I think I could find myself in a burning building, or walk up to a cannon's mouth at the instant of firing, with less trepidation than I can look upon human sorrow, upon grief which I cannot cure. Why is this largess of shown sympathy expected of us? Visits of condolence—letters of consolation! Why are these things demanded, and what good do they do? I wish I had Mrs. Sayce's happy faculty; she really does comfort people—never stops to think about it, but just slides into the place of ministering angel, and upholds fainting hearts; I suppose it is because she never thinks of herself. What would poor Miss Hughes have done without her to-day I wonder?" And then gathering up all her courage—which was small enough at that crisis, Persis Thrale, very nervous and alarmed in spite of her stately style, disappeared into the hall, and knocked at the door of the adjoining room.

It was fifteen minutes since the bell in St. Stephen's had pealed five.

That next room had for several years been the home of two sisters greatly differing in age, appearance and tastes. The elder, middle-aged, prematurely grey, a fair, sweet-faced, pre-eminently gentle woman, was an artist of no small repute. The younger, dark, brisk,

self-asserting, scarcely twenty-three, had been pursuing her education—graduating at a seminary, then at a Conservatory of Elocution, then at a Kindergarten Training-school. Six weeks before, just as the last term in this training-school was closing, the sisters parted for the first time in their joint lives. Miss Hughes came home one day and quietly announced that her physician had ordered her at once to go to Bermuda on account of a bronchial trouble. She had taken passage on a steamship which would sail in two days.

Harriet, in a very anguish of alarm, demanded leave to accompany her. “It is not worth while,” said the calm elder sister; “I prefer to go alone.” Harriet must finish the course of study which had absorbed her so long. For herself, in a few weeks she would return well, her portfolio filled with new studies.

She had gone. A cheerful letter came, then a second; that very morning Harriet, full of joy, had taken to Mrs. Sayce in the opposite room a third letter from her sister, a letter telling of feeling so well and so cheery, so full of satisfaction in the lovely island home. Then, even while the two were reading this letter, another came by hand of the ship’s clerk. It was from Miss Hughes’ landlord in Bermuda. Miss Hughes had been found dead beside the table where lay the letter just directed to her sister—the letter then in Harriet’s hand! The same ship brought that letter, this letter from the landlord, and the casket in which lay Miss Hughes’ body; in fact, the clerk had already brought that casket to the door. All day the casket which held the body of the elder sister lay

in the centre of the darkened drawing-room below stairs, and all day Harriet in her bereavement had sobbed and wept in her room, while friends went and came, impotent to solace, making preparations for the burial. All day Persis Thrale had felt that she must go with words of sympathy to this other girl, now alone in the world as she was herself, and all day she had shrunk from performing this simple office of humanity. Persis felt as if she little knew the face of sorrow, for though she was alone in the world her losses had come to her in the unreflecting days of childhood.

Now, however, the decisive knock on the closed door was given, and Harriet Hughes had said "Come in," striving to check the exhibition of her misery.

"She was so good and sweet, I do not wonder that you are heart-broken for her—so gentle, gracious, self-sacrificing. Even here she did not seem far from the angel or saint that she has been these days in heaven." Thus Persis, lamely and feebly consoling.

"Oh, but you do not know half how good she was, nor how much she has been to me! And I am now alone."

"Alone for her—but there are other friends, relatives, are there not? I have heard her speak of brothers, of nieces—"

"Not mine. Oh, I must tell you, and then you will see what she was; so much nobler than other people. Her mother had died, and her elder brothers were married, when her father, her twin brother and the lover to whom she was soon to be married all were killed in the

Battle of the Wilderness. And what do you think she did as soon as she rose from the first prostration of that terrible blow? She found me, a poor little sickly, miserable orphan baby of three months old, with no hope or future but to be sent to the poor-house, and she adopted me for her sister. She sought comfort in doing good. All her property had been left by her father so that it would go to her brothers if she had no children of her own, but that did not matter; by her own earnings as an artist she has educated me, cared for me, laid up for me a little competence. You know she was lovely and good, but did you ever think or dream how good? She found consolation in doing good, and grief made her more and more unselfish. I too shall try to be like that: just as soon as—as I have found my breath a little, after this sudden sorrow—then I shall give myself as she did to unselfish work for others. It is the only way left me of showing my gratitude.”

A servant came in softly and lit the gas.

“Night? Night is it?” said Harriet, sitting up on her bed and smoothing back with trembling hands her disordered hair.

“Night for us,” said Persis; “night down here; but there is no night there. These weeks she has been dwelling in the days of heaven. Until you told me I did not know how many that she loved she had to meet her over there. Time since she lost them will seem but as a dream.”

“Oh, you comfort me. That thought is good,” said Harriet, holding out her hand for Persis’ clasp.

She comforted her! Yes, for the hour Persis had forgotten self.

Persis left Harriet to Mrs. Sayce, and went back to her own room. It was almost six now. She went to the window to close the inside blinds, the maid had forgotten them, and now the gas was lighted. The electric light at the corner made a great circle of brilliant clearness. Just entering the outer line of that expanse of splendor she saw a gaunt girl carrying a big bundle of tailor's work. The little woolen hood clung damply to her damp hair; the thin plaid shawl, pulled tight about her, showed shoulders bent and crooked from years of leaning over a sewing-machine; the raw wind whipped her shabby skirts about her ankles, presumably wet from the sloppy pavement. She had entered the wide street by a narrow alley leading from a business thoroughfare, and right on the corner which she must pass were the brilliantly lighted and decorated windows of a first-class bakery, lately opened in that "highly genteel neighborhood" to the lasting exasperation of all its ancient inhabitants.

Persis, arrested in the act of closing the narrow panels of the blinds, saw this poor sister of hers pause and look longingly at the display in the window. Then she drew a little purse from her pocket, opened it, and seemed carefully to calculate the possibilities of its contents. Hesitating a little she entered the elegant establishment with humility and preferred her requests at the counter, with an air very different from that of the pert servants of the locality, who came in on errands for the household-

ers. Persis, greatly interested, saw the hand of one of the shop-girls reach into the window, pick out a roll and a small cake, drop them into a little paper sac, give it a twist and a toss, and consign it to the shabby customer. The girl did not return the change to her purse: Persis saw her stop beside an orange-seller in the next doorway and buy an orange.

“Not for herself,” said Persis; “for some one she cares for.”

Persis was a girl of impulsive temperament, fearless in action, eager for experiences. She took her long mackintosh from the closet, and as she went fleetly down stairs she buttoned it about her, and pulled the hood over her head. Once out in the street she saw the girl going slowly but steadily along in the distance, with her cumbersome burden of work. Strong and unburdened Persis went after her, soon came closely behind her, and then a kind of shame, bashfulness, awkwardness came upon this nursling of good society. What should she say to her poor sister? How should she reveal that she had watched her, followed her? Hesitating, and still following, she went on and on, and so these two—the weary shop girl heavily burdened in heart and arms, ill-protected, hopeless, but enduring, and the rich girl, full of curiosity and sympathy and embarrassment, intent on doing something but not quite clear as to what and how—kept on their way, entering poorer streets, darker, narrower, more remote from gentle boarding-housedom. At last the girl, never looking behind her, entered a stairway, where there was no ceremony of door giving

upon the street, and up she went, two flights of stairs. Persis went after her, resolved that if now any one challenged her she would say she wished to find a plain-seamstress and button-hole maker. A harsh cough echoed through the stairway, and the burdened girl hastened her pace. She lifted a latch and a door swung open, but no light shone out. Yes, there was a faint flicker as of a very small fire burning behind dull isinglass in a stove.

“All in the dark, Annie! Coughing, dear? Are you worse?” This thin tired girl spoke bravely. The reply did not reach Persis, who stayed her steps on the landing. The girl dropped her big bundle.

“We need a little change of air here, dear; we will leave the door open a minute. Croly paid me every cent without a grumble; what do you think of that for a marvel? I brought you an orange and a roll and the loveliest little charlotte russe! What do you think of that for extravagance? But then I have another huge bundle of work. There, now the lamp is lit, and I’ll stir up the fire and make a cup of tea; that will set us right up.”

Persis stood in the shadow absorbed in the interest of this little scene. The one-room home was such a bare, shabby place. The narrow, poorly-furnished bed contrasted so with that luxurious couch of hers; there were two rocking-chairs, two boxes covered with calico, evidently designed to serve as emergency-seats, a table, the machine, a worn old wooden cupboard, doorless, on the shelves of which stood a few dishes and cooking utensils with some small wooden and paper boxes, presumably

containing food or culinary indispensables. That was all, except the lamp and a small box of coal. There was the pale, thin, sick sister, stretched back, as in utter weakness, in one of the rocking-chairs, and that other girl, the worn bread-winner, making a great show of courage and energy to hearten her feebler comrade for the task of existing. Persis yearned to go in to them, to speak, to clasp hands, to make helpful friends ; but what should she say? How explain her presence there? How state her errand? And what errand had she? Then the girl who was moving here and there in the room turned, came forward, and the door was shut. Persis felt that she had failed ; had been insufficient to so small a demand upon her adaptability. She realized that in a book she could have made her heroine do the right, easy, gracious thing at the moment, but it is much easier to make people do well in books than to do well one's self!

“So it is,” mused Persis ; “self, self, self. I think what will people say or think about me ; how shall I explain myself ; what is best for me ; and while I am planning to make everything just right for myself, opportunity passes ; is gone. I can make my story character do better because she is not self-centered. I suppose I must go home, and end this evening, as all the rest of my life will perhaps end, uselessly to others. What a still, chilly place this house is !”

Just as she turned to grope her way down the stairs she heard from above a pitiful crying, “Mammy ! mammy ! What is it? Wake up. Can't you wake up? Oh ! I'm so 'fraid.”

No real woman is ever deaf to the cry of a child. God made women and children for each other. The steps of Persis were quickly turned, and up the next flight of stairs she sped as if on an accustomed way. There was an open door, and a room dimly revealed by the light coming in from the window of another room, near and opposite, in the narrow back court. A bed was near to the window, and on the bed lay a dark heap—a woman—and clinging, shivering near, and lamenting, was a short, odd-looking child figure. The room was cold, fireless, desolate. Persis made her way to the bed. “What is wrong, my little child? Let me help you. Can we light a lamp? Have you no fire?”

“The oil’s out; it went, and went, and is all gone. Then I opened the door to be less afraid, and mammy lay on the bed and moaned and moaned; and then stopped, and I can’t get her to move or speak.”

Persis passed her gloved hand over the face and form, the figure was rigid and chilly. Was this death? Persis Thrale had fled out of her old horizon now. Life for the instant was merely the theatre of the miseries of these two outcasts. “I’ll get help for you,” she said, ran down the stairs, opened the door of the sisters’ room without stopping to knock, and cried, “Oh, please, wont you come? I think the woman upstairs is dead, or dying, and the little girl is all alone.”

The sisters were just about to drink their tea, which was set out on a corner of the table. As Persis spoke the young seamstress started up, “Oh, poor Mrs. Gayley! Why did n’t I think of her! Let me take the lamp,

Annie," and with the lamp in one hand and her cup of untasted tea in the other she hurried up the stairs, followed by Persis. As if experienced in such scenes, the girl felt of the unconscious woman, straightened her, raised her head a little, and began to feed her small quantities of tea. "What is it? What is the matter?" urged Persis.

"Matter! Lack of all things. Can't you see?"

"And will money do any good?" cried Persis, feeling in her pocket.

"Money do good! I should say it would!"

"Here, then; let me feed her the tea. I do n't know where to go, and—I'm afraid. Get anything she needs. If that is'n't enough I'll go home for more."

"You'd have to go back to heaven then!" cried the girl, with a half-laugh grasping the purse; "I can't think of any creature but an angel giving such an unlimited order here. I will be back soon."

Persis heard her go to the room below, then go out. She herself stood administering the weak but warm tea; she thought that presently the woman's throat moved as if she swallowed. The little girl, too, awed by the splendid stranger, who had descended from heaven in a green Henrietta-cloth and mackintosh, rested against her mother's pillow. Persis saw that she was a hump-back, with large sorrowful eyes and a pretty pathetic mouth.

After a time her coadjutor returned with two boys carrying coal, kindling and groceries. "Your money is all spent," she said briskly.

“I’m glad of it,” said Persis. “Probably I never spent any so well before. Do you need more?”

“Not to-night,” said the girl, laughing and building a fire.

“Is that a beef-tea jar I see before me? Drink a bowl of it yourself instantly, or I will disappear and never return,” said Persis.

CHAPTER II.

HAVING NOTHING.

“From that torpor deep
Wherein we lie asleep,
Heavy as death, cold as the grave,
Save, oh save!”

“THERE! There’s a fire! Trinka, you come and get warm. Put some water in the kettle. I’ll go and make the beef tea in my room. I’ve water boiling.”

“Make a big pitcherful. Use it all. Give your sister some and Trinka, and drink a pint yourself, and we’ll give this poor woman all she can take,” ordered Persis.

“All right. Trinka, here’s a roll meanwhile. Unpack these things. Stir round and put them away. Oh, do you see?—I bought a big comfortable; there are hardly any clothes on that bed. Warm it up, Trinka, and tuck it over your mother, and heat up that flat-iron and lay it at her feet. Fill your lamp and light it. I’ll take this.”

“Oh how smart you are—thinking of everything!” cried Persis.

After a little the girl came back with a steaming pitcher of the beef tea. “There, Trinka, try that bowl of good stuff and another roll; you’re not likely to over-eat. Mother warming up any? Annie’s enjoying her tea finely.” And as Persis now began to administer beef

tea to the patient her comrade seated herself on the foot of the bed, a bowl of hot broth in one hand a big roll in the other, and leisurely, with evident enjoyment, proceeded with her supper. "I do n't know where you dropped from," she said, eyeing Persis.

"No? Oh, I thought you did! Are you beginning to trace me back to any less agreeable locality than you did a little while ago? I'll explain myself to you later; do n't remind me of my own personality or you'll paralyze me, and I seem to need all my energies at present. Tell me: how did this poor soul fall into such a terrible state?"

"It's easy to explain: no money to live without work, and no work of her kind to be had. White goods market overdone. My work is boys' clothes. You can count on the boys as tearing-machines, to keep consumption up to production, every time; if you're moderate in your demands, of course. Poor Mrs. Gayley has looked for work and grown heart-sick, and sold everything she had; and finally all was gone—food, fuel, money, property, hope, courage, strength—and she collapsed. I make a guess that she has n't had any food or fire for twenty-four hours. That so, Trinkka?"

"Yes," said Trinkka, too filled with comfort to weep.

"Shows how easy it is to be selfish. I ought to have looked after her. But the wolf is in our door, head and shoulders, most of the time. Mrs. Gayley could n't afford this rent; when she was out of work she ought to have found a cheaper place; but she wasn't used to rough life, and she was afraid of cellars or back attics in

the very slums. Timidity and pride do n't run well with no work. Rent behind, Trinkka?"

"Yes. The man came to-day and said he'd put us out to-morrow, and mammy just lay down and moaned till she went that way. Oh, Miss Clarke, I wish you'd saved a little of that money to pay him some rent!"

"Never mind," soothed Persis. "The rent shall all be paid to-morrow, and some in advance too. You'll see that they are not evicted before I get here, Miss Clarke?"

"Yes, indeed. You seem to be a kind of human mint. Money must come easy to you. I'm glad you chanced in here, for Mrs. Gayley and Trinkka are right nice people: are n't you, Trinkka? She's coming to. All to do now is to feed her some bread soaked in the tea, in about an hour, and keep her warm, and tell her good news when she gets awake enough to hear it. You can do all that, can't you, little woman?"

Trinka felt assured that she could.

"I can't stop longer, I have to sew in the evening."

"And I must go," said Persis, suddenly seized with vague terrors of her unusual surroundings, the dim streets, the strange neighborhood, the advancing night. The two girls went down stairs together.

"Good-by," said, Persis, holding out her hand, "to-morrow I will be back."

Once in the street she hastened along by the way in which she had come—by this turn and that into a full, noisy street, which she had sometimes passed along

but always with much disgust and in the daylight. Two or three noisy bars were delivering squads of shouting half-drunken men to the sidewalks. In the battle between the home and the saloon the home was evidently getting the worst of it. A clock struck nine. Two rowdies began to sing a ribald song ; no policeman was in sight ; with loud profanity a man and a woman entered into a quarrel. The terror of Persis increased ; she wished to escape, but her desire so much outran her capacity of motion that it seemed as if her feet clung to the pavement. She rehearsed the horrors of nightmare. Around a corner came a tall man, white hair flowing from under a soft felt hat pulled low, white beard lying like drifted snow on his broad breast, his head bent against the east storm, his shoulders a trifle bowed by the weight of many working years. Persis met him fairly, and clasped his arm as she said joyfully, "O Dr. Bond ! Are you here ? Take me home ! I'm frightened !"

Dr. Bond put his hands on her shoulders. "Persis Thrale ! You here at this time in the evening alone !" Then he tucked her hand under his arm, faced about, and they began to tread the way to her home. "What does this mean, my child ?"

He had known her, as the rest of the children of his flock, for years ; he had catechized her and taken her into the communion of the church, yet always felt in some way that her reticent, self-contained nature eluded him ; she was always the calm, sufficient, rather cold and abundantly capable girl, and he had never called

her "my child" before. Now she had come close to him, demanded something of him, rested upon him childlike; how natural it seemed! This hoary shepherd was fond of his flock, especially the lambs. So they went on together.

"It means," said Persis, "that I have been down seeing how the other half of the world lives, and it is terrible! It means that I find my nerves shaken by merely seeing what others are daily enduring; it means that I have found work: something to do."

"But I thought you were always busy, Persis."

"Oh, yes, in certain separate spheres of work which revolved around Persis Thrale as their central sun. I have had a revelation, a call. I have been led out of myself, and I am not going back! To-night I am shaken and afraid because all has been so sudden; but to-morrow I shall have accustomed myself to it and be more able to help. The trouble will be to keep from being overwhelmed by seeing so much to do, and feeling myself able at best to do so little. Oh, Dr. Bond, did you know of this great misery around us? To-night I have seen girls of my own age fighting, in hunger, cold and sickness, for mere bread; I have seen a woman dying, yes, dying—you understand?—of starvation!"

"The awakening has been a rude one—but—it is well to be awake at any cost," said the pastor.

This girl, in her calm, amiably assenting way, had lent her aid when asked in the Christian Association work, had fulfilled her duties in the Sunday-school and Missionary Society, had subscribed when the papers

went the rounds, had sat twice on Sundays and again on Wednesday evening—goodly to look at, statuesque, distantly admired by friend and neighbor—in her pew during service time. Was the latent life within her becoming forceful at last, stirring the marble to a woman's energies of gracious service?

“So much to be done—who will help me do it?”

“Be sure you will find helpers; for I have seen it always to be true that where one heart is stirred for good other hearts are always similarly stirred. God never sends his workers one by one; his plan is at least two by two, as he sent the seventy. Wherever a work opened to be done there rose up hearts to do it. The first worker never remained long solitary. That first worker is sometimes set to arouse the others, but their answer is prompt. If you have found new work, Persis, you will find new workers to help you. Seek them with care, choose them with judgment. Here we are at your home. I hope, my child, that you have not taken cold.”

Persis laughed. She was twenty-five and full of vigor; an expedition even in that raw storm from the east was not likely to shake her buoyant health.

“I will see you to-morrow afternoon, Persis. You will tell me about this new interest; perhaps my long experiences in city work may help you a little.”

The wet mackintosh was hung to dry, the damp shoes gave place to warm, soft slippers. Persis put her feet near the radiator, leaned back in her low chair, and clasped her hands behind her head; she was not nearly

as bored by existence as she had been when St. Stephen's bell announced five. A tap; a waiter came in with tea daintily set forth on a tray.

“Miss, we were afraid you had had no tea.”

Persis sat up and looked at tea biscuit, cold tongue, cake, jelly, as at strangers. She had forgotten for the moment that all these were Persis Thrale's perquisites in life; she had forgotten that she had had no tea. When the girl left her alone, and she was realizing how very hungry she was, suddenly she laid down the gold spoon, with which in her mouth she had metaphorically been born, and remarked, “Persis Thrale, I'm very much afraid that all this gorgeousness comes to you by gross injustice; by robbery. Do you understand me? By sheer robbery! I'll see that thing through to-morrow.” She did not refer to the affair of Katharine Clarke and the widow Gayley; neither was she developing socialistic sentiments.

As early as possible next morning Persis returned to Ramsay Street and knocked at the door of the Clarke sisters.

“Come in!” cried the elder from her machine. “Oh, you are here; you have not regretted your extravagancies over night?”

“On the contrary, I am resolved to commit more of them. But the first matter is about that rent and the finding Mrs. Gayley something to do.”

“Now you are talking good sense. It is work that we workers want, not alms; though some, like Mrs. Gayley, are driven to the extremity of taking alms.

You'll find it easier to pay the rent than to find the work."

"Then I'll make the work," said Persis stoutly.

"What work?"

"Whatever she can do."

"There; now you are right at the knotty point of the problem. What can she do? The women who can do even one thing absolutely well are little likely to fall into such destitution; they may be nippingly poor, but not like that. Mrs. Gayley is one of the women who have not learned to do anything perfectly. She was brought up to help her mother in the home and to expect to get married. Some people think that is the only really proper way to bring up girls. I don't. The mother is not likely to demand such accuracy as the master; the husband may turn out shiftless, or sickly, or die, and then the public will ask, 'What can you do for a living?' Some women are such housekeepers that they can always command a position in some establishment, or be specialists in varieties of cooking that are in demand. Mrs. Gayley's housekeeping was of the plain kind put up with by artisans; her sewing, making, fitting, were fair, but not skilled labor. I don't know what she can do but just the cheap starvation-wages work of which there is always a glut in the market, and half its seasons are slack seasons."

"You seem to have studied these problems."

"I should say I have."

"And from your conversation I should fancy you had been trained for higher labor than machine-running."

“I was a school-teacher, and a good one. My throat gave out. We were without any resources but our wits. I learned thoroughly the boys’ clothing work—and—we live as you see.” The machine whirled faster to make up for lost time.

“Shall I go up and give Mrs. Gayley the rent?”

“Yes: that will be all right. Five dollars and a half. She pays too much—a dollar and a half a week for that little back room! But the neighborhood is safe and quiet, and women will pay a good deal for that. You noticed how still it was last night?”

“Yes. Is n’t this near Gardner Street?”

“Three blocks.”

“Is Gardner Street as respectable as this?”

“Yes: a trifle more so.”

“Miss Annie,” said Persis, taking the tissue paper from a basket which she carried, “I have brought you some fruit.”

“Oh, Katherine,” cried Annie, “do look!”

The pretty basket was piled with oranges, apples, pears, grapes, bananas and figs, with a few sweet bay leaves.

“It is beautiful, and very kind. Do you know that fruit piled in a basket that way costs nearly double the price of the separate fruits?” said the seamstress.

“I had not thought of it,” said Persis meekly.

“I know; I was wild enough to price a basket once, when Annie was sick, it was so pretty; but I concluded that Annie would think a few fruits laid on a plate, at a quarter of the price, pretty enough for us; eh, Annie?”

“Whatever you do is pretty to me, Katherine,” said Annie.

“Is your name Katherine?” said Persis. “I always wished that mine was. It is my favorite name.”

“My name is Katherine ; Katherine with a K, too, if you will please to remark. As I can indulge in style in nothing else I have the most stylish method with my name,” said the workwoman cheerfully.

“I shall come back for a long talk some day soon,” said Persis ; “now I must see Mrs. Gayley, and go home.”

The question of work for Mrs. Gayley Persis solved for the present by sending her a quantity of crash to make into towels, and unbleached cotton to hem into sheets. It had not occurred to her to notice that the sewing-machine had vanished to the pawn-shop, but happily Mrs. Gayley could hem by hand. The machine and the widow's other Lares and Penates came back later, under Persis' direction. With a shrinking that almost amounted to agony, and was both constitutional and cultivated, Persis Thrale had tried to keep herself from the sight and sound of sorrow. Flowers and notes from her had gone, when courtesy imperatively demanded them, to the houses of mourning, but Persis herself seldom crossed a threshold where the long black scarfs waved, and just as seldom did she attend a funeral. She came home from the burial of Miss Hughes weary in mind and body, and having let into her room all the sunshine possible, provided fresh flowers, and called for a fire in the grate, she sat down to rest her nerves before discussing a question.

“Mr. Inskip, Miss Thrale,” said a maid at the door.

“Show him up, please,” said Persis.

“Perhaps I should not have come to-day?” said Mr. Inskip. “I did not hear about Miss Hughes’ death until this moment.”

“I expected you—I’m glad you’re here. I want to ask you about several things. Are you comfortable? Do you like that chair? I thought you preferred the purple one. I know you do; here, let me wheel it up.”

“Don’t disturb yourself,” said Mr. Inskip, laying hold of the chair; “yes, thank you, I think this chair does suit my anatomy better—made for me, in fact. I wonder if your landlady would sell it.”

“She dare n’t; it belongs to me. Is that that everlasting leather book that we have studied for seven years? Are you not tired of it?”

“By such books I live. Your house on Gardner Street is vacated to-day—”

“That’s good news; I have found a satisfactory tenant for it.”

“Really! Then you are going to look after your own business a little? I shall be pleased indeed, for these matters could as well be handled by you as by a—”

“Skilled lawyer? No doubt; but it is the skilled lawyer to whom I must go for wisdom this day. Jane, tea, please”—to the maid who had answered her bell. That “please” which slid so invariably and easily over Persis Thrale’s lips prevented the answering of her bell from ever seeming burdensome to the house servants.

This monthly visit of Mr. Inskip and the ring for tea and biscuit were regular events.

“There you have it—hot, strong sweet ; Jersey cream, and your Albert biscuit. Now let us proceed to business. Mr. Inskip, were you in Judge Wexford’s office when the case *North vs. Thrale* was tried?”

“Yes. Where did you strike that case?”

“Up in the Capitol Library. I went up there as a special favor to read where I liked in the Court Reports. The fact is, I wanted to find a case that fitted a story that I was writing, a case parallel to one I had detailed ; I wanted to see how courts had considered it. Accidentally I saw my own name, Thrale, and I read up the case, and lo, it was not only the name Thrale, but my name Thrale ; and my money too was in question—or my grandfather’s—and I saw that the defendant’s lawyer was Judge Wexford, once your partner.”

“Yes : I entered his office as a lad, became partner, and succeeded to the business. Yes, I remember all about that case. It was the first great property case that had come up since I had been admitted to the bar, and though I was not one of the counsel I had considerable to do with it, and was much interested. Wexford won : he always won ; it was a way he had.”

“But tell me honestly, as a Christian gentleman, do you think all the right was on the side that won?”

“I think,” said Mr. Inskip, meeting her eyes fairly, “that there was a good deal to be said on the other side.”

“That is exactly what I thought, reading the case.”

“I thought that if Judge Wexford had been retained by the plaintiff he might have secured for them not all they claimed—they claimed too much—but one third of your great-grandfather’s estate for the Norths. I think that was really the old man’s intention. But why speak of it? Your grandfather held what he had; your father inherited it and left it to you. The court decided for the Thrales. If the case had been carried up to the Supreme Court the decision might have been reversed. But heart and means failed the Norths and they accepted defeat. That is all long past, and you cannot help it, Miss Persis.”

“I can’t?” said Persis with a flash of her big brown eyes. “Are there any of these Norths living, Mr. Inskip?”

“Do you know, I have always felt an interest in keeping track of them. There are two elderly women left, Miss Rebecca and Miss Susan; they support themselves by some little handiwork. I do n’t know what.”

“Give me their address, please,” said Persis.

CHAPTER III.

THE PLAN OF A CAMPAIGN.

“And at his side with patience eat
Of his hard bread, and share his cup
Below—they shall be summoned up
Beside him in his joys to sup.”

WHEN Persis Thrale said, “Give me their address, please,” Mr. Inskip realized that he was dealing with a very young, a very enthusiastic, and a very independent woman, whose heart was much larger than her experiences of life.

“Miss Persis,” he said anxiously, “tell me what you have it in mind to do.”

“Nothing; absolutely nothing; my mind is empty of all plan as a last year’s nest is empty of eggs.”

Whatever had been his private sympathy with the Norths, whatever his opinion of the justice of their claims in that long-ago suit, all Mr. Inskip’s interests had now gone over to this young girl, whose guardian he had long been and whose man of business he still was. To her the Thrale thousands seemed to belong by a divine right; the court had given them to the Thrales and three generations of possession had consecrated that giving. “Persis,” he said, “I want you to promise me something.”

“Let us hear what it is,” said Persis contumaciously.

“It is merely that you will not pledge anything, or

decide upon anything, or take any action as regards your property, before talking the matter over freely with me."

"Certainly I will promise you that," said Persis, bending forward and taking his hand with one of those radiant smiles which had made her always popular, despite her natural hauteur. "Can I forget my father's friend, my long-patient guardian? Of course I will take no important step without talking with you. Don't I know that I can always talk you into my own opinions?" she added, resting her head back in her chair, her eyes full of laughing reminiscences of days when she and her guardian had differed.

"There, now, drink your tea in peace of mind; you need not go home and tell Mrs. Inskip that my idiosyncrasies are rendering your hair gray."

"There's one comfort with you: I can always tie to your promises—and your tea is always hot."

"There are two comforts enumerated," corrected Persis.

"And you intend to hunt up the Norths? The two are the daughters of the plaintiff in *North vs. Thrale*—your father's compeers. They never married, and they are, I believe, called peculiar."

"I shall hunt them up before the sun sets," said the tireless Persis, fully reinvigorated by the thought of a new undertaking.

"In that case, set forth at once and I will see you some squares on the way. As usual, I have two or three commissions for Mrs. Inskip."

“One of which was to invite me for dinner next Saturday—and you have forgotten it,” said Persis.

“I had not forgotten; could I forget what was not?” said the lawyer stoutly; “but consider yourself invited.”

Mr. Inskip signalled a car for Persis, and stood for a moment on the street corner looking after her as she was borne swiftly away. Then he pursued his walk slowly, meditating on what had passed.

Persis was eight years old when the death of her parents had left her in his guardianship. An aunt of her mother had assumed the immediate care of the child, but in four years this aunt died and Persis was put into a boarding-school. Then came seven years of earnest, faithful study, until Persis graduated from college leading her class. The next two years were spent in Europe, travelling with friends. On her return she remained for a year at her guardian's suburban home, then chose those rooms in the “first-class boarding establishment.” She had plenty of friends, plenty of money, and her literary and artistic tastes had led her into constant congenial occupation. Mr. Inskip reflected that for a long time he had taken anxious thought lest the beautiful and wealthy girl should be sought for her fortune and make an unhappy marriage; but his fears had been laid at rest, as Persis had turned a deaf ear to all lovers whatsoever, had been superior to flattery, and found her chief friends and companions among her own sex. The girl was liberal, lavish sometimes, never extravagant or wasteful: she had never

used up her income and her property continued to accumulate. "I hope," he said to himself, as he pulled himself together to drop meditations on his recent ward and execute one of Mrs. Inskip's commissions, "I hope that girl will not go into some reckless Quixotic scheme. It would be almost beyond foolish human nature, I fear, for her to go on as sensibly as she has begun. To think that she should ferret out that North *vs.* Thrale, and see right into it too! What did Mrs. Inskip say about those two arm-chairs—where is that mem.?"

Persis in the meantime had changed from one car to another, and finally found herself in a region of very small, cheap houses, occupied by people of the nice, quiet variety, with microscopic incomes and highly specialized family pride. One little house, at the end of a row of six as closely alike as peas in a pod, was the dwelling-place of the Misses North.

Persis felt now none of the trepidation which had hindered her when she followed Katherine Clarke home. The Misses North were of her own blood, they considered that they had a grievance laid up against her; all Persis' personality rose up to subjugate these enemies and make them her friends. In answer to her knock, a slim, gray, severe-looking woman of about fifty opened the door. Her gaze had in it so little of welcome that it barely failed to be hostility.

"Are you Miss North?" asked Persis.

"Yes."

The world had not been particularly good to Miss Rebecca North, and she had long since ceased to waste



words upon it. Her bald "yes" was not supplemented by any gracious smile or intonation. Persis proceeded to supply the graciousness. "I am Persis Thrale, and I have come to see you."

Miss North had often said that nothing could surprise her, but her astonishment now was in evidence. The courtesy of her breeding, for she was clearly a gentlewoman, at once brought an invitation to enter.

"Will you walk in? My sister is here. Sister Susan, this is Miss Persis Thrale; it is longer than our time since Norths and Thrales had anything to do with each other."

"Yet if we go back to my great-grandfather," said Persis smiling, "we shall be—the same person!"

Miss Susan laughed a little, but Miss Rebecca said, "Well, it goes without saying that some persons are their own worst enemies."

"In our family, relations are not plenty enough to permit us to be enemies," insisted Persis cordially. "Do you know, two or three days ago, I found you and myself in an old lawsuit!"

"That was a dear lawsuit to us, or rather to my father; the loss of it broke his heart," said Miss Rebecca, pressing her thin lips together.

"Oh dear me!" sighed Persis, "that makes it worse than I thought. I supposed it was only the money; but when it comes to broken hearts—and lives—it is much worse."

"And, sister Rebecca," suggested Miss Susan, "we

know, of course, that this little cousin had nothing to do with it; she is quite a young girl."

"But when I read the case in the Records I felt that your side did not get justice. Legal forms, no doubt, were with the decision of the court, but real intentions must have been with your side."

"It is too late to discuss it; the case has been decided, the fortune awarded and spent. Will you excuse us if we go on with our work? This is our busy season and we must fill our orders."

The two sisters were seated by a large table, an old carved, solid mahogany dining-table, come down from the period of their family splendor. It was covered with the dainty *debris* of artificial flower making, while here and there, out of harm's way about the room, were paper boxes of artificial flowers, fruit and pompons—creations of silk, velvet, muslin, feathers—most exquisitely made.

"I shall love to see you work. I never saw anything more beautiful! I did not know that such delicate work was done in this country. I have seen the flower-makers in London and Paris, and envied their skill."

"We learned of a French flower-maker," said Miss Susan, busily tinting a bunch of grapes. "There is not much of such work done here. We get about all we can do, for ours is equal to the best imported work."

"That is what Katherine said: the really skilled worker in any line can get work."

"Well, usually," said Miss Rebecca. "Who is Katherine? Your sister?"

"Katherine Clarke is a friend of mine who does

tailors' work. I wish you knew her; she is so bright and brave. I have no sister—no relations at all, unless you will let me be your cousin. Just now you said the money the case was about was all spent, but it is not. None of it is spent. I have not even used all the income. I have not known what to do with it."

"Not known—and the world so full of need! Are you blind and deaf? You do n't look it," cried Miss North.

"No, no, it is only that she is so young," said Miss Susan.

"Well, Susan and I would not have had a far cry to find out what to do with all the money we could get! How often we have talked about it, as we sat here making flowers, that if we had had the Thrale money we would have made the world the better for it; we would have helped people to help themselves; we would not have let the interest roll up on the principal—saying we did not know what to do with it."

"Sister Rebecca," said Miss Susan mildly, "that is because we have lived here in the midst of need and know all about it, being a part of it. If we had had the Thrale money, and been brought up in affluence, perhaps we too would have gone riding about in our carriage, and been waited on by servants, and might have never known what need there was in the world."

Miss Rebecca, fabricating a scarlet poppy with a blue-black heart, sniffed dissent. Persis laughed out—

"I did n't come in a carriage. I do n't keep one. I came in the street car. I have not even a house. I board."

"No home," said Miss Rebecca, winding green silk

on the wire stem of her poppy. "No home, and no sister! I don't know but I pity you, for all the Thrale money."

"But, my dear girl, why do you not have the comforts you can afford?" queried Miss Susan, critically eyeing the bloom on her grapes.

"Oh I have comforts enough," said Persis; "the boarding house is comfortable to luxury, and when I want a carriage I have only to send around to the livery stable. You see, it is lonesome for a young woman to have an establishment of her own, and difficult. There is the matter of the stables; the coachmen are sure you don't know about things, and they sell the oats, and feed arsenic to the horses to make them sleek, and one is kept in a worry all the time. I have felt it the easiest way just to live as I do."

"But God does not put people into the world just to have an easy time of it," said Miss Rebecca.

"That is true, and since two days I have been looking at things in a different light. I see it is not enough merely to live without doing any harm; we must live to do some positive good. If the Householder should come to me now for an account he would find my pound wrapped up in a napkin; but I am going to unwrap it just as fast as ever I can, and keep it moving until it shines bright in dark places. I am making a plan for using my money in good work, and as you have studied these questions, and know all about them—"

"Oh no, indeed, only a little about them," said Miss Rebecca, highly gratified.

“Much more than I do, at least. Why cannot you give experience to the work, and I give money, and all of us work together just as we did in my great-grandfather’s time, when the experience and the money walked under one hat?”

“Of course, any thing we can tell you,” said Miss Rebecca. “But you see we are working women, and we have to keep very closely at work to cover our expenses and lay up a little sum to keep us in our old age.”

“Yes, I see. As soon as I get my plan into a little better shape I could talk over all that with you. I want to be friends, relations, fellow-workers with you. I know I should like you. I hope you would like me,” and she gave one of her winning smiles.

“As if we could help it, my dear!” cried Miss Susan.

“If you could come and spend the day with me and talk it over,” said Persis.

“Oh, impossible—we could not leave our orders unfilled.”

“Then, if I might come and spend the day with you.”

“We have not the time—or anything for you to eat,” said Miss Rebecca bluntly.

To Persis this bluntness was refreshing. “I want to see you for a special purpose,” she said, “to talk over a plan for doing real good. I want your help, and your opinions. It is just the true Sabbath day work, so cannot you come on Sunday? Come in time to go to church with me; you will like Dr. Bond.”

“We have heard him,” said Miss Rebecca; “but we cannot leave our own little church, out here, for morning service. The congregations are small, and every one is missed. Besides, we teach in the Sunday-school at nine.”

“Then meet me at my boarding-house as soon as you can after service. I am at home by one. Then we will have dinner and can talk about my plan as late as you think it well to stay.”

“We can do that, I am sure, very gladly, sister Rebecca,” said Miss Susan; and Miss Rebecca, who was fearful of conceding too much to the Thrale side of the question, with some grim hesitation finally consented.

That visit to the Misses North was paid on Wednesday; Thursday morning Persis and a notebook spent in the empty house on Gardner Street, and in making a call in Ramsay Street as she went home.

It was then she discovered the absence of Mrs. Gayley’s machine, and remarked on the bareness of her room.

“The machine, the clock, the bureau, the dishes and the rest of the things are in that teacup on the shelf,” remarked Trinkka; and then Persis made her first acquaintance with pawnbrokerage. Trinkka, old with the oldness that poverty induces, took down the cracked cup and showed the dirty tickets. “This one, the clock, so much; that one, the bureau, so much more—you understand; these, the dishes. They don’t give

much, you know, and so it is easier to get them back, if you can, and yet you pretty nearly almost never do."

It required very little arithmetic to sum up the total of these beggarly bits of pasteboard ; and to hand Mrs. Gayley a bank-bill and tell her to go at once to redeem her pledges was just as easy. An hour afterwards, as Persis sat talking with Katherine and Annie Clarke, she heard a man slowly climbing the stairs carrying Mrs. Gayley's recovered property.

"You'd think it poor trash if you saw it," said Annie, "but it is much to her ; it is part of her history ; it was paid for once by her parents and husband ; that shabby little clock is as much a treasured memento to her as a gold spoon or a miniature on ivory might be to you. Pawnbrokers' shops are full of these wrecks of heart-life. How often I wish I could scatter all the things back where they came from !"

"You must not forget that many of the pledges are not heart-relics at all, but pickings and stealings," said Katherine, the practical.

On Friday morning Persis was back in Ramsay Street. She handed Annie a cluster of carnations on whose scarlet and fragrant beauty lay a few snowflakes, the first of the season, that had been aimlessly drifting about on the sharp November air. Then, leaning back in her chair, Persis began to talk, to unfold a plan ; soon Annie, with shining eyes and a little glow of color on her thin cheeks, sat up straight to listen ; and then Katherine's feet ceased to press the treadle, the swift wheel stopped, the needle stayed in the seam of the little

sleeve. And finally Persis said, "Katherine, can you come over and look at that house with me? Have you time?"

"Time!" said Katherine, springing up; "I'd take time, if I didn't make another pair of trousers or another little jacket this blessed day!"

Persis dropped a box of chocolate bon-bons into Annie's lap and went off with Katherine.

That afternoon Dr. Bond was leaning back in that big purple chair in Persis Thrale's parlor which so well suited the anatomy of Mr. Inskip. The doctor was very comfortable, but he did not realize how comfortable; he was absorbed in the "plan of campaign" which Persis was detailing. "I do n't expect to make a revolution in city philanthropies; I do n't expect to help the thousands; I only expect to do something for a few, to make a few dozens of lives easier, more profitable to themselves and others, and their influence on the future proportionately better. If some one had rescued 'Margaret, the mother of criminals,' while yet her childish possibilities were with her, then all the line of criminals sprung from her might have been saved to the State. I can give a few people hope and heart and healthful surroundings; I can provide some children with—a childhood; I can give one neighborhood a centre of crystallization into something higher and happier than they have known; that is all. But it is enough, I think, to be worth doing, and to do it I am going down to live among those I wish to help."

"I have long wished to find some one to work in

that way," said Dr. Bond, "and I believe in a short time, when you have shown the possibility of such a plan, others will follow your example, undertaking similar work. And where exactly is this house that is to be your home?"

Persis told him. "Do you know people in that neighborhood?"

"Yes; it is near where Serena Bowles lives; I have often gone there to take a lesson from her; and widow Mumsey too. God has his hidden ones in that quarter, and I think in you he is answering some of their prayers."

"Then it is not a neighborhood where it is impossible to live?"

"I think, really, there is no such neighborhood. Even the worst and lowest slums make room for light. Wherever a generous intention, a simple godly life of unselfish helpfulness go, the worst and hardest will step aside to let them pass and kneel to kiss their garment's hem."

After Dr. Bond had gone Persis went to Harriet Hughes. "You have mourned here long enough, come into my room; it is time to arise and build your sister's monument. I have a plan of a campaign for you to listen to."

CHAPTER IV.

“WO, GO, LO.”

“No eyes beheld the pitying face,
The answer none might understand,
But dimly through the silent space
Was seen the stretching of a hand.”

ABOUT noon on Saturday Mr. Inskip's carriage called for Persis Thrale. “I have given myself a half-holiday,” he said, “to take you to my house, and to hear all the plans which are rioting in your brain. You made your visit. How was the frozen North?”

“Thawing,” said Persis. “They are coming to spend the day with me to-morrow. We shall make common cause; it will no longer be ‘North *vs.* Thrale,’ but ‘North *et* Thrale.’”

“Move cautiously, I beg of you,” said Mr. Inskip. “Remember that at the time of the case the property in dispute was much smaller than it is now. What you have represents not merely what was left by your great-grandfather, but it represents the conserving and up-building forces of three generations, the tax-paying, the judicious investments, the continuous improvements of your grandfather and father, and the handsome savings of your own long minority. Consider all that.”

“I do,” said Persis. “I see you are afraid that I will recklessly give away property of which I do not know the value. On the contrary, my property never

before appeared so valuable, so desirable ; because it now represents to me the power of accomplishing good.”

“Tell me exactly what you do mean.”

“I mean to stop idling and go to work.”

“Where? and how?”

“I mean to renovate that Gardner Street house, to make it a comfortable home, furnish it, and go there to live. As the house is very large I shall rent the third and fourth stories, giving a few working-women really pleasant and healthy homes, with modern conveniences, for a sum which will represent cost but not profit. As I shall not wish to live alone, I shall ask Misses Rebecca and Susan North to join me in my undertaking and live with me, carrying out some schemes of philanthropy of their own.”

“But how do you know that you can live with them? They may prove intolerable to you.”

“I hope I am not so crotchety that two upright, refined Christian women would prove intolerable to me.”

“Consider that you and your ways might prove intolerable to them. The plan might be broken up, and then, their present mode of life having been once abandoned, the way of return might be difficult. They might have resigned the possible to try the impossible.”

“I have thought of that. I have thought too that here are two ladies of my own blood, descended from the ancestor whose money I enjoy, and these ladies are poor, are working hard for a maintenance, have nothing for old age. What would be meagre to some would be

wealth to them, considering their habits of life. } I propose to right an old wrong and give them out and out ten thousand dollars, so that they shall feel independent and that when they plan to do a little good they can do it on their own resources. Ten thousand is enough?"

"Ample ; and you can easily spare that, if you don't go on scattering ten thousands."

"No, I shall not. I have not earned this property, it came to me by inheritance. For some reason God made it a direct gift to me, and I am, no doubt, responsible for its use. I shall not get rid of the responsibility by donating the property, I shall administer it."

"That is well. It occurs to me that, shut up with two old ladies, surrounded by people of a class and methods so different from your own, you will be lonely."

"Harriet Hughes is going with me. She is a girl whom I really like. She wants to undertake Kindergarten and Nursery work for children. She has a little income; she can get on nicely if I provide our home."

"Have you thought that free kindergarten and nursery, like many other free things, may be undervalued?"

"Oh, our system will be elastic: those who can pay are to pay according to their abilities. Even four or five cents a week, duly handed in by a child, will give it the noble feeling of paying its way and needing to get all it can for its money."

"I see your native level-headedness gleaming through your plan here and there," laughed Mr. Inskip. "It is now about four years since you came into the city to board and devote your time to art and literature. What

guarantee have you that this present plan will have a longer continuity?”

“I might suggest my own increasing age and judgment, also the more important form of the proposed work; but if I find my plan chimerical, and give it up, no one will be harmed; by just so long as they have received a benefit they will be bettered. In renting rooms I bind myself only for month by month, as other landlords who have monthly tenants do. Miss Hughes will lose nothing by me in any event; the Misses North will gain, going out with a competence where they came in with nothing: the kindergartens and nurseries, the evening classes, the pleasant entertainments, are not pledged to go on for ever, like the brook; even if, like Narcissa’s, their ‘date is short,’ they will be a good thing during their continuance. Those evening entertainments, to put a little joy into treadmill, joyless lives, will be fine, I can tell you. Harriet Hughes with her elocution and singing will be grand there; I have no doubt that our audiences will be kind enough to think my chalk drawings and violin worth applauding.”

“You don’t—you surely don’t—mean to set up an entertainment hall!” groaned Mr. Inskip.

“Only at home, in our own sitting-room, our parlor in the real old Norman meaning of the term; where we will make our friends and neighbors welcome, and entertain them as other house-mistresses do.”

“Oh!” said Mr. Inskip relieved. “I didn’t know but you meant to start a Palace of Delight down Gardner Street way, and be your own performers.”

“ ‘We do things better than that in France,’ ” laughed Persis. “I think, myself, that our neighbors will like to show off for themselves a little and do some of the entertaining ; do n't you ?”

Mr. Inskip's head was sunk in meditation and his coat collar ; he mumbled something inarticulate. Finally he demanded, “What set you at all this ?”

“I have been dissatisfied with my life for a long time,” said Persis ; “it seemed so purposeless, so little worthy of one who had ability to work and was surrounded by so much need. The sight of sorrow and suffering has always been so distressing to me, squalor and unthrift, to say nothing of vice, have been so repellent to me, that I kept on my pleasanter way in spite of the faultfinding of my conscience. Then—when Miss Hughes was brought home lying in such profound peace, her busy hands unstirred by any need, her ears deaf to all appeal—I realized how soon life's working days are ended, and how final is that ending ; no relenting, no return to accomplish the neglected task. I asked myself what I had been doing for God and for humanity. It is the old story of ‘wo, go, lo.’ ‘Wo unto the world because of offences.’ ‘Go, teach.’ ‘Lo, I am with you alway.’ There is the need, the method, the supply of power. This is not really a sudden resolution of mine, I have been growing up to it for some time. It was hard to relinquish what I like and go down and live with those I wished to help. But it seemed to me that that was the only way to do really telling work. We cannot stand afar off and throw alms, as

one throws bones to a dog ; one must dwell among the needy ones, as Christ to save flesh dwelt in flesh. You spoke of classes and methods, just now. I want, for a time, to forget any class but the human class or the class Christian. I want to be large hearted and tolerant as to methods, relaxing a little of my own and lifting up others', if I may.”

“You know really nobody in that neighborhood,” sighed Mr. Inskip. He had been used to considering this girl only in the purple, fine linen and gold spoons system.

“There are two friends of Dr. Bond's living there : Mrs. Serena Bowles and Mrs. Mumsey,” said Persis mildly.

“Oh ! Then they may be able to keep you in countenance a little.”

“I asked Dr. Bond what I could do for them, and he thought Mrs. Bowles would like to take in my washing, and that Mrs. Mumsey could do my white sewing and get better prices than the shops give her,” said Persis with malice.

“Well, Persis,” said Mr. Inskip, looking from the carriage to see if they were not nearly at his home, “go your way, and may God go with you and own the work of your hands. I shall not interfere unless I see your health or your property going to waste. Then I shall make myself very conspicuous in your affairs. I remember my promises to your parents, and I shall fulfil them.”

“As you always have, dear Mr. Inskip,” cried Persis. “Meanwhile your favorite purple chair and the silver

tray and the Sevres china cups, and the best Oolong tea, and the china jar of Albert biscuit, will be ready for you as usual; and by degrees you may become reconciled to my new way of living."

"It seems a true providence that you have found the Misses North to live with you," said Mr. Inksip.

"Yes: I had about made up my mind to get a couple of Salvation Army lassies to come into the scheme and live with me. They understand much of the needs and the work necessary in meeting the needs. As it is, I mean to make great friends with them and get all the help I can from them."

"You spoke of renovating the Gardner Street house and renting the rooms at cost to working girls. Even at cost that rent would probably be more than most of them could pay. But what do you reckon as cost?"

Here Persis had the grace to blush and hang her head a little.

"Taxes and repairs," quoth Persis; "reckoned on the whole house, and adjusted according to the rooms."

"And nothing said about the original investment, or the property tied up lying idle, eh? That's business!"

"For this one piece of property I thought I could do it," said Persis. "If the property keeps itself up on its rents I will ask no more of it. The interest represented can be the sacrifice on the altar, you know."

"I see—and your life and labor can be the incense and the oil and the wheaten cakes thereupon."

"I hope so."

“Perhaps at the end of all it may be shown to be the better way: the life worth living, the work worth doing.”

“There are the Clarke sisters that I told you about; they live in a dark, sunless room that is ruining Katherine’s eyes and has entirely broken down Annie’s health with inflammatory rheumatism and bronchitis. I’m going to put them in a south-west room, flooded by sunshine all day long and kept at an even temperature; and we’ll see if that does not prove a Florida to Annie and cure them both. That Gardner Street property has all sunny rooms; stands finely on a corner, does n’t it!”

“It has always rented so well,” said Mr. Inskip; reluctantly finding hope of gains in that quarter gone for Persis.

Persis had made up her mind that the Misses North should share her work in Gardner Street, but how to bring them into it was the question. To deal with Miss Rebecca evidently required much tact. A little after one on Sunday afternoon the two sisters entered Persis’ sitting-room, neat and prim as a pair of old-fashioned dolls. Their gowns, shiny black silks that had seen service for a dozen years, Paisley shawls of equal date, little black silk bonnets made by Miss Susan’s careful fingers, their narrow crimped white ruffles, their prunella boots at a dollar a pair, their smoothly-brushed, tightly-twisted gray hair, were in peculiar contrast to the mundane glories of Persis’ rooms: the floating lace curtains, the soft rich carpets, the silken divans, the

books, pictures, knick-knacks—the purple chair. Oblivious apparently of their brilliant surroundings, with the ease of thorough good breeding, the Misses North gave to the waiting hands of Persis their bonnets and shawls and made themselves calmly at home.

“I feel as if I cannot waste a minute. I want to talk with you—to hear you talk, to listen to your plans of helping people! And first, while we talk, here is tea and bread-and-butter for us all; for our Sunday dinner hour is three o’clock—much later than yours I am sure—and I am always so hungry when I come in from church.”

Persis knew that nothing so ruffles one’s disposition as hunger; that nothing so mollifies one’s temper as a good cup of tea—provided one is a tea lover. First of all things she must put her guests in a balmy frame of mind. Her method worked to a charm. Sipping tea, gently permeated by the warmth of the tea and the fragrant steam-heated atmosphere of the room, daintily eating dainty slices of bread and gilt-edged butter, the spirits of the Misses North, who had been faint and hungry when they came in, revived. The soft chairs suited them, the questions of Persis as she sipped tea and consumed bread and butter beguiled them, and their cherished plans, those dear air castles built upon them, were revealed to Persis almost unaware.

They had solaced many hours of toil telling each other what they would do if they were rich enough; and now they told Persis. The possibility of performance seemed no nearer than ever, but the girl was so interested

that they could not refuse to speak of this choice vision of their lives, which had never been glorified into a reality.

“Our wish, our plan,” said Miss Rebecca, “has been to help people, some few people whom we could reach, to help themselves. We have said, suppose that we had enough to live upon simply, so that we could use our time in teaching these other people, girls, you know, instead of, as now, using all our time to earn our bread. We have thought if we had a house, and two work-rooms that we could use, Susan, who is the more skillful in flower work, could teach that business to chosen girls who had a real gift for it. Girls must be neat and quick-fingered, and have a natural eye for color and a real love of flowers, or they cannot make them well.”

“And the girls that I would choose for learners,” said Miss Susan eagerly, her faded face lighting up with benevolence, “should be girls who are little able to earn a good living in any harder way, delicate girls, lame or deformed—for I have found that such girls usually have a taste for nice, dainty occupations; girls who from some constitutional blemish cannot be clerks or work in factories.”

“That,” said Persis, “is such a good thought—that their very burden of infirmity may open to them an easier way of life; it is in the line of compensation, you see. And you would not teach flower work, Cousin Rebecca?”

The name of kinship slipped so easily over her lips;

Persis had such a calm, natural way of saying kindly, gracious things. She had cultivated it; instinct had shown her from the first that it was a choice helpful gift.

The Misses North started and flushed a little with pleasure. "One would be enough for teaching flower work. I had, in our planning, you know, said I would take the other work-room and have a dressmaking establishment. I know a lady, a member of our church, who would be just the one to oversee the work. She is first-class in dressmaking, a beautiful fitter and finisher, and a Christian woman who would help the girls on and up in every way. It has been so pleasant to plan, for all we knew all the time that we never could do what we planned. We have been ready, but the Lord has not wanted that kind of work from us, he has not led the way."

"But now if he should give you opportunity, just the opportunity you have fancied—the house, the work-rooms, the capital to live upon—then you would feel that he approved the plan, and called you to carry it out."

"I do n't see how it could be," said Miss Susan.

"This way, perhaps. I have come to an end of my idling and am going to work. You were right the other day in saying that the Lord required more diligent stewardship of me, and had given me property to use for him. I have a house in Gardner Street; it is now empty, and yesterday I set the workmen at it to repair it, make it clean, comfortable and healthful. I am going to live there, right among the people that I

wish to help. My plans do not seem to be so well matured as yours, but what I want is that you should go there to become one family with me. You can have the two work-rooms, and open your training classes and carry out your plans, and I will help you as you ask me to, and not interfere ; and by degrees my own especial work will open up. And to make it possible that you should do this, that you may be free to spend the time, I want to set right a part of what has long been wrong, and make over to you ten thousand dollars for your ‘sole use and behoof’ as the lawyers say. I think my great grandfather would have felt sorry to have the property as it is now, all on one side of the house. I am sure he meant more for his daughter, and it is only right that I should do this : right, and easy.”

Miss Rebecca turned crimson, Miss Susan became pale. Ten thousand dollars ! It was as the wealth of the Indies.

“What are you saying ?” cried Miss Rebecca. “What do you mean ?”

“I say you are to have ten thousand dollars of the Thrale money ; and I shall have the affair concluded to-morrow. I can do what I say, because I am twenty-five years of age and the money is all in my own right and available, and I hope, my cousins, you will not put any false notions in the way of my doing my duty.”

Miss Rebecca set her lips, and was silent. Miss Susan said, “Sister Rebecca, this seems to me to be the true hand of God.”

“Perhaps this is the very way God has been keeping in reserve to give you opportunity to do the good you have planned,” said Persis; “but I want to make it clear that this restoring to you ten thousand, which I think of right belongs to you, has nothing to do with the living with me in Gardner Street. The money will be made over to you entirely, and then you can do as you like about coming to Gardner Street and taking up work there, and helping me in my work. If you go there, and by and by feel that the place, or the work, or the company, do not suit you, or you would like to be alone, there will be nothing to hinder you in making a change any more than there is to hinder you now in changing houses, or employers, or employment. We shall be perfectly free. As long as we live in the Gardner Street house I will be at the expense of the establishment, and the style in which I mean to carry it on will be plain but comfortable. I should like you to go to-morrow and see the house. Also there will be some papers to sign, about the ten thousand, at Mr. Inskip’s office.”

“Sister Susan,” said Miss Rebecca with a surprised air, “it seems that we can now afford to take time even in the busy season.”

“The Gardner Street house will be ready, I expect, on New Year’s Day,” said Persis. “I hope you will like it.”

“I am sure we cannot help liking it,” said Miss Susan.

“And the time before New Year’s will enable us to

fill our orders, sister Susan; we cannot break our engagements.”

“Certainly not. And we shall depend on these same firms for work for my flower workers. Oh, Rebecca, can this be true! Shall we really work out our plans!”

“It seems so,” said Miss Rebecca, “somewheres. Only I need to know more about your house, Persis, and your plans, and the people you will have about you. I hope you have not been too hasty. I may not feel that we can go there with you.”

“I shall be so sorry,” said Persis smoothly. “But if you will not, then I must fall back on my other thought: of getting two Salvation Army women, of the older and experienced ones, to go with me. In that house I expect to sleep New Year’s night, and begin my new work with the new year.”

“I will go there with you to-morrow to look at things,” said Miss Rebecca; “Susan will agree to do whatever I do.”

“Indeed,” said Miss Susan, “I am agreed already, and I feel like singing, ‘Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.’”

“My friend Miss Harriet Hughes will go with us to-morrow,” said Persis. “Harriet is going to live there with me; the work for children will belong to her. I’m leaning to the work among the mothers, the home-work; but I want to talk that over further with you. And to-morrow I hope you’ll take time to go with me to see Katherine and Annie Clarke, my friends who do tailor work and are to have the very sunniest room

there is—right at the top of the house: three windows, south and west, and a skylight! And there is Mrs. Gayley, too, a widow, and Trinka, her deformed little girl. I so hope she will be fit for the flower work! There are twenty-four rooms in the house, besides the basement. I shall take in only widows or single women; the people with no one to fight for them!”

CHAPTER V.

SERENA BOWLES' EXPERIENCES.

“A charge to keep I have:
A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save
And fit it for the sky.”

WHICH of the three was the happiest that cold, bright Monday morning: Persis, or Miss Rebecca, or Miss Susan? Persis, who felt for the time as if she were doing a work large enough to satisfy her, and whose cheeks and eyes shone, as in a handsome carriage well-provided with fur robes she drove to the door of the small house where flower work had been carried on for ten years. This was the carriage, this the driver, these the horses which Miss Thrale always had from the livery-stable, and she looked the image of comfort seated waiting for Miss Rebecca. Miss Rebecca came out in her black silk, little black bonnet and Paisley shawl, and a muff of many years' date; she held her head a trifle higher than usual and stepped with a little more than her usual dignity, as a scion of the Thrale-Norths come to her own again, and before the eyes of admiring neighbors going to ride in a carriage as was her just right. Miss Susan, accompanying her sister to the door—the tip of her nose red and her eyes tearful from the keen frost of December air—joyful to see Persis, whom she loved already, proud and happy to think that Rebecca

was esteemed as she should be, intent on hurrying back to the big table to work fast enough for two on those orders. Perhaps, after all, Miss Susan was the happiest of all, because she had lost self out of sight entirely. She had several callers that morning, and chatted with them as she worked; and Miss Susan never hinted of the ten thousand dollars or the home on Gardner Street.

Meanwhile Miss Rebecca was in a mood to be pleased with everything. They stopped for Harriet Hughes at a store where she was pricing kindergarten supplies, and Miss Rebecca was pleased with Harriet. "A nice, plain, sensible girl," she said to herself; "not handsome, like my cousin Persis—she is a real Thrale—but a nice girl; a girl I can get along with."

"You'll find the Gardner Street house in great confusion," said Persis. "As soon as I had made up my mind what I wanted I put a contractor at work with plenty of men. I was so glad I could, for this is the slack season and this contractor is a very good workman; not rich like many of them, and he has been unfortunate. Dr. Bond told me of him; he is a teacher in the afternoon Sabbath-school. He was so glad of work that would help him keep his men on wages for a while longer! Mr. Inskip had had good renters in the house and it is not in nearly so bad order as it might be. There had been a Chinese laundry in the basement and a barber-shop with two bath-rooms, so there is a beginning of things as I shall want them. I am having all the ceilings given a coat of hard finish, all the walls scraped, washed with disinfectants and papered; all the

woodwork, floors and all, given three coats of good, thick paint. Mr. Gleason said I would cause a rise in the paint market! I want the place to be a kind of Castle of Health and Happiness. Here we are. Peters, bring the carriage back at twelve."

The house was filled with busy workmen. Some were replacing cracked or broken window-panes; others were scraping walls, others re-hanging doors and re-setting windows; the plumbers were looking after pipes, traps, drains, setting two new bath-tubs, and restoring sinks and stationary wash-tubs.

"We'll begin at the bottom and work up," said Persis.

"Cousin Rebecca, our private family will be four: you and Cousin Susan, Harriet and I. Here in the front basement is our dining-room and kitchen, with tubs and laundry stove, and here is our bath-room—I'm having the floor tiled, you see. This is our cellar, and this other cellar is for the tenants of the rooms, and this big washing-room with tubs and stove is also for them, and this bath-room. All who live in this house, you see, can have, free of charge, opportunity to be clean themselves and have clean clothes. Look here: I am having an elevator put in."

"Aren't they terribly dangerous?" asked Miss Rebecca.

"Hardly as dangerous as going up and down many stairs with heavy burdens," said Persis; "besides, safety is to be considered before speed in this elevator. Now let us take the next floor. Notice that the hall runs clear

through, and there is a door on each street. Harriet, we will have a blue and gold sign, 'KINDERGARTEN' over the side-street door, and this back room will be for the kindergarten. See how well lighted it is. The next room, Cousin Rebecca, is for the flower work, and I am having an arch cut between that and the front room, so that when we need space for a social gathering we can throw the two together. One chief part of my plan is to have pleasant things going on here, so that these poor tired women will have something cheery and attractive to remember, talk about and look forward to. This front room will be our family sitting-room, where we shall see our friends and try and make a centre of social life. These three rooms across the hall are our private rooms, our bed-rooms; this one opposite the sitting room is mine, the next Harriet's, the last one is for you and Cousin Susan, as it is the largest; and I wish, while you are here, you would pick out the paint and paper you prefer; and you too, Harriet. I think people are healthier and can work better if their surroundings please them. We shall all be more efficient if our paint and wall-paper suit our particular tastes."

"I don't know but there is something in that," said Miss Rebecca, "but I cannot remember that it ever occurred to me before. The fact is, I have all my life been so hard put to it to get the merest food and shelter that I have never thought of gratifying taste. I'm glad if we can now, for Susan's sake. Susan thinks more of such things."

"We must all think of them," said Persis. "For

my part, I am an ardent lover of beauty, and, I think, on the highest example. God loves beauty well—we cannot doubt that when we see his creations—and he expects us to find rest and comfort and pleasure in the beauty which he has made. I know, when I have been sad or sick, beautiful flowers, or sweet sounds, or choice fragrance, or some lovely view—or even a picture of such a view—has cheered me and done me more good than medicine. The Flower Mission recognizes that. I want our work here to bring the grace of beauty into lives that have supposed they were debarred from it. Now let us go up one flight and see the room over the sitting-room—the one I have reserved for your dress-making establishment, if you like it, Cousin Rebecca. Counting out the first floor and this dressmaking-room, we have seventeen rooms to let ; or rather, as we shall need one or two for the cook and janitress, we shall have fourteen or fifteen rooms, and you will see what clean, bright, well-aired wholesome rooms they will be.”

Persis ran from room to room delighted with her plan, her abounding health and hopefulness filling her with a joy that reflected itself in the sad face of Harriet and the staid features of Miss Rebecca.

“Do you like it, cousin Rebecca?” she demanded. “Do you think you can be happy here and carry out your plans, and find your air castles turned into a reality—the Gardner Street house? Do you?”

“Yes, yes,” said Miss North, carried away by her young kinswoman’s enthusiasm. “This is the very place for us.”

“There’s the carriage back,” said Persis, looking out of a window. “Who would have thought we had been here for an hour and a half! Now we are to go to Ramsay Street for my friends the Clarkes, and then to a restaurant for dinner. I sent word about the dinner for five ; we are to have a private room.”

The wonders of Aladdin’s Lamp were as nothing to the wonders of this day to Miss Rebecca. The Clarke sisters were crowded into the carriage, and presently they were all seated at dinner, an incongruous group to look at : Persis in her garments of praise—silk, cashmere and sealskin ; the quaint, carefully-saved best of Miss Rebecca, the new tailor-made mourning of Harriet Hughes, the faded, nearly worn-out clothes of the Clarkes. The faces were so different also—Persis all health, courage, eagerness, fearing nothing ; Miss Rebecca, rigid, ever on the defensive, obliged, as she said, to hold her own, never forgetting what was due to herself as Miss North ; Harriet, a very plain girl, naturally aggressive, capable of softening into unlimited tenderness, sad now from a loss of which each day showed her increasingly the greatness ; finally these over-worked, under-fed, Clarke sisters, girls with whom the world had gone desperately hard until heart had nearly failed them, and who were suddenly finding in Persis the first strong hope and help of their lives. Oddly incongruous as the little group seemed they had a happy dinner. Persis gave full rein to her wit, Katherine Clarke had a brave way of always seizing the best, Harriet forgot her sorrow in trying to make the occasion bright to the Clarkes, while Miss

Rebecca was slowly beguiled out of her stiffness and made merry with the rest.

“If you ’ll believe it, Susan,” she said to her sister, when with her feet on the stove hearth and a half-constructed feather pompon in her hand she was recording the events of the day, “I no more remembered that I was in a public eating place, among strangers, only one of whom I ’d ever seen before : it just seemed as if I was at home somewhere, as if all my life I ’d known those girls—as if it was my company and I ’d asked them to dinner ! And I found myself talking and laughing, listening and telling things. That Persis is the liveliest piece ! Some of the things she said fairly took my breath. When we sat down she looked about at the spread, and said as coolly, ‘Nice dinner ; is n’t it ! And we ’re all hungry—two things to be thankful for. Cousin Rebecca, will you ask a blessing?’ It fairly took my breath, for all I ask one here—in our way you know : just to bow heads and whisper a little. Well, I looked so aback, she went on as smooth, ‘or I will ; it is my party ;’ and so she asked the blessing as easy as to say, ‘Will you pass the bread?’ or ‘Do you use cream and sugar in your tea?’” Yes, we did enjoy that dinner. I do n’t reckon those Clarke girls had had such a meal ever in their lives. After we took them home, and left Miss Harriet at a dressmaker’s, we went to Mr. Inskip’s office, and that matter of the ten thousand was done up as easy as changing a five dollar note. Dear me, Susan, I wondered if that could be myself coming down stairs a rich woman, as you may say, with plenty for old age.”

“To think how the dear Lord has provided for us,” said Miss Susan hastily, polishing her eyes so that no stray drop might fall on a wreath of honey-suckle; “and we have felt so fearsome, and hinted of the poor-house or the Home in our despondent days, and worked as if all the providing lay on us, while here our Heavenly Father had it all planned out for us. What a dear blessed girl that is!”

“Yes, so she is. I don’t look at it as charity though, Susan, you mind that. It is only justice; all said and done, it was no more than our due.”

“However that is, sister Rebecca, not every one thinks of doing justice to that extent. Oh, she is a dear, dear girl.”

“Yes, of course—and the girls she has picked out for the house so far are nice girls. I can live with them. Persis is a little heady, I fancy; fond of running on in her own way. I don’t know as I shall take very heartily to her social evenings, inviting in all the neighbors and making free and easy. You and I, sister Susan, have always kept ourselves to ourselves. But then we can stay in our own room if we don’t like the Socials.

“Besides, we are not bound to stay in Gardner Street at all if it don’t turn out as we like it. I felt half sorry about that kindergarten work right there in the house. You know I am not over and above fond of children; but you are—enough to make up for us both. As for our things, Persis said to bring what we wanted to and give away the rest, and she’d put in all that was lacking. When we left Mr. Inskip’s she sent me home

in the carriage and walked back near Gardner Street to see a woman named Serena Bowles. I don't know but Persis is one to take a little too freely to common people."

"Why, sister Rebecca, it is written, 'What God hath cleansed call not thou common.'"

"Of course, in one sense. But something is due to one's family."

"The real family, sister Rebecca, is in Christ. 'One is your Father, even God, and all ye are brethren.'"

* * * * *

Persis had climbed four pairs of stairs at 96 Webster Street, and as she finished the fourth flight she heard, through a door set ajar, a voice tired and not musical singing :

"A charge to keep I have:
A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save
And fit it for the sky."

She tapped at the door and the voice prolonged itself on the last note, without much change of tune, into "Come in."

Persis "came."

"Oh, now, I truly believe you're the young lady that is coming to live on Gardner Street corner! Well, I will sit down and rest a bit, and visit with you! Here is a chair. You're not afraid of the clothes? They're not to say real damp."

They seemed to be in a new kind of grove; not a green grove but a white one, of newly laundered clothes,

hanging on frames, ropes, pegs, chair-backs, door-corners. Vision was in every direction intercepted, here by a shirt, there by a petticoat, or a row of towels, or aprons, or sheets; window-sills and any other flat surfaces were repositories of trays or platters holding handkerchiefs, napkins, bibs, caps. Persis remarked that even if the clothes were damp it would not do her any harm, and studied the kind, worn, wrinkled, but indomitably cheerful face of Serena Bowles.

“Dr. Bond told me about you, Mrs. Bowles.”

“Now! Law me! Isn't he a dear man! Oh, the blessing he has been to me! And Mrs. Bond as kind as kind; and all the ladies of his church, that I know, so real good; most of my work is for them.”

“Dr. Bond said you could tell me more about this neighborhood—Gardner, Webster and Ramsey Streets, and the alleys off them—than any one else, Mrs. Bowles.”

“Being natural, as I'm, as you may say, the oldest inhabitant. I've lived here five years, and that's a long, long time for this neighborhood. I'm not given to moving, and when I'm here year in and year out my folks all know where to find me. Jim Bowles gets pretty restive—he is that kind of a man; made that way—but I says to him, ‘Jim, we can't move about; it costs money and loses me patronage. Long as you can't get work, Jim, we must stay where I can get it; it's work or starve,’ I says. But I'm sorry for Jim; a person with nothing to do is lonesome.”

“Is he out of work? That is hard on you. Is work scarce?”

“Pears like it is always scarce for Jim. He’s made that way. But he’s a quiet, steady, honest man as is going. He is not very peart, Jim is n’t ; he’s slow and he takes his time, and there ain’t much output to him ; so he do n’t get through as much in a day by about half as other men, and naturally he loses his place if he gets one. Folks want the stirring ones. I says to him, ‘Jim, if you’d just offer to take half wages you’d get all you earned as compared with the rest, and half a loaf’s better’n no bread.’ But Jim, he allows he can’t tell folks he do n’t consider he’s but half a man ! If some one would only take Jim right, and say, ‘Bowles, I haven’t full work for a man, and I do n’t lay out to pay full wages ; but if you want to take what work I have on the half pay I feel able to give for it, and take your time and do it,’ why Jim would do what he did right up to the handle ; he does right what he does do. Often and often I’ve caught myself praying, ‘Lord, if you’d send some one that was willing to let Jim work along his own slow easy way, seeing as it do n’t seem possible to stir him up, just send some one that will give him a little something regular, so he can pottér on at it and get it done finally.’ That’s the way I’ve found myself praying ! Is n’t it queer how we poor sinners take the liberty of planning for God, and laying out work for him, just as if he did n’t know what way was best to do it ! Want to run the whole universe, poor weak creatures that we are !”

“This room looks as if you did not take much idle time, Mrs. Bowles,” said Persis, glancing about.

“That’s so,” said Serena; “I have to stir; some one has to, and seems like it has always been me. Now I am glad to hear the Lord has put it into your heart to come and live right here among us, and bring a little something bright and strong and cheery to us. It will be so comfortable to see one place where all is not grind, and hurry, and pinch! Why, it will be just like a Park, a breathing-place put down here among us. We’ll get new thoughts, something fresh to dwell on. That helps amazing. Why, if you’ll believe it, a sprig of clover, or a faded bunch of apple blossoms that Jim Bowles has picked up among the market wagons—for Jim is very thoughtful that way, and kind-hearted—why, such a sprig has carried me clean away out of myself to the country, and the old times when I was a girl. I could see me laying clothes to bleach on the grass, and picking shell beans or peas along the rows in the garden; and I’d seem to be walking in my best frock under that row of popple trees on the way to church, the shadows of them white popple leaves shivering on the path, and butterflies, like flowers blown off their stems, drifting along over the pastures, and the long bench under the bomber-gilear trees, where I and Jim Bowles used to sit evenings after the milking was done, and all the air was full of laylock smell and the chirping and chirring of so many live things! Well, if you’ll believe me, by the time I was done thinking I would find half an ironing finished, and the time gone by so easy I did n’t know where it had gone to.”

“And you were from the country, Mrs. Bowles?”

“Yes, and I often feel sorry we left it ; it seems just like heaven to think of. And Jim’s sorry too, now ; but leave he would, thinking country work too hard ; but I’ve found it harder here. However, the Lord has never seemed inclined to let us go back, and I try not to fret, but to feel, real deep down, what’s his will is my will.”

“Dr. Bond says you manage, with all your hard work, to help your neighbors wonderfully.”

“Oh, no, indeed, only just the least bit in the world : a wash for some sick person, or to sit part of a night, or cook some one’s meals along with mine ; or tidy up a room, or wash a baby. You see, I’m poor, and I can’t do much, for all my will’s good enough. And isn’t it a comfort that the Lord is so favorable that he takes us for what we’re willing to do, even if we don’t reach out to accomplish it all ? It’s willing, not fulfilling, if so be we can’t fulfil.”

“I believe, looking straight into your eyes, that you are really cheerful and contented, satisfied. Tell me how you do it. Were you ‘made that way,’ as you say?”

“Well, no, miss, I was not. I’ve fretted my share, but I knew fretting was sinful and hurtful and hindered me terrible, and I kept praying the Lord would show me how to be easy in my mind ; and one day I seemed to get a revelation. The Lord showed me what he had showed plenty of other people, only I’d been too dull to see it till he took a little pains with me. I was singing ‘A charge to keep I have’ in church ; and it came upon me that my trouble was I was always craving to be happy, and supposing I was put here to be happy, while

really I was put here to keep a charge : to glorify God and train up my soul for heaven. Time enough to be happy over yonder. I says, 'Serena Bowles, henceforth you attend to that charge, and it do n't make a mite of difference if you never walk under a popple tree nor see a bombergilear again.' "

It was Persis' habit when she had received something valuable in conversation to go away and think about it. Thus now she carried off for meditation Serena Bowles' philosophy. As our minds are given to harping on little oddities, she dwelt also on the "popple trees" and the "bombergilear." What did they represent? Finally she successfully made poplar out of "popple," but the bombergilear resisted the best efforts of herself and Harriet. Then one night, lying awake, she received an illumination. She was so delighted that she sprang out of bed, ran across the hall, and knocking, called, "Harriet! Harriet! I've got it! Bombergilear is Balm of Gilead!" Then the two girls laughed so hilariously that Mrs. Sayce was constrained to call through her open ventilator to know what was so exceedingly funny at that time of night — so late that tired Serena Bowles was walking in dreams under popple and bombergilear trees.

CHAPTER VI.

TOMMY TIBBETS AND OTHERS.

“I have but thee, O Father! Let thy Spirit
Be with me still, to comfort and uphold:
No branch of palm, no shining crown I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.”

By the twenty-fifth of December the “house on Gardner Street” was finished, shining with new ceilings, new paper, and heavy coats of paint. “Jim Bowles,” as Serena called her husband, had been busy for ten days, in his plodding, accurate but lazy fashion, clearing up rubbish, cutting kindling, storing coal, cleaning the sidewalk; which last operation greatly edified Gardner Street, and no sooner was it accomplished than a score of children settled down on steps and curb-stones like a flight of sparrows.

“It’s all swept and clean like it was a parlor,” said one midget to another. “Let’s play it is a parlor.”

So there they remained daily, as long as light lasted, scrutinizing and fingering every thing that was carried in, and greatly riling the temper of the draymen, who declared that they “could n’t get into the house for children under feet.”

Persis made sallies among them, once with a big basket of apples and again with a box of doughnuts, which proceedings in no wise lessened her crowd.

Persis had visited her new friend Serena several times,

and it was through her that she secured a woman for the service of her private family of four ; an English woman lately widowed, who in great poverty had nursed her husband through a long, terrible illness.

“She needs a harbor,” said Serena ; “a quiet place where she’ll hear kind words and feel she has friends. She’s had an awful time, has Mrs. Massey ; when I consider her I say to myself, ‘Serena Bowles, you’ve no call to complain ; the Lord has seen fit to shower you with benedictions.’”

And Serena felt as if she had a new benediction, too large for words to express, when Persis offered “Jim Bowles” steady work as elevator-tender and general utility man at three dollars a week and his board.

“I hardly dared offer a man that,” said Persis to Dr. Bond ; “but somehow it seemed exactly what Serena was wishing for, and I concluded she knew Jim, and how to manage him, better than anybody else.”

“You may be sure she does,” said Dr. Bond, with a twinkle in his eyes. “To be free of Jim’s complaining about his meals, and given the room he occupies hour after hour by the stove, in the way of her tubs and irons, will be a great help to Serena. If you gave Jim six, seven or ten dollars a week he’d strike for higher wages, and find the work too hard in a month. He’ll take himself at your valuation, and conclude nobody else would want him. Jim is one of those who can’t endure prosperity. Besides, he is childish enough to enjoy riding in the elevator !”

The Clarke sisters were the first to move into the

renovated house : they found their sunny room in the top story supplied with curtains, a couple of strips of bright rag-carpet, a geranium in bloom, and a wash-stand with its furniture ; Persis knew just how far she could go in giving without hurting their feelings. The room had a fire-place, two closets and a long low mantle-piece.

“No more stove heat for you, Annie,” said Persis. “Sunshine, and the ventilation of an open fire, and in a month’s time you will be learning flower work of Cousin Susan.”

Trinka was also to learn the flower work, and Mrs. Gayley had made bold to ask for work more to her mind than sewing. “Let me have the cleaning of all the halls and of your six rooms, Miss Thrale, for my board and Trinka’s and the small room next to the Clarkes. I can make that look real neat with my own things, and being a brisk cleaner I can get done for you by dinner time, and earn enough afternoons for our clothes by sewing for the women in the neighborhood. I won’t neglect your work.”

Again Persis hesitated whether this would be fair ; ought she not to pay more to Mrs. Gayley ?

“If she’s set her price, and made her plan, let her have it,” advised Katherine Clarke. “She is more likely to feel satisfied and independent. A little liberty of choice is dearer to most of us than money.”

Harriet Hughes had been to all the houses in the neighborhood explaining the kindergarten, which was to open the day after New Year’s. The mothers were in-

vited to come and see it for themselves, and children from three to six years old were to be admitted.

“Oh is'n't this heavenly!” sighed Mrs. Massey, when she had hung the last rolling-pin and sauce-pan to her mind, looked into the beautiful depths of the new stationary tubs, opened and shut the drawer of the kitchen table, admired the box of kitchen towels and the handsome range. “Is n't this just enough to make the widow's heart sing for joy! Sure enough, the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, I have a goodly heritage! Many's the time in my troubles I felt as if I must lie down and die, but I did n't find the Lord had called me to die, but to do: and here he has saved me alive for this;” and she stood in the doorway between the dining-room and kitchen and surveyed the pretty dining-room with its stand of plants in one window—a room plain, orderly, attractive, with a few pictures on the walls, the table with a center-piece of a pot of ferns. “Oh, ain't it heavenly!”

Persis had made the rounds of the neighborhood and invited the girls and women to come and spend the evening of New Year's. “Just to have a pleasant time,” she told them, “and learn to be sociable together: she wanted to be friends with her neighbors. They would have some music and singing, a recitation or two from Miss Hughes, and a magic lantern. She felt sure they would enjoy it.”

Having invited them thus genially, and her home being swept and garnished and all complete, Persis stood in the door of her sitting-room, about four o'clock on

New Year's day, and admired it to her heart's content. The well-painted floor shone like glass, and four or five rugs lay like islands on that shining sea; there were pictures on the walls, a stand of flowers in gay bloom, a cabinet of curiosities—idols from heathen lands, jugs, money, utensils, ornaments from India, China, Alaska, and the Pacific Isles. In one corner stood a piano, and on it lay her violin; there was a case of books, and on a big table lay illustrated books and portfolios of pictures not too good to handle freely. Then there was another table with patterns and pattern books, and bits of various kinds of work, that might awaken interest or give an example. Persis felt that surely she would see that room full that evening, perhaps even be obliged to open the sliding-doors and use the flower-work room, with its long table and its shelves of boxes of material.

“How well we have got on,” she said to Katherine Clarke, who passed her coming in from an errand.

“That is because every one had her own work and did it. Miss Hughes had the kindergarten, and only that; Miss North had her dressmaking room, and no more; Miss Susan had her flower-work class to put all her time on: and as no one was over-burdened, and each did what she knew how to do, all is done easily and well.”

“I'm sure we'll have all the neighbors to-night,” said Persis. Katherine did not venture an opinion. Perhaps she knew the neighbors better than Persis did. Perhaps if Persis had heard some of the neighborhood's remarks she would not have been so sure of a full room.

“Going?” said Mrs. Mulhony. “No, I ain’t going. I do n’t want to be sung to and read to. I’ll bet you couldn’t smoke a pipe ’mong them fine ladies. Me and Mis’ Kelly will have our Welsh rabbit, and our pitcher of beer, and our pipes after, up in my room, and like it ten times better than their ‘Social’—bad luck to ’em!”

“I know I ain’t a-going neither,” said Mrs. Trawles; “the likes of her coming in in a fur cape and a hat with a feather, flaunting her good clothes, to invite me! One of her gowns would buy us all out. I do n’t want anything to do with high-flyers. If she wants our company why do n’t she dress like us?”

“That would n’t suit you either, Mis’ Trawles,” said her next neighbor. “So be she had come in with shoes trod under at the heels, and a calico with a slit pinned up, and a shawl pinned over her head, then you’d have faulted her for that—on account of her saving good clothes for big-bugs and not thinking us worth wearing them for. As for her clothes, Mis’ Trawles, she wears them as natural and do n’t think more about them than my canary of his feathers. Now, I’m going. For if there is anything a bit nice and cheery lying in my way I mean to enjoy it. We need n’t go again if we do n’t like it, or we can leave soon as we are tired of it, I reckon. I’m going to see what it is.”

“Well, Maria Jane and I can’t go,” said Mrs. Moss; “we are so dead tired, doing heavy work eleven hours a day, we just merely drop over, come night, ’most too far gone to take our clothes off. There’s no fun in lives as hard as ours.”

“I’d go, though,” said Maria Jane, “if I had a thing to wear. Seems like a little something pleasant might rest me all the same as sleep; but my gown skirt front is all spoiled and my shoe is burst out at the side, and I can’t go.”

“Far as that goes, Maria Jane, I’ll loan you my shoes and my long white apron, if so ye hanker to go. I don’t forget how ye sat up with little Kate when she was sick, and you’re always ready to do good turns, Maria Jane. I can’t go myself, for Peter has asked three of his shopmates to a supper out of some rabbits they shot, and I have to cook it and serve it.”

“Nor I can’t go,” said another woman, “along of the children. If I put them to sleep and left them the baby’d be sure to wake up and scream till all the others were awake and crying. ’Tisn’t much pleasure the likes of us get, d’ ye hear me!”

“Why can’t your husband see to the children, and let you have an evening’s pleasure?” demanded a young woman.

“The idea of his seeing after the children! Why, the men think the children are none of their business.” Thus the chorus of the women.

“I do n’t see why they are not as much their father’s business as yours. They belong to him as much as to you, both by law and gospel. Fathers ought to be glad to give a little care to their children and rest their mothers a bit. It is sure all the family would be the better for it. No doubt you have begun by taking it for granted that men can’t and won’t help

in tending the little ones. I shall not do that way. If God sends us children Jonathan and I will both see to caring for them."

"Oh, you'll see he won't! The men no more think it is their part to see to their children than it is to wash or sew."

"That begins with the notion that the men have all they can do to work and provide a living, and are doing it; but the fact is, not two men in this ward provide a good living for their families, and all the wives are adding to the sewing, washing, cooking and the care of the children, more or less work for earning wages to help matters out. And I say that any man who idles round the street corners, or sits smoking and beer-drinking in saloons, and leaves his wife unhelped in all her work, is a mean, lazy man!"

Loud laughter from the women. "Oh they call all that talking politics, and bettering their wages!"

"And how much better off are their families for it? For my part, I'm going this evening; for if there is anything coming here to make us happier or better or more sensible I want my share of it," said Mrs. Tull, the advocate of equal rights and privileges.

"Now I know all the ins and outs of this invite," said a rough-looking dame. "This singing and reading she tells of will turn out to be all hymns and Bible, and the whole thing is gotten up to chouse us all into her church, whichever it is. Folks do n't do things for nothing."

"She won't get me; I haven't time for any religion."

“More like she just wants us to come and see how fine she’s fixed up, and after that she wont know us on the street.”

“There’s plenty of quality want to come meddling in our affairs; but if we just stand up for ourselves and give them plenty of bluff they’ll get tired and drop it.”

Thus on and on, the majority of opinion being against Persis, her work and her invitation.

When evening came, instead of a crowd came only Mrs. Bowles and her friend and neighbor Mrs. Mumsey, Mrs. Tull, Maria Jane, in borrowed clothing, Mrs. Cobb, one or two others (who refused to lay off their hoods and sat near the door, ready to escape if affairs looked dangerous) and the lodgers in the house. The rooms were not full by any means. A Mrs. Picot, a Canadian-French woman, with three daughters, toy-makers, had taken two rooms on the third floor, and four or five other rooms were occupied. Persis had not found the rush for reasonable and healthful rooms which she had expected. Many preferred the dear possibility of being untidy, and nearly all were suspicious.

“You’ll get the rooms full, and with the right sort, in course of time,” said Katherine Clarke; “there will be more want to come than you can accommodate. It will be so too with the Socials; they will be crowded when they hear that people come and get away safely!”

Persis glanced about at the nearly empty room—the half-dozen outsiders looking nervous and regretful, Miss Rebecca grimly non-committal, Miss Susan truly

sympathetic with the disappointment of Persis. Then Persis began to pull herself together. She realized that if her "social evenings" were to grow in popularity and usefulness they must be made pleasant from the start. The few present that first evening would be closely questioned by those who refused their invitations. A good report must surely be carried; her blood was up to show cousin Rebecca that her plans were good and feasible. She thought of her school-days motto, *Nulla vestigia retrorsum*, and of that nobler translation of the same, "No man putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

She threw herself into the entertaining; all the family were present, Mrs. Gayley and Trinkka and Mrs. Massey. Mrs. Massey, with a book of pictures and a little basket of worsted work, knitting, and patch-work, was planted by the hooded women, who uneasily regarded the door and possibilities of flight. Serena was called to the stand of flowers, almost as fine a sight as a row of popple or bombergilear trees. Mrs. Gayley and Trinkka and Maria Jane were led to the open cabinet of curiosities. "See, this little doll is dressed exactly like a Japanese lady, and here is her bed—a mat, and a little wooden block for a pillow; and here is a little two-wheeled carriage drawn by a man, in which carriage the lady goes to her temple to pray to this idol. Idol worship is likely soon to be done away in Japan. Where is it, did you ask, Trinkka? Here is a globe: I can show you the exact place. Here we are, and we start in the cars and go here, and here, and here, to San Francisco, and

then we take a steamer"—and so on; great interest was shown in the globe and the curiosities.

Katherine Clarke had drawn Mrs. Tull to look at the books of patterns and some of the easily-made trimmings on the table. Her "sister Annie would be so glad to show her how to make these trimmings." "You could learn in an hour; and you see the material is cheap—just thread and a little braid."

Then Persis left the cabinet with Annie Clarke and herself drifted to Mrs. Massey's help and brought the conversation to cooking—soups, stews and cheap dishes; and then produced Miss Corson's book of cheap cooking, and let in a little light on good meals for little money.

"I've been to Cooking-school," said Persis, "and to Emergency lectures, and to a Nursing-school; but I expect to learn many things about plain cooking from Mrs. Massey. This room is quite warm, wont you let Mrs. Massey take your hoods and shawls? There, you will be more comfortable! Will you look at my flowers? I like to raise slips to give away; I hope to find neighbors here who will want all the slips I can pot for them. Oh, you are looking at what Trinkka has in her hand? A pair of shoes, or sandals rather, from India. Bring them here, Trinkka! Mrs. Bowles, I want you and Mrs. Mumsey to look at that square red book on the table. It is Doré's Bible Illustrations; you will like it."

So between them all in a little while everyone was at ease and interested, freely looking at the pictures, flowers and curiosities. Then three here and four there

were persuaded to play simple games—"The Mansion of Happiness," or "A Trip Around the World." They were as pleased as children, twirling the little tops, and as Miss Susan, Annie and Katherine helped play there was no trouble about the reading that was needed. Cousin Rebecca thawed, explained to some of the women her dressmaking scheme, and took two of them up to see the work-room. Then Miss Susan turned up the light in the next room and told about free lessons in flower work, and how Trinka, Annie, Marie Picot and two others would take their first lesson next day.

Then Harriet Hughes played and sang, and Persis played on her violin—common old tunes, "Swanee River," "Pop Goes the Weasel," "Blue Bonnets Over the Border," "Annie Laurie." Then Harriet played a popular melody that all the street boys were whistling and all the hand-organs were grinding out, and the guests, taking courage, joined in singing, and then sang two or three other tunes. Mrs. Massey walked up and down the hall, rubbed her eyes, and pronounced it all "heavenly."

Then Harriet recited "Roger and I," and "The Swan Song of Parson Avery," after which refreshments were served unconventionally—pop-corn being brought about, well-salted and buttered, in a great wooden chopping-bowl, and apples came, red and shining, in a new splint basket; then Mrs. Gayley handed around ginger-cookies of Mrs. Massey's make piled on a japanned tray, Trinka gave every one a Japanese paper napkin, and finally every one had a cup of tea. Great joy and

volubility came with the refreshments, and with a little urging everyone helped herself two or three times.

When ten o'clock struck Mrs. Tull remarked that they "must be going."

"Wait for one last sing," said Persis; and she and Harriet with the piano struck up "God be with you till we meet again." When it was ended Persis added, "I am very glad you all came and I wish the others had come too. Tell them so. I mean to have these Socials every Thursday evening, from seven to ten, and all the women in the neighborhood are invited and will be welcome. I shall have something to entertain you always, though maybe we shall not always have as much to eat; this being New Year's was a special occasion. Come again and bring your friends. Good night."

"Ain't it been heavenly!" sighed Mrs. Massey, gathering up cups and trays.

"A real success, I call it," said Katherine Clarke.

Next morning at nine Persis peeped into the kindergarten to see if Harriet was making a success also. The room was pretty full.

"They are all here, and Tommy Tibbets," said Harriet laughing. Tommy Tibbets was a fat, untidy baby but little over two.

"Mistook it for a Day Nursery," laughed Persis.

CHAPTER VII.

MISS REBECCA'S PROSPERS.

“How all mere fiction crumbles at her feet!
Here is woe's self and not the mask of woe.
A legend's shadow shall not move you so.”

Who and what was Tommy Tibbets? “I have not met anyone named Tibbets in this neighborhood,” said Harriet; “he is quite too young even for the kindergarten, but I do not wish to arouse enmity by sending him away.”

Meantime Tommy, indifferent to discussions concerning himself, sat on the floor and ate an apple.

“Who brought Tommy Tibbets?” This question Persis propounded several times without receiving any answer, until Mary Hook lifted her little round head from the paper on which she was making marks and volunteered the information,

“Tommy Tibbets, he comed with me!”

“Who sent him?”

“My mammy.”

“What for?”

“Said if you was taking care of babies you might as well take care of Tommy; he did n't have nobody else at all to do it.”

“Is he your little brother?”

Shrieks of laughter came from all the children who

heard the interrogation. It was so exceedingly funny to think of "brother Tommy Tibbets."

"Where is his mamma?"

"In a hole in the ground," said the literal Hook infant.

"Where does he live?"

"'Long with us; but when my dad gets home from sea mammy knows he'll send Tommy Tibbets flying; he ain't so soft-hearted as mammy, to do for strangers."

"And how long has Tommy's mamma been dead?"

"Oh, ever 'n' ever so long!"

"Before Tommy could walk?"

"Oh, no; he could run out doors and play in the gutter."

Persis concluded that Tommy's mother had been dead since summer, six months perhaps. At first the reported remarks about "might as well take care of Tommy Tibbets," and how "daddy would send him a-flying," seemed to Persis very brutal. Then common sense rose up and directed her attention to the goodness of the poor to the poor. Here was this sailor's wife, with a flock of children of her own, and little to keep them on, taking Tommy in with the rest; giving him the same rough care and careless kindness that her own brood received.

"What did ever I do that was as truly liberal as that?" Persis asked herself, and conscience frankly replied, "Nothing."

The thought of the plump, friendless, dirty baby haunted her; she went out and purchased shoes, stockings, a suit of under flannel, a woolen dress, and a pair

of check aprons. Then she came back, captured Tommy, and repaired to the bath-room. Persis had never before washed a young child; Tommy had never before been thoroughly well washed. Persis by nature obeyed the precept, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Howls, wails, roars, ear-piercing shrieks, came from that bath-room for over half an hour. Then Persis emerged, red-faced, her sleeves rolled up, her apron well wet, but leading triumphantly a radiantly clean Tommy, newly dressed, and joyfully expectant of "ever so much to eat."

Afterwards Tommy regularly went home at night, but baths, garments, and meals were nevertheless frequently and promiscuously bestowed upon him by Persis, Cousin Susan, Mrs. Massey, or Mrs. Gayley. Persis in the course of her visitations found Mrs. Hook and inquired into the status of Tommy.

"Poor kid, he don't belong anywhere," said Mrs. Hook. "His mother boarded with me, and we both worked on horse clothing for the factory; and it is hard work and poor pay. Mis' Tibbets died sudden, and Tommy just stayed on cause I couldn't turn the poor mite out. She died in June. Tommy was two last September. His father, did you say? I do n't know about him; some things made me think he was dead, and some things made me think he'd got himself into jail. When my man comes home from sea he'll send Tommy off, feeling as his own is enough, and we so crowded we can't turn round."

"I will have to provide for Tommy, then," said Per-

sis to Miss Susan ; "how I shall manage it I don't know."

"You cannot guess what hundreds of times I have wished I could adopt a child," said Miss Susan ; "I love children so, and it seems when I am real old I shall be so lonely. But Rebecca does not like children, so of course I can't do it."

"I'll ask Serena Bowles to keep the case in mind," said Persis ; "Serena always sees a way out."

"Wouldn't I love to take him," said Serena ; "I would not mind a little harder work if it was for a child. I have always wanted a child so. But, la ! Jim Bowles would scold if I had a child 'round. I can't even keep a dog or a cat, Jim is so jealous-minded. He is made that way. 'Serena,' he'd say, 'you care more for that dog than you do for me. You talk more to him and do more for him.' So there it was ; I had to give up cats and dogs for Jim's peace of mind. Men are made so queer, miss."

Persis herself did not think of adopting Tommy, or any other child. It had not occurred to her as a personal duty. She fed and clothed Tommy to relieve poor Mrs. Hook of a burden, and he spent most of his time at the kindergarten or playing on the corner of Gardner Street. Persis had not yet taken up any especial line of work ; her vacant rooms slowly filled, and week after week more women came to the Thursday Socials. They were attracted by the magic lantern, tableaux, bright little talks on sewing, cooking, nursing, from Persis, or Harriet, or their friend Mrs. Sayce ; and, what the women

liked most of all, descriptions of travels in foreign lands, especially if the descriptions were accompanied by curiosities or pictures.

After the New Year's reception Persis had made her rounds again to invite her neighbor women to a Sunday afternoon Bible reading. "We will have plenty of singing," she said, "and my friend, Mrs. Sayce, will begin regular Bible readings on the life and words of Jesus. I hope you will come. I am sure you will enjoy it."

"I'm sure we wont, and we are not coming," said a big virago. "I told 'em next thing you'd be meddling with religion; but it wont work; we sha n't have any Bible readings round here."

"And how can I be hindered having readings in my own house?" asked Persis calmly. "The readings will be a fixed fact, whether any of you will come or not. You remember we are a large family there by ourselves, and Mrs. Sayce will have a large class from the house-people if no one else comes. As long as I live here on Gardner Street I shall have a Bible reading every Sunday afternoon, no matter who comes or who opposes. I hope to make these readings very pleasant and very helpful, and I hope before long all my neighbors will be coming regularly and looking forward to them as the pleasiest things in the week. Come regularly, come occasionally, drop in for part of the hour, just as you choose; only come and see what it is before you condemn it."

"She gave old Suke as good as she got," said Mrs. Moss to Mrs. Tull, "and I was glad of it. Suke is always at somebody with her loud tongue, and I was

right pleased to see our young lady standing up with her head thrown back, looking Suke right level in the eyes, and laying down the law to her. My Maria Jane says she wouldn't be hired to stay home from Bible reading, or Social either; they just put new life in her. 'Pears like she can't talk enough about what she heard and saw and ate. I lay out to go myself next time."

"When my Bible readings and my Socials are fairly started," said Persis, "I mean to choose some regular daily work for myself, as the rest of you have. I think it will be nursing. I take naturally to that, and I don't know what is more needed around here than a Bible nurse. I can know the people better, help them more, educate them more, as a Bible nurse than in any other line of work, I think. I must get acquainted, and see what is needed, and how much and what kind of nursing I should be likely to have."

"Will you have a uniform?" asked Harriet Hughes.

"Yes: the gray dress, white sleeves, cap and apron, big cloak, and big bag—bag full of possibilities as the mother's bag in the 'Swiss Family Robinson!' The nurse's uniform is a protection; it is recognized, and gives one a respectability and standing, even in the roughest slums. The good done by the nurses secures a measure of gratitude and decent treatment. Another good thing about the uniform is that the wearer is recognized and called in to cases of which she has not known, or in sudden emergencies and accidents. The uniform is a clean and convenient garb too, and is soon associated with friendship and succor in people's minds. When

folks are sick, and you are in their homes as nurse, you can set them an example of cleanliness, neat cooking, pleasant ways; and while their hearts are softened by trouble and by gratitude you can give them bits of gospel and good advice without being supposed to preach."

"I see clearly that you will be a Bible nurse," said Harriet.

"So do I," said Persis; "but first I want to know my field better, and I want to understand some things of which I have heard. I want, for instance, to know more of the sweating system."

"You cannot go about much among the working women," said Katherine Clarke, "without coming upon that system. There is a sweat-shop round the corner, kept by a Jew named Bohm, and the work is 'men's ready made.'"

"What is the 'reason-of-being' of the system?" asked Persis.

"The sweater is a middle-man who contracts for the work from the wholesale dealer, getting a price more or less large than he pays to his work people; and that margin which he 'sweats' out of them is his living. The reason for his existence is, that many of the work people are not able to pay the guarantee for the safety of the goods taken away from the wholesale dealer's premises; others have lost their machines, or never had any. The sweater gets a cheaper room, near his work people, and so they are saved the time, fatigue and expense of the longer daily trip to work. Knowing his people, he allows the work to be carried home for finishing, and at

that all the family can help : children from three and four years of age can pull out bastings ; those a little older put on buttons ; the women fell down the hems or belt linings. I have seen poor creatures, sick, sitting up in bed doing this finishing, almost dying at the work sometimes."

"And what wages does the sweater pay?"

"The least he can, naturally. So little that women 'finishing' at home can by steady work make no more than thirty or forty cents a day. When girls first go to the sweater's shop as hand-workers he makes them work for nothing for a month, 'to learn' ; but all the time he sees to it that the work is good enough for him to be paid for. Then he gives a dollar or a dollar and a half a week, and so on up to three dollars. About twenty per cent. of all the workers for sweaters, the few representing really skilled labor, get five or six dollars a week ; and that is offset by slack times, when the market is glutted and they get nothing, or are on half or one-third wages. Some of these women getting six dollars do button-holing and pressing, but the men do most of that and are paid higher. Some women, beginning work, are too poor to buy needles, thread or wax, but when they go to a sweater's shop all those things are provided. Oh, those ready-made suits could tell rare pitiful tales if they could speak !"

"You are quite right," said Miss Rebecca, "to study the situation carefully before you make a decision, Persis. Nothing is really more difficult than to do philanthropic work well. The beginner is likely to give,

give, give, without consideration, and so make paupers ; other people, in their zeal to right wrongs, simply increase wrongs. I have known well-meaning people who, finding women at over-hard work at which they could make but a scant living, urged them into some other labor for which they were so little fitted that they could not make any living at all. Now there are Maria Jane Moss and her mother working themselves nearly to death on policemen's heavy overcoats, and yet, hard as the work is, scarcely earning enough to keep body and soul together. We all want to see them helped ; I am inclined to think that Maria Jane would do well at dressmaking, but before she can leave the coats to learn dressmaking Mrs. Moss must be put in the way of easier and better paid work that she can do."

Miss Rebecca secretly felt that her work in Gardner Street was the best that was being done. She was a very sensible, systematic woman, and had studied her plans out carefully months, even years, before she had any idea that she should ever be able to carry them out. Persis provided the large room, fuel, chairs, large and small table, and oil-stove for heating pressing-irons. Having found herself on the eve of accomplishing her plans Miss Rebecca engaged a forewoman at eight dollars a week and dinners with the family ; then she chose five girls for apprentices, intending to increase the number to eight, and these girls she designed to teach thoroughly until they were able to set up in the dressmaking business themselves or she could place them in establishments where the weekly wages were higher. All of

Miss Rebecca's girls were dependent on themselves for entire support, and so even at the beginning they must be paid. Miss Rebecca had no scale of wages, but one fixed price for all as long as they remained with her—and that was but three dollars a week and dinners. The work on which these new hands could be employed was of the plainest and simplest; fashionable customers willing to pay well would be little likely to find their way to Gardner Street. Neat work and perfect fitting Miss Rebecca meant to teach, and she had also the prospect of supplying a few handsome garments for the last work of her apprentices, as they completed their course of instruction and went out, leaving their places to others.

“Good instruction, good influences, a healthful, pleasant work-room, interest in their health, manners, and morals, help in finding for them good positions when they are well taught—that is what I propose for my girls,” said Miss Rebecca. “My five thousand dollars brings me three hundred a year, and half of that I keep for myself, and half I shall use on my girls. The dinners for the girls will cost me twenty-five cents a day, and that will be seventy-eight dollars a year. Then I shall have seventy-two dollars left for thread, needles, pins, scissors, and making up any wages where we come short. A scant pattern, Persis, but I shall make it do. I always was good at cutting my coat to suit my cloth.”

“How you are to give eight girls a dinner for twenty-five cents passes my guessing,” said Persis, “and I hope you will let me take a lesson in economy from you, Cousin Rebecca.”

“I shall have a loaf of bread and plenty of good soup. The soup shall be different every day in the week, hot, rich, and a big bowl of it for each. The bread will cost five cents; I shall get a loaf a day old, a long loaf, and cut it into eight equal pieces. The soup will cost twenty cents. Bean soup one day, pea soup another, soup of mutton bones with rice and maccaroni another, tomato soup with beef bones; shin of beef soup with plenty of vegetables for two successive days, so that I can lay out forty cents at once; the pea and bean soups will cost less than twenty cents, the tomato soup a bit more, and so it will even up. Come out for an evening or two and see me buy.”

Every evening the steadfast Miss Rebecca went for her bread and soup-stuff; each morning before breakfast she was in the kitchen preparing her soup. When it was all ready Mrs. Massey was glad to see that it cooked steadily without burning. At noon one of the girls in turn laid a cloth on the small table, took eight bowls and spoons, a bread plate and a knife from the corner closet and laid them on the table; then she went down on the elevator for the loaf and the covered soup boiler, and bringing them up cut the bread and filled the bowls. When the meal was over another girl put the bowls in the empty boiler, went down to the kitchen and washed them neatly, and so the meal was over. The improved flesh, strength, and complexion of the apprentices soon spoke clearly in behalf of the advantage of even one well-cooked nourishing meal in a day. Three of Miss Rebecca's girls had a room in the house, and it did the heart

of Persis good to see how these girls changed for the better ; their health improved, their manners softened, their language grew more refined, they looked cheerful and hopeful, and instead of lying in bed all Sunday morning, and taking a walk or visiting in the afternoon, they were off for church, attended the Bible reading and availed themselves of the library which Persis provided. This library was kept in the lower hall, and the only rule about it was that whoever took out a book must put in its place a slip of paper with her name and the date.

Miss Rebecca's pride in her dressmaking establishment was pleasant to behold ; brusque, dictatorial as she was, her girls trusted her, obeyed her, and soon came to love her as their tireless, faithful friend.

“One thing I can't and won't do,” said Miss Rebecca, “is to teach girls how to sew. They must know how to make the stitches when they come to me. I can't do everything. I must draw a line somewhere, and I draw it there. If I spend time teaching girls to hem, run, fell, overcast, stitch, and so on, I cannot do justice to my customers, or to the girls who know how to sew and should learn dress and cloak making. I will not begin on girls who baste so that you can put two fingers between stitches, run a hem and call it hemming, and gather with long and short stitches promiscuously.”

Persis soon found that there were plenty of girls, large and small, who could not sew, and who were disappointed at finding Miss Rebecca's workroom was not a sewing-school. Poor children ! Who would teach them ?

“Loan me the kinder gartenroom from ten to four on Saturdays and Wednesdays and I will have a sewing-school,” said Mrs. Sayce, who was greatly interested in the Gardner Street venture.

Persis was delighted with the sewing-school. But Persis was of the Jacob nature: while she looked well to the affairs of this life her chief hopes were set on the future, the land that lies very far off, and the heavenly birthright filled all her horizon with its surpassing excellence. “What are you doing for their soul-life, Cousin Rebecca?” she asked.

“I ask a blessing for them at their dinner regularly before I go down stairs,” said Miss North, “and we begin every day with a Bible verse, and a little prayer that the Lord will keep our thoughts and our tongues, and make us honest in work, not with eye-service as men pleasers, but with singleness of heart as unto God.”

“That is good,” said Persis; “but if their thoughts and tongues are to be kept they should have something given them to talk of and think of. I should like to come up each morning and tell them a little story, a fact, if you think it would not disturb your work.”

“I do n’t know. If the story is not too long it might not; but then they’d forget it before you were down stairs.”

Persis laughed. “I think I am a more impressive story teller than that! Besides, I shall illustrate my story by a water-color sketch, which I shall have hung up on the wall, or a chalk outline, or a colored crayon.”

“Well—try it,” said Miss North dubiously. “This one thing I do,” was her business motto, and she greatly feared having attention distracted.

Persis cheerfully accepted the reluctant permission, and next day she appeared with a sheet of grey board on which was broadly washed in a mediæval figure.

“I want to tell you a story,” she said, “of a man named Raimond Lully, who lived in the time of the Crusades. He was born about the middle of the thirteenth century, was rich, educated, lived at court, and seemed until he was thirty years old to care only for pleasure. The Crusades, undertaken to capture the Holy Sepulchre and other sacred places in Palestine from the Turks, did not move Raimond Lully, he cared nothing for them; but one night, as he sat on his bedside composing a song, the thought of Christ, the crucified Saviour, was brought before him—Christ, dying for him, and worthy of all his love and all his service. As Paul and Cornelius saw the vision of the One altogether lovely, and arose and followed him, so Raimond Lully desired nothing but to follow in the steps of Christ, and convert the heathen world to the knowledge of Jesus. Louis, Tancred, Richard of the Lion Heart, Fredrick Barbarossa, other kings, warriors, hermits, went sword in hand to the Crusades; but for fifty years Raimond Lully went out alone, unhelped, to carry the gospel to the heathen world. He counted all toil, sorrow, pain, loss, as nothing, that he might win some souls to love his Lord. Wherever he went calling the heathen to the knowledge of God he also called the careless, idle so-named Chris-

tians of the time to cease from serving self and serve the Saviour; persecuted, imprisoned, shipwrecked, he counted all but gain if he might bring some to the knowledge of Christ. At last in Algiers, in a little town where he was preaching, he was stoned to death. He had fought a good fight, kept the faith, and received the crown of glory."

CHAPTER VIII.

A BIBLE NURSE.

“Suffice it if my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven by thy abounding grace,
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.”

“COUSIN REBECCA,” said Persis at dinner time, “did my little story distract the attention of your girls, and cause them to do poor work this morning?”

“I don’t know that it did,” admitted Miss Rebecca reluctantly, for she mortally hated to yield a point.

“It did them good,” spoke up the forewoman, who dined with the family. “They worked well, and they had more sensible, improving conversation than I ever heard from them before. They discussed whether such a sudden entire change as came upon Raimond Lully often occurred; and whether it was likely to be permanent. They talked of the gay, luxurious life he left, and the hard, painful life that he assumed; and then they made account of the more than five hundred years he had been in heaven, as set over against the fifty years of his labors, and added the thought that of the years of reward there would be no ending. One of them said that she should ‘hate to be as old and near death as Suke Ryan, and as wicked;’ another said she ‘would be willing any minute to take old Mrs. Mumsey’s place, if she could have her assurance of eternal life.’”

“And I told them,” interposed Miss Rebecca, “that choice was open to them, and it depended upon how they lived whether they reached age and the border-line of life like Mrs. Mumsey, or like Suke Ryan.”

“Mrs. Mumsey, whoever she is, seems to have made a deep impression on them in favor of godliness,” said the forewoman.

“Mrs. Mumsey is a saint,” said Miss Susan.

“She is one of God’s hidden ones,” said Harriet.

“She has been life-long in the school of affliction, and it has worked out for her the peaceable fruits of righteousness,” added Miss Rebecca.

“I think any respect for religion, any desire after holiness, any fear of sin, that may be found here and there in this neighborhood,” said Persis, “is due more to Mrs. Mumsey than to all other people put together.”

“She must be gifted in speaking of religion,” said the forewoman.

“She does not speak at all,” said Persis; “she has a bronchial affection, and can scarcely speak above a whisper. Instead of talking religion she lives it.”

“Which is even better.”

“She is a small, frail, feeble old body, poor, forced to daily work for daily bread; very lonely, for all her kin are gone; but on her mouth is a smile of patient acquiescence in all that comes, because it comes from God; and in her eyes shines the light of a steadfast hope. I am going to see her this afternoon; and whenever I go I feel benefited. But, Cousin Rebecca, you have not told me if I can tell your girls stories in the future.”

“Of course, if it does n't distract them any more than it did to-day,” said Miss Rebecca. It always soothed her feelings to observe how careful Persis was not to infringe on her especial work. In fact Persis was careful not to trespass on any one: Harriet Hughes administered the kindergarten without any interference; Miss Susan was supreme in her flower-work room; Mrs. Sayce conducted the sewing-classes and the Bible readings on her own lines; Persis rendered all possible aid, stood back of all financially, but infringed on no one's rights. For herself, she was learning more of the neighbors, more of their needs and peculiarities; was making friends among them, and perhaps some enemies, like Suke Ryan.

A field of work as Bible nurse more and more forced itself on her attention. As she “spied out the land” about Gardner Street she saw weakly, sore-eyed children who could be made strong and healthy by proper care. This the nurse could give, and meanwhile instruct the mothers in carrying out her plans; she heard of sprains, fractures, burns; there were wee babies to be suitably looked after, and sick mothers to be tided over a hard place, and old people with coughs and rheumatisms to be helped and made comfortable.

Behind the Bible nurse must usually stand the committee, or society, or wealthy friend, to supply the food, medicines, clothing, bedding, the thousand comforts needed by the sick. Persis as a Bible nurse sent out by herself, at her own charges, and responsible for all her expenses, found it needful first “to count the cost,” lest,

having begun the work, she might not be able to finish. Her own monthly income, the expenses of the Gardner Street house, and the amount of money which she could put into her nursing business, must all be considered. By April all the rooms in the Gardner Street House were full. Miss Rebecca's dressmaking, *plus* the one hundred and fifty dollars which she added to it, paid its way. Miss Susan could make the same report about her artificial-flower work, with ten apprentices ; the sewing-classes and Bible class were supported by Mrs. Sayce.

"You are proving a first-rate financier," said Mr. Inskip. "I had no idea so much work could be done for so little money. In giving ten thousand dollars to your cousins, in repairing and furnishing the Gardner Street house, you used up a large share of the savings of your minority, upon which I prided myself ; but all the rest of your property is intact, and appreciating, and you are living eighteen hundred dollars within your income ; by re-investing that regularly we can bring affairs up again."

"I shall reinvest it, but not in the way you think of," said Persis. "A hundred a month I shall now assign to Bible nurse work ; three hundred yearly I will dedicate to summer vacation weeks, to some sick children and poor mothers among my clients ; and three hundred is to set up a new industry in Gardner Street. There are some women there working themselves to death on heavy overcoats and getting almost nothing for it."

Mr. Inskip reluctantly gave up the idea of saving margins for Persis. "Do n't intrench on your capital,"

he implored ; he had nursed this capital so long that he felt it a sacrilege to infringe upon it.

“I wont,” said Persis laughing, “because that capital gives me assured income for my work ; but be sure that I shall not save income—that is dedicated.”

Bright and happy in her new plans, Persis left Mr. Inskip’s office and hastened to her “ward,” as she called it. Up the many stairs that led to the room of Maria Jane and Mrs. Moss she went. There the two were bending at their heavy work—worn and dull-eyed ; but they brightened at sight of Persis, and she could not fail to see that they looked less feeble, miserable and forsaken than they did when she came to Gardner Street. She had brought them friendship, new hope, some few comforts. She told herself that she had been too slow and cautious, and had left them to struggle too long. The nature of Persis was to hasten slowly, to prove all things, and undertake only what she was sure of carrying out. Cousin Rebecca and Mr. Inskip had fostered this trait ; both had feared that the enthusiastic zeal of Persis might outrun her judgment.

“At last,” said Persis, “I have a plan for you ! If you like my plan this will be the last batch of coats you will touch.”

“I wish it might. It is killing us,” said Maria Jane ; “and between us we make only six fifty a week. And we have to work together. Mother could not do it alone ; it needs two.”

“Very well. I can now give you easier work, and seven dollars a week, and *a future*. Think of that,

Maria Jane : to be building up to something better ! You can go into Cousin Rebecca's dressmaking, she will pay you three dollars and dinners from the start, and in six months or a year can no doubt get you as well placed as her other girls, with a wage of five or six dollars. Mrs. Moss, I'm going to set up as Bible nurse for this district. I shall want a depot of sheets, pillow-cases, night-dresses, infants' clothes, slings, bandages, and when I provide the material you can make up these things ; and in many cases they will need to be done up by you when they are exchanged. I will furnish soap and fuel, and you can have change of work—some washing, some sewing ; and then, I may need to call on you for some nursing help. You are to be my right hand. This will give you easier work, change, some out-of-door exercise, and I expect the various little perquisites will make you out about five dollars a week. Maria Jane, I want you to keep your courage up, for I mean to send you and your mother to the beach for a week or ten days in July, in charge of four or five little children. You will be boarded, and all you will have to do will be to play on the sand. Wont that be nice?"

Persis' cheeks and eyes were glowing with joy, the joy of service. Mrs. Moss and Maria Jane were fairly crying with relief, thankfulness, gratitude.

"Come over to Cousin Rebecca to-morrow, Maria Jane," said Persis, "and, Mrs. Moss, you had better take to-morrow for a house cleaning and general straightening out, preparatory to beginning on the material I shall send in to you the next day."

Away went Persis, and then Maria Jane rose up in her might. "Mother! It is two o'clock. We can get these coats done by four. Then let us make ourselves as neat as we can, take them home, say we don't want any more, and when we get our money let us buy some cold meat and biscuits and cookies and get on a street car and go out to the Park, and stay there till dark! We haven't ever had an outing, and now I know the grass will be green, and the air is lovely and mild, and the Park will be full of people; oh, let us hurry and do it. It seems as if I should be clear made over by a treat like that."

"Why, Maria Jane, I do believe you are inclined to be extravagant," said her mother.

All the same, they both worked with a speed sustained by hope, and Maria Jane's programme was carried out to a dot. They came home at nine o'clock, tired, but with a new, healthful weariness such as woos sleep; and Maria Jane said she felt as if she had seen the world and been somebody.

"Oh, mother, isn't it beautiful to live to serve God and do good, as Miss Persis Thrale does! I wonder why more folks don't try it. Wouldn't the world be lovely!" said Maria Jane.

"Perhaps more do do it," said Mrs. Moss, "but we do not know of them, and they don't know of our Miss Thrale. 'Pears to me it must be so, for Miss Thrale says she finds all this in the Bible and her Christianity; so of course there must be hundreds of folks living up to their Christianity the same way."

“Mighty queer that we never met ’em,” said Maria Jane.

That evening the family, consisting of the Misses North and Harriet, were together, Katherine and Annie Clarke having come down as usual for the evening in the family room, and Persis seized the opportunity to say, “At last I have made up my mind: I shall be a Bible nurse, in my own fashion and at my own charges. I find there is need for just such work around here, and it draws me more and more. I have been talking over affairs with Mr. Inskip and find I can support a nurse business very nicely.”

“I’m afraid,” said Miss Susan, “that you will wear yourself out. You will deny yourself things that are needful to you. You will give all and keep nothing.”

“Oh I am much more greedy than that,” said Persis. “Harriet and I are going for a month to the sea-shore, and we shall have the very best time that we can. Do I not dress as well as ever, and keep up my former acquaintances and go to my socials and clubs the same as ever? I have not cut myself off from the world I lived in or the comforts of life. If I did, I should repel and discourage many whom I hope by degrees to interest in this work that I am doing, so that they can select some part of the city for a field of labor and work as they see to be good. Cousin Rebecca, I want you and Cousin Susan to go away for a vacation before or after Harriet and I go. I think it will prolong life and working force for you. We must not forget that the laborer is worthy of his hire.”

Then Persis explained her plan of nurse work, and

how Mrs. Moss was to help her. "I want your girls to make me two uniform-suits of grey, Cousin Rebecca, and then as they have time make three flannel wrappers and four cotton ones for my invalids. There is an order for you."

"Glad of it. We were pretty nearly out of work," said Miss North.

"Persis is a good girl," said Miss Rebecca to Miss Susan, when they were alone in their room; "an excellent girl; but heady. It is well that she has us here to think for her a little."

"Why, sister Rebecca, I thought she was unusually prudent, and such a judicious planner."

"I don't fully take to having her run round in a nurse's dress," said Miss Rebecca, shaking her head; "she should consider what she is born to and the credit of the family. I like to see her well dressed. She wears handsome clothes easily and naturally, and they become her. A Thrale might do better than wear a grey *barege* gown and cloak."

"The reasons she gave for using the uniform of a nurse were to me quite convincing," said Miss Susan. "You know her nursing hours will be from eight until half-past twelve. In the afternoon she will wear her usual dress."

Miss Rebecca was still unappeased. "I've never felt quite sure of the sense of her living here and associating with such poor commonplace people. The Thrales have always lived up town and held their heads high."

"Oh, sister Rebecca! Pride goeth before destruction,

and a haughty spirit before a fall. Our dear Lord left the throne of glory to live with simple men ; and he had not where to lay his head. The way of the Master may surely be good enough for the servant."

"Yes, there is that way of looking at it. But if every one abandoned her station in life to work at philanthropy what would become of the world, sister Susan ?"

"It might be better off every way, sister Rebecca."

"However, she is young ; she may marry, and return to her fitting place."

"She has not abandoned her place : she has not given up her old friends. She calls on them, visits them : goes to teas and clubs, and she and Harriet you know often have a carriage and go off to lectures and concerts ; they have invited us time and again, only we would not go. Persis says the way to interest her friends, the circle she has moved in, in this work which she is doing, is to go among them and let them see she is not warped or isolated by her new life ; and to have them come here and see how we manage, and meet our people. You know she has begun to invite two or three of her old friends to come to her Thursday socials and help entertain ; and has sent out 'at home' cards for Tuesday and Saturday evenings, so that her friends may come and discuss Clubs, and Settlements, and various branches of philanthropy."

"I only hope she will keep it up, and not drift down and down among these people until she is only a worn-out unthanked drudge," said Miss Rebecca, who often fell into a misanthropic mood.

Miss Susan, on the contrary, always walked in the sunshine. Of the two, Persis loved Miss Susan best and found Miss Rebecca the best adviser; for her very pessimism secured a careful investigation of both sides of every question.

The first day on which Persis set forth in her nurse's uniform, bag in hand, she found herself watched from every window and door in the neighborhood. She had laid her plans, looked out her cases, and received "pointers" from Serena Bowles and Mrs. Moss.

"I have come to help you look after Jenny, Mrs. Small. I hear she has a slow fever. Has she had a doctor?"

"Yes, but he says she needs nursing more than doctoring, and I don't know what to do—me so busy, and not knowing anything about nursing. Maybe you do, Miss."

"I think so. Let me take charge of the case. She needs a good warm soda bath, and a clean gown and bed. While I am getting that ready let us air this room, and then darken it, give her some nourishment, and put her to sleep."

"She can't sleep, and she wont eat, Miss."

"We'll see about that. You'll drink some lemonade, wont you, Jenny? And, if you take a good sleep, to-morrow I will make you a funny pig out of a lemon."

"Oh, ain't you handy! What a blessing it is to know things," sighed Mrs. Small, as Persis bathed Jenny, combed and braided her hair, made lemonade, and finally laid the refreshed child in a well-made bed.

“There, now! Shut your eyes, and think about that lemon pig! Mrs. Small, keep the window open, the door into the next room shut, put down the curtain, and do n't let anyone but yourself come in here. After she wakes up mop the floor. Put this stuff in a bowl of water on the stand. Remember, it is poison. It is a disinfectant. Mrs. Moss will bring Jenny another clean gown and some beef tea at noon. What noise is that I hear?”

“Comes from Suke Ryan's room. My! ain't she going on!”

Persis hastened to Suke Ryan's room. The woman had just scalded her foot terribly. “Here I am!” cried Persis; “let me see to that foot. That is a bad burn! Now just do as I tell you and I will make you comfortable.” She put Suke in her rocking-chair, and seeing only a dirty gingham apron at hand laid that on the floor before her and emptied upon it about five pounds of flour that stood in a paper bag in the corner. Placing the burnt foot on the flour, she carefully brought it up thickly over the scalded skin, and then bound the edges of the apron about it.

“Now, about noon I'll come in and paint the foot thickly with glycerine-and-bismuth paste, and I do n't think you will have any more pain; only you must keep quiet, and let me dress it every day. Now I will make your room comfortable; let me tip back your chair a little more.”

She made up the bed, swept the floor, and rubbed the dusty stove with a newspaper.

“Now here is a basin of water ; wash your face and hands and I will comb your hair. I have wrappers to loan my patients ; at noon Mrs. Gayley shall bring you one, and also your dinner. I will send you a clean pillow case and ask Mrs. Gayley to mop your floor. There, now ; the window is open and the air is pleasant. I will put this stand by you, and your work ; if you work you wont notice your foot so much.”

“Well, you are good to a body, if you are a religious one !” cried Suke.

“Why do n't you say, ‘You are good to a body because you are a religious one?’” said Persis. “The Bible says, ‘To do good—forget not.’ Did you ever hear the story of the Good Samaritan?”

“No, I never did.”

“I'll read it to you, and you can think of it while you work.”

She began, “‘A certain man went . . . and fell among thieves.’”

“Yes,” said Suke, “that's just it ; perlice never on hand when they are wanted. Kinder out in the country, I s'pose.”

Persis read on, “leaving him half dead.’”

“Poor critter ! Wonder how much money they took from him.”

“‘And by chance there came down a certain priest that way. . .’”

“Oh, I'll warrant ; jest like them priests ! I never took stock in 'em, nor in parsons neither—Doctor Bond nor the lot of 'em.”

“ ‘And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked.’ ”

“ ‘Oh, yes, they stare. I reckon if you had n’t come in, and I’d screeched awhile, every woman in the house would ‘a’ been in here staring, as if that’d help me any!’ ”

“ ‘But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was.’ ”

“ ‘S’mar’tan? I never saw that breed of people. I’ve seen Jews and Poles and Swedes and Hungarians and Scotch; no S’mar’tans.’ ”

“ ‘And bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.’ ”

“ ‘Do tell! What queer medicine. Never knew oil and wine was good for cuts before. Wonder how he came to have them handy.’ ”

CHAPTER IX.

IN HUMBLE DUTIES.

“ ‘Blessed they who do his bidding,’ cries the angel day and night, ‘They shall find abundant entrance; they shall walk with Him in white.’ ”

“ ‘DON’T you get tired of it all, Persis?’ ” asked Miss Rebecca, as her young kinswoman one April day left the breakfast table and took up her grey cloak and bag. “ ‘Don’t you long for your old Egypt, as the Hebrews longed in the wilderness—the Egypt of good clothes, easy times, amusement, vacations?’ ”

“ ‘No, Cousin Rebecca, I do not. I was never better satisfied in my life; never happier. I had twenty-five years of gathering, harvesting, accumulating, whatever you may call it, and the time had come when I ought to go out for seed-sowing, and distributing what I had gained. I was never in better health than now. If I found my strength failing a particle I should see it to be my duty to go off for a rest. But my work suits me, and I do good.’ ”

“ ‘You certainly do do good, Persis,’ ” said Rebecca. “ ‘I know more than one life has been saved here by your nursing, and see what different beings Annie Clarke and Maria Jane are! You are making a new woman of Mrs. Moss, and of Mrs. Bowles too, and Trinkka owes everything to you. Yes, you *are* doing good.’ ”

It was seldom that Miss Rebecca spoke out so warmly of Persis' work. That morning she was particularly pleased, for the previous evening Persis had asked her to go over her month's account of the nursing work ; and then they had reckoned up the cost of the various vacations Persis was to supply money for, and Persis had taken Cousin Rebecca's advice not to use three hundred for starting some small new industry, but to hold it in reserve for emergencies in the Nursing and Vacation line. "It is well not to cramp what you have begun, Persis ; and it is better to do two or three things thoroughly than more poorly. These vacations will cost heavier than you think, and be worth more than you, who always have had them, can guess."

So Persis accepted Miss North's advice, and Miss North looked benignly at Persis and praised her work.

"I am receiving, in largeness of life, far more than I give, Cousin Rebecca," said Persis, as she buttoned her cloak. "I more and more measure all else by eternity. I live by hope, that hope of the resurrection and the immortal life which the apostle knows and speaks of as hope. In ministering to others I am ministered unto myself. When things here look discouraging, and I feel as if no progress was being made, then I turn my eyes to the heavenly horizon and find it large and bright."

Cousin Rebecca proceeded up stairs to her work-room considering that she would give her girls for a text that day, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?"

Persis, bag in hand, went down the street. Her objective point was little Mrs. Tull's home, where there was a very glad young mother and a fat new baby to be cared for. As she passed Mrs. Hook's out ran that worthy dame, surrounded as usual by her own brood of children and Tommy Tibbets.

"Oh, Miss, wont you please stop!"

"Nothing wrong with any of you, I hope, Mrs. Hook?"

"Oh, no; but it is about Tommy."

"Tommy looks all right; they are going to school, aren't they?"

"True, Miss, but it is that I can't keep Tommy longer. My man I am looking for every day, in from a two years' voyage, and he won't abide to see us loaded up with Tommy. Why, Miss, did you ever count heads for me? Seven, if there's one, and poor little Tommy, he is eight. And do but look at the two rooms, Miss, for ten to live in, sleeping, cooking, eating, working. Why they're that full you can't swing a cat in 'em! To get on so for ourselves, Miss, it isn't decent, nor possible longer. I have hired out my Katy, for board and clothes, to the grocer's wife down on the corner, and bargained she is not to be put upon over and beyond her strength; and she is to go to the night school at your house, Miss. And Katy is only eleven; poor child, she has to start out early! And Ben I've hired to the butcher in Webster Street for home and clothes, and free Sundays and night school too. So, Miss, my man wont think it looks to reason, me putting out my own and keeping Tommy, that is no kith or kin."

“That is true,” said Miss Thrale gravely. “You have been very good and liberal. It is time Tommy was put where he can be looked after and brought up. You have been very kind. I’ll see to him.”

“You’ll find them as will be good to the mite, and let me see him sometimes, Miss?”

“Yes, indeed; you’ve been a real mother to him.”

“But you’ve helped me out liberal with him. When will you take him?”

“Now,” said Persis, promptly. “‘If it is well when it is done, then it is well that it were done quickly.’ Come on, Tommy.”

Persis took Tommy’s plump hand and went on, thinking that here was a homeless child while the world was full of childless homes, and how many people would be proud of Tommy if they had him. But what should she do with Tommy?

It was not far to Serena Bowles, and Serena was a good counsellor. They went up the stairs, Tommy sturdily clambering along step after step. Serena was just ready to begin ironing. Her irons were hot, a basket of neatly folded clothes stood under the ironing board. Persis perched Tommy on a chair and stated his case.

“I’ve been thinking of him. I knew it would come soon. Tom Hook ain’t a very easy-going man.”

“I’m prepared to pay his board and buy him a bed,” said Persis. “And you know he spends every morning at the kindergarten, and Mrs. Gayley gives him three or four baths a week, and I provide his clothes. He is a nice child, Serena.”

“So he is! Wish I had him; but there is Jim Bowles, he’d go off his head. He don’t like children.”

“You know the neighborhood better than I do, Serena. Where can I put him, where he can have kindness and good influences?” said Persis, secretly thinking that in their attitude towards children Cousin Rebecca and Jim Bowles were greatly alike.

“Put him with Mrs. Mumsey, over there across the hall,” said the prompt Serena. “Her hands are getting too stiff to work fast and she hardly makes enough to keep her; she could n’t live, only she has her two little rooms rent free. Mrs. Glover, who owned the house, made her son promise when she died that Mrs. Mumsey was to be free of rent all her life. Dr. Bond’s ladies remember her at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and so she manages; but if you gave her Tommy, and paid a dollar a week for him, she’d be just made. After all you do for the child there is not much expense left, and I’ll do his washing. There, don’t say you’ll pay for it, for I wont take a cent. It is little enough I can do to serve the Lord by helping my neighbors; but I can rub up those clothes, and I mean to do it.”

“And you think Mrs. Mumsey would take Tommy?”

“She’d be glad to. She dotes on children; she is lonesome; in two or three years more Tommy could be a real help to her, going errands and so on. It’s true she is n’t likely to live to see him grown up, but she’ll give him such a start towards heaven while she does live that his feet wont easily be turned out of the straight and narrow way.”

“I’ll go and speak to her,” said Persis. “Come, Tommy.”

Tommy, for whom the important matter of a home and a foster mother were being settled, with delightful unconcern was playing with his bare toes, and trying to count them. When Persis took him into Mrs. Mumsey’s room he went and rested his arm on the old lady’s lap, and leaned his head back on her breast, with great content.

“And how comes Tommy here this time in the morning?” said Mrs. Mumsey. “I thought it was kindergarten time.”

“Tommy is like Gideon’s Band, ‘hunting for a home,’” said Persis, and detailed the plan suggested by Serena.

“Now may the dear Lord bless you for the good thought,” said Mrs. Mumsey; “but there, it was the Lord himself that put it into your mind! The dollar a week will make me quite comfortable; but that is not the best of it. I have been so lonesome, miss! I’m wakeful nights, and I feel so lonely then! I’ve often thought that a child of God has no right to ever feel like that, seeing the Father is never far away. But I’m old and weakly, and no doubt he makes my excuse. It will be such a comfort when I’m wakeful just to put out my hand and find the little warm, comfortable creature slumbering there in his little bed. I tell you, Miss Thrale, we’re both children, Tommy and me, and we’ll fit very well. Tommy’s in his first childhood, and I’m creeping to my second, and we’ll take real comfort together! I

shall so love to tell him Bible stories and teach him verses. You'll love me, Tommy?"

"Yes," said Tommy, his round cheeks dimpling as he looked up hastily from under his long lashes, and then down again, and began to trace with his finger the pattern of Mrs. Mumsey's gown.

"Little Lena, on the first floor here, comes to kindergarten, and will bring him every day," said Persis. "I will send over a cot and bedding, a little rocking-chair, and a few dishes. Mrs. Gayley bathes him three or four times a week, and he always has his dinner with Mrs. Massey. Come, Tommy, since your lot in life is settled for a season I think you must go to school, and I must make my rounds. Thank you so much for taking the child, Mrs. Mumsey."

"Oh, Miss, it is a privilege! Doesn't it say in Scripture, 'Whoso receiveth one such little child receiveth me?'"

Persis went her way laying the verse to heart. Had she missed an opportunity of receiving Christ? Was she putting herself out of the line of blessing? With her usual slow, long-sighted way of considering plans and questions, she laid this up to be discussed on all sides and finally settled. At present she had her nursing duties for the morning to occupy all her attention. Little Mrs. Tull was to receive her first cares.

"How neat you look in here," said Persis; the floor was swept, the stove clean, the bedclothes straightened.

"Jonathan did that," said Mrs. Tull, proudly. "Jonathan can turn his hand to anything. He didn't

want you to find things careless looking. It made me laugh to see how carefully he washed the dishes and put them by."

"He is worth his weight in gold," said Persis. "Have you had anything to eat?"

"Jonathan made me a cup of tea, and I had some bread and butter with it."

"All right. Now I will see that you are washed and have a clean gown, and that this baby is dressed. Then I will make you some Graham gruel, and at noon Mrs. Gayley will bring you a bowl of Cousin Rebecca's soup. I hope you are remembering what I have told you about keeping perfectly quiet, not having any visiting or gossiping; allow only one person in here at a time, and use no water for any purpose at all unless it has been well boiled."

"Yes, indeed, Miss; I remember it all. Jonathan and I would no more disobey a word you lay down than if it was the law and the gospel. I feel so safe, knowing you understand just how everything should be."

"It is well to have a quiet time now, to do some thinking," said Persis, as she picked up the baby. "You have a new duty in life. It depends largely upon you whether this little man spends his days in travelling toward heaven, and reaches there in the end, or not. You must consider now that in the ways where you and your husband walk little feet will come pattering after you. You must love this child, teach him, set him a good example, pray for him and pray with him. Begin well, go on well, and you will end well. You know

where you can get wisdom and strength. God gives to all that ask. There, now Mr. Baby is in order and I will make that gruel. Here is a new large-print text to hang on the wall, to give you a little fresh thought as you lie here quietly. Are there any more cases around here that you know of?"

"Mrs. Koon's baby is sick; she asked me to tell you."

"She's been feeding it pork and pickles probably," said Persis, with a trace of Miss Rebecca's grimness. "If mothers will turn their babies' stomachs into wholesale groceries they cannot expect them to keep well."

"Yet some children eat everything, and seem to thrive."

"Seem to for a time, but in the long run injudicious feeding tells. The constitution, morals and brains of the children suffer accordingly. Mind you feed this child of yours according to the laws and intentions of nature. It is easy if you begin right."

A tap came at the door, and a little girl looked in: "Oh, Miss Thrale, mammy's hurt her foot dreadful!"

"I'll be there in five minutes. Go and get hot water ready, Jenny. Hot water is always in order," said Persis.

"Since you cured Suke Ryan's foot," said Mrs. Tull, "she is a great champion of yours. Jonathan said yesterday she slapped a woman in the face for saying you were a fool to live here nursing if you were rich enough to live up town and ride in your carriage and do nothing. They came near getting Suke arrested, but some of the other women made peace between them."

“I wish, instead of slapping people in my behalf, Suke would quit her drinking, come to Bible readings, and try to be a good woman,” said Persis, as she finished making the gruel and placed it on a little stand by Mrs. Tull.

“I’m afraid that will never be, Miss Thrale. Suke is the greatest heathen in the world, I do truly believe.”

Bright and happy, Persis went from house to house in her morning rounds. Her health was perfect, she enjoyed her duties, and felt that she was doing good. What a real guardian angel she was to her neighborhood she did not realize, for daily self obtruded less and less into the thoughts of Persis. She was so busy for others that self was passing out of sight. If now she had recalled how but a few months before she stood outside of Katherine Clarke’s door wondering how she could make acquaintance, she would have given a surprised laugh. It was so easy now to make acquaintance with people. The secret was that she was now so interested in people.

Early in February Persis had secured the opening of a night school in the kindergarten room five evenings in a week. Some young friends of Harriet Hughes and herself, college seniors, three ladies and three gentlemen, had agreed to establish the night school, teaching by two and two in turn. Agreeably to her usual plan, Persis left this enterprise entirely in the hands of its conductors, furnishing room, fuel and light, and securing pupils whenever she could do so in her rounds in the neighborhood, but in no wise interfering further. This plan not only saved Persis from being overworked and becoming nervous, but

it left her coadjutors in philanthropic work room to develop their own schemes, and gave the people for whom they were working the advantage of new methods and new friends.

Persis was indefatigable in a quiet way in securing helpers. She bore the needs of her work in mind, and where she saw among her friends those who could supply a need she was not slow to make request. Much of the work done in Miss North's dressmaking school came through the quiet suggestion here and there of Persis. She had among her friends a railroad director, and unfolding to him her scheme of summer vacations for some of her poor friends she was promised passes for their trips to the beach or country. An old acquaintance of Persis' mother, who had always been a familiar friend to the daughter, had a little plain sea-side cottage which she seldom used. Persis got the loan of this for a month for Mrs. Gayley and Trink, Mrs. Moss, Maria Jane and three children. Through another friend, directress of a health-resort home for ladies in reduced circumstances, she secured a ticket for a month for Katherine and Annie Clarke, giving them a whole month by the sea at no expense.

A great scheme grew upon her for Serena Bowles and Mrs. Mumsey and Tommy: she and Harriet laughed over it by the half hour, and made various explorations. The idea was no less than to find a country home supplied with a due quantity of "popple and bombergilear trees" and send these three for a July vacation.

"Why don't you just find out where she used to live

and have her trees, and send her back there?" asked Miss Rebecca.

"Not for the world!" cried Persis. "That is now to her a beautiful memory. She enjoyed that place in the possession of hope, youth and health. If she went there now she could not possibly enjoy it as she once did; a shadow would lie over it, disappointment would cleave to it, and she could never rest in its beautiful idea again. I will send her where she will expect nothing, and thus cannot be disappointed; so any 'trembling poplar shade,' any 'bombergilear' tree, will come to her as an unexpected joy."

"I don't know what Jim Bowles will say when Serena gets an outing which he is not to share," said Miss Susan.

"He'll fret," said Persis. "It will be worth much to Jim to have a real good reason for fretting. There is nothing he enjoys so much as to find himself a martyr. One thing is sure: Serena shall have a vacation from Jim's selfish exactions and complainings, as well as from work."

Persis had said nothing to Serena about this plan; she intended to reserve it until the time came near to carry it out. She herself took much pleasure in thinking of it, and succeeded in finding a lonely, old-fashioned farmhouse with plenty of trees, and wide fragrant fields, where the good housewife was very glad to have Serena, Mrs. Mumsey and Tommy for boarders.

"Why, Miss," she said to Persis, who had made her acquaintance in the market and went out to investigate,

“ what you offer me for a month is n't only good pay but it will be just so much clear gain to us, for we raise all we use. I'll like the company too, fine. I've always wished for summer boarders, but we ain't furnished up enough for rich ones ; and we're quiet folk, I an' my man, and don't want those as our blessing at table and our prayers in our own humble way would seem queer to. Folks that will just come in free and kind, like a family with us, will suit all round, clear down to the ground : I know it will.”

These words were in Persis' mind one warm May morning, when she passed Serena's door on her way to a patient in the back part of the same house.

Serena's door was open, the usual white grove of garments interrupted and shut off any free wandering of air through the room heated by the ironing fire. Under the table the willow basket was heaped high with closely rolled and dampened clothes ; Serena, in a calico skirt and light calico sacque, was busy quilling ruffles, her face moist and crimson from heat.

“ Find it pretty warm, Serena ? ” said Persis stopping.

“ Indeed, yes. Heat coming so sudden, one feels it. La, it is not to equal what it is later, say in July and August, but by that time one gets a little used to it. I was just telling myself I had no call to fret over heat when I had steady work to be thankful for. Then, when the terrible hot weather comes, most of my ladies are off for summer vacation, and I have n't much to do.”

“ You ought to take a vacation yourself, Serena.”

“ Oh, bless you, I couldn't afford it ! Last summer I

was real extravagant, and took my dinner and Mrs. Mumsey and we spent three days in the park. Maybe we'll do as much this year. Mrs. Mumsey really does need a change ; she is a frail body. However, if the Lord sees she must have it He knows how to give it to her ; and for me, I take no end of comfort in considering that I'm not here to *enjoy* but to *glorify*. If I do my duty, glorifying God, he'll see to it that I get my full share of enjoying over there where nothing offends. But don't think I mean I can earn anything for myself, or can do the glorifying of myself, without the Lord's help. That's a good verse, Miss, 'It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.'"

As Persis went down the hall she heard Serena singing—

"A charge to keep I have :
A God to glorify."

"Poor Serena !" said Persis smiling to herself. "She is truly glorifying God in the fires ; and I think she is really happy. I wonder what she will say to a vacation."

THE DEW AND THE SHOWERS

CHAPTER X.

THE DEW AND THE SHOWERS.

“ Some humble door among thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and sorrow cease,
And flows forever through heaven’s green expansions
The river of thy peace.”

It was a happy characteristic of Persis, and one which especially fitted her for the mission she had undertaken, that while she threw herself heartily into her work when she was doing it she was able to withdraw her mind from it entirely when the duty of the hour was done. When she visited her friends in different parts of the city, and with all her former enthusiasm took part in their plans and discussions, and the talk turned, as it often did, on her life in Gardner Street, she was able to describe it and argue about it as fully and debate upon it as dispassionately as if it was entirely the affair of another.

“Persis Thrale,” said one of her friends at an afternoon tea, “I don’t see how, with all your money and education and refined tastes, you can go down there and live in the slums.”

“I am not living in the slums, but in a very respectable neighborhood. Come and assure yourself by seeing.”

“Well, I thought it queer when I heard you were

A NEW SAMARITAN.

in the slums, among the hoodlums. Of course, you'd be afraid."

"I do n't think I should be afraid, or that there would be any occasion for fear. I believe that any person armed with good intentions, good common-sense, a real philanthropy, a simple desire to benefit the souls and bodies of others, can live safely and do this proposed work in any quarter. Especially is this true of nurses who wear their distinctive dress, so that their vocation is recognized. They are associated with help, usefulness, unselfish kindness, and, as far as I know, are treated with respect by even the rudest and most degraded."

"For my part," spoke up another friend, "if I were to go into such work at all, it is to the rudest and most degraded that I should go. Their need seems to be greater, the results of work could be more quickly seen, and then there would be more interest and excitement to be had out of it. You, Persis, were always so thoroughgoing in everything that I wonder you stopped half way in your Gardner Street 'respectability.'"

"Morally speaking," said Persis, "I am not going on a warfare at my own charges. In all this new work I go as I have been led. The work in the Gardner Street neighborhood seemed especially marked out for me. The first people in whom I became deeply interested were from that locality, of the respectable working poor; not the people of the slums. I own the Gardner Street house; it was well fitted for my purpose, and left vacant at the exact time I needed it. All this seemed the directing of Providence. My various friends, my former

guardian, would have been very uneasy about me if I had settled to work in one of the worst parts of the city. I think I should have feared nothing, but they would have feared much."

"Seems to me," said a fashionable young society girl, putting on an aspect of complete boredom, "that you would be tired to death by the monotony of it all. This 'life among the lowly' must have a distressing sameness. I should die if I did not have variety."

"As far as my experience goes," said Persis, "there is very little variety in society life: one day, one entertainment, one style of conversation, closely like every other. But, Laura, there is no monotony in the developments of misery: the individual suffering may have a monotony of likeness from day to day, but the general suffering has endless variations, forever new developments, the constant excitement of new dangers and new demands. One is kept forever on the alert."

"My greatest puzzle is," cried another friend, "how, with all your culture, you can accommodate yourself to the constant society of ignorant people."

"You are simply mistaken about my surroundings. My two cousins, the Misses North, though poor, are women of refined tastes and the education usual to ladies of their time. Katherine and Annie Clarke are high-school graduates, and have been teachers. They and the Misses North are from cultivated families. Harriet Hughes lives with me, and few have had better advantages, social or literary, than Harriet. Do I shut myself away from this pleasing society of old friends in

the midst of which you now behold me? If you lived in Gardner Street you would see that I have plenty of calls from this highly aristocratic quarter where we now find ourselves. I believe it due to my work to keep myself fresh and abreast of the thought of the times. Then I can bring 'forth out of my treasures things new and old.' Also, I know I am interesting my friends in my new work."

"If you could interest us in something entirely fresh and new for the summer it would be a blessing," said one. "I am tired of Cape May, Saratoga, White Mountains, the Falls. Give us something new, Persis."

"I will," said Persis, flashing up into great energy. "Here are ten of you, with the summer at your disposal and money for all your needs. Form a Summer-home Club. Hire at the sea-side, or where you choose, a house large enough for yourselves, each one to be accompanied by a child needing a summer home; each one of you to be responsible for the clothing, training, mental and moral and physical care of the child that belongs to you. As for servants, you will need three or four, and I know how it is: when families close out their homes for the long vacation there are among them good servants who would be glad to go for an outing of this kind. Appoint of yourselves a committee to secure the house, a committee to secure servants, and wholesale your groceries. Then divide up the housekeeping among you, and for one season be useful as well as ornamental."

"But the children, Persis; who will be committee on children?"

“I will,” said Persis. “You can send in your orders as to sex, age and appearance of your respective *proteges*, and whether you particularly desire healthy youngsters or will take a cripple or two, or some anæmic little elf who is dying for common comforts.”

The girls looked at each other amazed. “We’ll talk it over and let you know next week, Persis,” they said at last.

“You’ll do it,” said Persis laughing; “the *rabies juvenandi* has seized you. I believe it is natural to women.”

These vacation plans made life very bright to Persis that summer. Her cousins Rebecca and Susan had not had an outing-time since they were little girls, and Persis succeeded in making them take three weeks at the sea-side—the forewoman and Annie Clarke taking charge of the two work-rooms.

The Clarke girls came home from their month at the “Summer Rest” looking ten years younger; Annie was no longer the frail creature apparently near to death whom Persis had found that November night. Warmth, sunshine, better food, hope, friendship, had re-created Annie, and lifted the burden from Katherine’s heart.

Perhaps no one was really happier that summer than Serena Bowles and Mrs. Mumsey at the farmhouse with Tommy. They went away for July, as then nearly all Serena’s patrons were away for the summer, and what little work remained to her a neighbor was glad to take.

“The Summer-home Club” formed itself, and ten rejoicing children went away under its protection, to

secure permanent interest in the hearts of their gay young patronesses. Other ailing children, and overworked mothers, and joy-bereft old people, were also provided with a care-free vacation lasting from a week to a month.

When, in August, Harriet and Persis left Miss Rebecca at the head of affairs and went off for their own six weeks' change and pleasure, the "summer vacation money" had all been laid out and, to their thinking, brought admirable returns. They came home in mid-September ready to take up again all their work and prosecute it with fresh vigor.

One day, late in September, when Persis in her gray garb with her newly replenished bag was on her rounds, she met a gentleman whose face seemed familiar—so much so that she half paused and he did the same. Each looked again. Then, "Surely—Miss Thrale!"

"Tom Trenton! yes, it is."

"I knew you by your eyes—and smile. I felt it must be Miss Thrale; yet this dress—this uniform. I remembered you as rich."

"Of course," said Persis, "so I am. I have 'an inheritance incorruptible,' treasures where thieves do not break through and steal: 'the riches of the full assurance,' 'the exceeding riches of God's grace,' 'the hidden riches of secret places'—no end of riches."

"That is the best kind, surely, and all that is wanted," said Tom Trenton, shaking hands again in his great delight at the meeting. "And this dress; what is it exactly?"

“Nurse’s uniform. I’m a Bible nurse.”

“For what church?”

“None,” said Persis cheerfully.

“For what Society, or Committee? Who stands back of you?”

“No Society and nobody. I stand back of myself.”

“I supposed a nursing enterprise required considerable money.”

“Oh, it does! The demands are as insatiable as the leech’s daughters.”

“And who, then, provides the charges?”

“I do. I have not lost the fortune which you knew I had. I have dedicated it—laid it on the altar, and myself with it; and now I am finding life well worth living. Now I have said my catechism: say yours. When I spent that vacation in the country, boarding at your mother’s, you were about to enter college with a view to the ministry.”

“And I did. I took my course in college and in the Theological school, was duly ordained, and am hard at work.”

“Where?”

“Not far from here—I have a Mission in Dorsey Street.”

“For what church?” demanded Persis laughing.

“For several. It is a Union Mission, and four or five churches support it. A very good building has been bought and arranged; the ground floor has a Dispensary, a Labor Bureau, a Reading Room, a Personal Interest Headquarters. The second floor is my home, where I

have a like-minded wife and an elderly handmaid, who looks after our comfort and finds time to succor the afflicted. The third floor has our church and Sunday-school room, and the attics are reserved for worthy casuals. The ladies of the churches who maintain the work form what is called a 'Personal Interest Society,' each one having in charge one or two families to whom to be a friend and helper. It works well, I can tell you!"

"Now here is my house," said Persis, "and I cannot go in, for I have two or three cases yet on my morning list. I want you to bring your wife to tea at five o'clock, look over the house, see what we are doing—for I am not alone in my work—and stay to my Thursday evening social; you may find new parishioners. A church at hand is what we want."

"Such work as this of yours," said Mr. Trenton that evening, when he and his wife had been shown through the Gardner Street house and were seated at the tea-table, "restores the true meaning of the word charity—love, love to the neighbor—fellow-feeling. The old Greeks meant by this word kind treatment as to one's self; but with us it has degenerated so far into a haughty or perfunctory almsgiving, a tyrannous red-tape-giving, that many poor people hate the word charity more than the fact of starvation. During my Theological course I worked in city missions and I was much impressed with the goodness of the poor to the poor, the giving, the loaning, the active helping: some one says the noble amount "of this true charity of the poor to the poor will never be known until the judgment day," and I believe it.

Hundreds of rich people are willing to share what they have with the suffering, but the needy are so far away from them that they do not know how to approach them. They are simply living in another world. To comfort the poor, help them to a better financial, social, and often religious standing, it is necessary first of all to be friends with them, live among them, have the privilege of knowing and sharing their home life."

"Yes," said Persis merrily, "it is time we clamored for Home Rule in the cities, and we should keep up the clamor until we get it. It is the Home among the homes, the model home, that we need. I don't think we should ask or expect people who have young children to bring them to live in these quarters. If God has given them means to keep their children in better localities they should occupy their opportunities. But there are plenty of people who have no children—women like my cousins, Harriet, and myself—who can establish homes as norms of social life in places like Gardner Street, and worse places. It is the Christian's work. The Church of Christ is the strongest organization in the world, and it should be able to cope with this social darkness and destroy it. It will be done too, sooner or later. The world wakes up. Ten of my friends, this summer, took an outing together, each taking in charge a poor child. They began it as a summer frolic, it is ending in a noble consecration of themselves. They have hired a house on Ramsay Street, calling it *Alma House*; are going to renovate it, and by two at a time live in it. As being permanently resident, they will show what can be done in that neigh-

borhood. They are going to be friends, helpers, teachers—teachers by living.”

“Some of our Personal Interest ladies are becoming so absorbed in the work,” said Mrs. Trenton, “that they are planning to open a temperance eating-house, and to form a Working Girls’ Club—which will have a house of twenty rooms where working girls can get their board, washing and lodging for three dollars a week, under their own rules.”

“That will be a help to those who are above the dead line of three dollars or three and a half a week wages,” said Persis. “Now, as we are through supper, I want you to come and see the chief beauty of our place here. I have reserved it to the last. It is my Cousin Susan’s flower-making room. I always had a sneaking fondness for artificial flowers, they imitate nature so closely. There, now! Is not this like a summer land, a tropic garden? Do you wonder that I hear her girls humming like bees, or singing like birds? See how the pattern sheets light up the walls, and look at these boxes of finished work. This is Cousin Susan’s box; she is a first-rate artist, and some of these are coming up to her standard. We hope our poor little deformed Trinka will be ‘passed mistress’ in the art of flower-making, and so always provided with a comfortable living. Poor Mrs. Gayley tells me that when Trinka was a baby she always prayed God to take her out of the world, she seemed so hopeless of any safety or comfort if she lived, so doomed to misery; but now she is so thankful that God did not take her at her word, for Trinka is likely to be helpful to

others and comfortable herself. I suppose it is easier to reach Serena Bowles' standard for ourselves than for our children: that we all have not to enjoy but to glorify."

Cousin Susan, looking very happy, was showing her patterns, materials, and finished work.

"How neat the room is—like a well-kept garden!" cried Mrs. Trenton.

"If we were the least bit untidy it would ruin the work," said Cousin Susan.

With Persis' work in the Gardner Street house and vicinity, the Alma Club, a true "home of religion," as one of the girls called it, in Ramsay Street, and Tom Trenton and his wife in Dorsey Street, the forces of misery and sin were being effectually beleaguered. Persis had found it true, as Dr. Bond told her, that where one worker was called to the field others were called also, and as these helpers one of another concentrated their efforts the work began to tell. Persis, in her rounds, found the homes cleaner and quieter, better methods in use, children better cared for, a brighter and more hopeful spirit abroad. There was much less drinking, and a very marked diminution in the quarrelling. The night school filled up; a new refinement and dignity marked the young women of the neighborhood. They were secretly patterning after Persis, Miss Hughes, and the young ladies of Alma House.

Mr. Trenton began to report increased attendance on the meetings in his mission, the Sunday-school filled up, and more teachers were called for. They came. Moved by some divine influence, the men and women of the up-

town churches who had taken to heart the Personal Interest Society work came to throw themselves heartily, in the self-forgetful, right way, into this new work in Dorsey Street. All at once the congregation outgrew the lately half-filled chapel room, and the sliding doors to the Sunday-school room were thrown open; and within a week that whole space was filled, and there was not standing room. There had been no noise, no bids for popular effect—merely the earnest preaching of the gospel, the singing of Mrs. Trenton and her helpers, and the warm spirit of Christian love. For the hour Tom Trenton felt overwhelmed and helpless under the sudden expansion of his work. Then his heart rose joyfully to the harvesting. But what should he do with the crowds, men, women and children, scores who had not attended a service or heard hymn or prayer for years, who were now coming nightly to preaching? The Dorsey Street chapel-room only sufficed for the noonday prayer-meeting. "Where is the room?" he said to his friends of Persis' family.

"See here," said Cousin Rebecca, briskly; "if you really need more room God will provide it. This is his work, not yours."

And the room was provided in one of the wonderful ways. Years before there had been a large church near Dorsey Street, but the congregation had moved up town, and the church had followed them. The great church building had been sold for a theater, and there were hearts of those who had once been greatly blessed within those walls which were broken over these desolations of

Zion, and were yet praying that light would shine forth at the once consecrated place. The theater had not prospered, and the premises had been sold to a wholesale liquor dealer. Outwardly the place had been little changed. The wide doors, the long windows, the low, square bell-tower, proclaimed the old-fashioned house of worship. Within there had been alterations, but the ground-floor was still one huge room, the ceiling supported by arches and pillars, well lit, well ventilated, with fine acoustic properties, as was the fashion in old-time churches. No one asked the liquor dealer for the church; it is doubtful if any one thought of it in connection with this present need; but one morning fifty men were set to work, the entire stock in trade was carried elsewhere, and a newsboy brought to Rev. Tom Trenton a note telling him that the place was at his service, and by sending word to a certain firm chairs and benches would be in place before night.

As when Rhoda came to hearken the praying friends of Peter "believed not for joy," so Tom Trenton and his helpers could not at first realize their good fortune. But as the vigorous knocking of Peter brought his friends to their senses, so a hasty rush to the old church, standing empty, swept and garnished, had a convincing effect.

That was a busy day, and at night the great audience-room was lit and crowded, and for the first time in many years the voice of praise and prayer and the proclamation of the gospel sounded again in the building once consecrated to the service of God.

The Dorsey Street Mission had been from its incep-

tion a union mission, and from various churches came the helpers, ministers and laymen, whoever felt his heart drawn to the work. It was as in those days in the wilderness: "And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and all the wise hearted, in whom the Lord had put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary." Presently their friends and relatives came also, and as the news of the wonderful work spread Mr. Trenton's father heard of it in the country and came also. Now, Mr. Trenton's mother had been a godly woman all her life, but the father had always avowed himself an infidel.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LIVING STREAM.

“There is a living stream, my friends,
That by the grace of God descends
Into our sinful hearts.
And when a soul is bathed therein,
All care, all heaviness, and sin,
All sorrow, thence departs.”

THE sudden and wide outpouring of religious interest in the whole ward where were Gardner, Ramsay, Dorsey and Webster Streets surprised no one so much as those workers who for over a year had been toiling and praying for this end!

“What presses upon me most,” said Persis, “is the realization of the unfaith that is beneath all our supposed faith! Which of us expected this?”

“I can tell you,” said Miss Susan. “There are two who have asked for revival and expected this answer: Serena Bowles and Mrs. Mumsey are not one bit astonished; they say they ‘knew it was coming, because it is promised that where two agree to ask in Christ’s name it shall be done unto them; and they agreed to ask for this some years ago, and have kept it up ever since.”

“The fact is,” said Miss Rebecca polishing her glasses, “when we get a blessing we don’t generally know whose prayers are being answered—those of some long dead grandmother, maybe, or of some saint of God whom we have never seen. There’s one thing I

can tell you, though : no two people are enjoying this work of grace more than Serena and Mrs. Mumsey ; they are at the meetings every night, and their faces just shine."

As the workers who were busy in the mission were from various denominations their methods were many, but they all held forth one gospel of the grace of God, and their harmony was perfect. From the first the work was largely personal, friend praying for and bringing friend. One evening, just after the old church was given for the meetings, Serena, Mrs. Mumsey, and Katherine and Annie Clarke were walking home together, when Annie said,

"I feel so anxious for widow Picot and her three girls, who live in our house. They are such nice, bright, kind, industrious bodies. When they came there they seemed to have absolutely no religious ideas ; they visited, sewed, did their house-work on Sundays, didn't own a Bible, and never went to church. Mrs. Picot and the eldest girl are just the same still, except that they do own a Bible, for Miss Thrale got a grant of Bibles from the Bible Society and put one in every room in the house where there was none. Marie, the youngest girl, is in Miss Susan's work-room, and Lisbet, the middle one, is with Miss Rebecca, and the religious teaching that they have had has helped them somewhat. They don't work Sundays, and they come to the Bible readings. Oh, how I wish they were all converted !"

"Let us make them a subject of prayer right off," said Mrs. Mumsey. "I feel I'm so old and weak I'm

not like to stay in this world very long, and I want to do all I can while I'm here. Let us begin as soon as we get to our homes, and pray with all our hearts for this whole Picot family."

"Yes : we will," said Katherine. "I hope we can pray with faith."

"We all of us have miserable crippled faith," said Serena. "I remember, however, that there was a man in the gospel who got a big blessing by beginning, 'Lord, I believe ; help thou my unbelief.' Now that comes home to me, and that is the way I always begin."

"Queen Esther said, 'If I perish, I perish,' and the lepers at the gate of Samaria said, 'If they save us alive, we shall live ; if they kill us we can but die.' Little faith has been very largely rewarded," said Katherine.

The four parted at the door of the Gardner Street house, and the promise to pray for the Picot family was kept. Not long after followed one of the great wonders of God's grace. Katherine and Annie were just dropping asleep one evening when some one knocked at their door, and they heard the voice of Mrs. Picot. Katherine rose, opened the door, and stirred up the fire in the grate.

"I knew you would n't mind my coming," said Mrs. Picot. "All this evening, as I sat working, I felt that God was calling to me to come to him. I began to feel as if to serve God was the best thing in the world. I felt it strange I could have turned my back on him so long. I want more than anything else to be saved ! Oh, I do wonder why I have not seen how wicked I

was, and how much I need God! And I do believe God will take me for his. I've been reading that Bible for some weeks. I don't know why I began, but I could n't stop, and every word was for me! Somehow I feel new to myself, and everything seems new to me."

"Praise God!" cried Katherine. "How soon he has answered our prayers, Annie; it is just as it is written, 'Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear!'"

"I believe God will save my girls," said Mrs. Picot. "I want you to go with me and speak to them. They are never so hard-hearted as I am. Marie and Lisbet have been praying and going to the meetings, I am sure. Come with me to their room, Miss Clarke, and let us tell them what God has done for me, and pray for Laura, for she is hard-hearted, like me."

Katherine put on wrapper and slippers and went down with Mrs. Picot to the hall below, where her younger daughters had a room next their mother's. As they drew near they saw the door ajar, and a thin line of yellow light falling into the hall. They pushed open the door. There stood Laura Picot in her wrapper, her two sisters sitting up in bed. As their mother pushed open the door Maria cried out, "Mother! Laura loves God. She believes in Christ! She has come to tell us of it! And we had just been praying for ourselves and for you! Oh, mother, let us all go to heaven in company! Let us live to serve God."

Mrs. Picot stood weeping for joy, "I believe," said Katherine, "that here is a time for a prayer-meeting!"

I am going to tell Miss Thrale and Miss Hughes and the Misses North! Come down, all of you, to the family parlor, and bring Annie and Mrs. Gayley. I have to sing, 'There is a fountain filled with blood' and 'Grace 't is a charming sound.' I must sing; I cannot be quiet, 'The Lord hath done great things, whereof I am glad!'"

"Last night," said Miss Rebecca at breakfast, "was surely the most beautiful night of my life. I never felt so near God before. Persis, have you not a story for my girls this morning?"

"Girls," said Persis, standing in Miss North's work-room, "I have come to tell you the story of a shoemaker and a lady. The lady was the Baroness Sophia Krudener, a Prussian, rich, beautiful and highly educated. She had all that this world could give her: nobles and even kings were her friends: but she was miserable. She was unhappy in her marriage and found no comfort in any of the pleasures and splendors that surrounded her. Her heart was empty of faith, hope and love, and she was forever desolate and unsatisfied. One day she sent for a shoemaker to take her measure for a pair of boots. As the man knelt to measure her foot she thought she had never seen a face so calm, so deeply happy, such an expression of heavenly peace. She asked him what was the reason of his joy and satisfaction, while he seemed to have almost nothing of good; and she having all that the world could give was wretched. He told her that he was a Moravian, that the love of God dwelling in his soul made him happy and peaceful, and that from the word of God he daily learned more and more of the fullness of

God's grace. Those few simple words were blessed to Madame Krudener. She became a woman of deep, enthusiastic piety, devoted to the service of God and of humanity. She united with the Moravian Church, and spent all the remainder of her life in helping the needy and speaking of the richness of that gospel which had supplied all her need. Your text for to-day is, 'Ye are complete in Him.' This story I think illustrates that ; and you know it is open to us all, by a godly, happy living, to commend the grace of God as the poor shoemaker did, and to find that grace all sufficient for us as Madame Krudener did."

News of the conversion of the whole Picot family spread in the neighborhood, and served to deepen the interest already felt. Persis in her nursing rounds noticed the change of tone among the people. The women talked of the meetings, of religious and moral things, instead of the faults of their neighbors. From the repeated singing of certain hymns in the meetings they were learned and sounded along the streets, or from beside the cradles and over the washing tubs. The men and women now planned to help each other to opportunities to attend the services. Among the converts were Mrs. Hook and her two older children, Mrs. Tull and Jonathan, and many more. The father of Mr. Trenton still regularly attended the meetings, but whether interest in the gospel preached, or simply fatherly pride in the young preacher, brought him, none could tell.

One evening the platform at the church was occupied by several different ministers, among others a Methodist

from a suburban church. He had been there a number of evenings and worked with fervor increased by a great burden on his own heart, for his eldest son, a lad of seventeen, was giving him much trouble. A big, hearty red-faced man, towering above all the others, as Saul above his people by head and shoulders, sympathetic, easily moved as a child, his mighty voice sounded in exhortation or in fervent prayer, or caught up and rolled along the words of some hymn. Mr. Trenton had been preaching earnestly and forcibly, and after he closed, this Methodist brother, all on fire with ardor, rose and said: "I know many of you are almost persuaded to be Christians, many more are saying in your hearts 'I have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.' Let us see you face to face: let us take your hands; let us hear what God has done for your souls. Come down here to the front and let us magnify the Lord together."

There was a sudden rising, and thirty or forty persons came down the aisles and stood about the little group of ministers. Then there was a pause. The tall parson leaned forward from the end of the platform where he stood. "God's harvest is not all gathered," he said. "In the name of Christ I entreat you, 'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.'"

Then, in the midst of a great silence, footsteps were heard. Down one aisle came a tall, gray-haired, broad-shouldered man, down the other a slim, erect lad. The face of the big minister crimsoned and worked convulsively. He held forth his hands. Tom Trenton looked up the aisle at the head of which he was seated, then

rose trembling, watching intently. There were two smothered cries. One said, "My father!" the other said, "My son!" Then the old man and the lad stood in the forefront of that little company of converts.

"Let us pray," cried one of the ministers on the platform. Mr. Trenton, standing by the desk, bowed his face on the Bible, his joy for his father overwhelming him. The big Methodist threw his arm over Mr. Trenton's shoulders, bent his head on his, and sobs shook his burly frame as the words of the brother minister's prayer voiced his thanksgivings for a rescued son.

Those were busy and happy days in that neighborhood. It seemed to Persis that the work was crowned when just begun, and that the harvest had come when but the few first handfuls of seed had been scattered.

As Suke Ryan was by all odds the noisiest and most openly ungodly liver in the district, many of her acquaintances were much exercised about her. In their work for her they, in their ignorance and zeal, often, no doubt, outran discretion. Earnest and untrained, beginners in the right way, the women had much to learn, and the management of Suke was no easy task.

"It is just diabolical how Suke does behave," said one woman to another. "She shut the door slam in Mr. Trenton's face, and when that nice big Methodist man did but ask her in the street would she come to the meetings, says Suke, 'I'll souse this mug of beer in your face if you speak to me.'"

"She don't chase Miss Thrale off," said one.

“No. But, mind you, there’s a queer thing about Miss Thrale : she don’t talk religion to Suke.”

“Well, she ought to. Suke needs it bad. Miss Thrale’s young.”

“See here, neighbors, let’s go, the whole ten of us, to Suke’s room and talk with her and pray for her. One of the preachers said t’other night people were n’t Christians unless they talked with sinners and prayed for ’em.”

“Oh, I don’t think he said quite that,” cried Mrs. Tull.

“Well, it was mighty nigh to it, and I don’t feel we do our duty unless we go to plead with Suke.”

This notion of bearding the redoubtable Suke in her den had in it a venturesomeness which captivated these women, whose hard and narrow lives had given them a craving for excitements of some kind, whether of a street quarrel, a fire or an experience-meeting. At once they adjourned in a body to Suke’s room.

“What now, neighbors?” cried Suke, instantly suspicious. “What is wanted that so many of you come at once?”

“We’re here to do you good, Suke.” “We feel anxious about your soul.” “We can’t give you up, woman.” “You are getting old, and have n’t any hope.” “We want you to be a Christian.” “We’ve come to hold a meeting with you.” Thus the chorus of the women.

Suke sprang to her feet and glared at them like some beast at bay. The earnest kindliness in the faces turned to hers, the eagerness, the tearful eyes and trembling lips of these simple women, so far disarmed her that she

refrained from taking a chair, a poker or a broom-stick to clear her room, as was her pleasing custom. She began to argue. "Now, neighbors, I don't bother you—you can be pious or not, for all me—and you have no right to come forcing religion on me. When I need it I'll go for it, and when I want you here talking prayer-meeting I'll send for you. I wish you'd go home, every one of you, and let me alone."

"Oh, Suke, you don't know what is for your good." "We have an errand to you from God." "Woman, if you were sick you'd be glad enough to have us come to help you, and it is your soul that's sick to death." "We've got so much betterment ourselves, Suke, we want you to share it." "Yes, that's true for us. I'm a happier woman by half; I've got something to hope for." "It helps us all along, neighbor. We do our work better, we keep house better, we rear our children better, we live pleasanter together." So the chorus of women's voices continued bearing their simple testimony.

"I don't deny it," said Suke, her arms akimbo, standing defiant. "You may get all the good you like out of it, but I wont have it. What are you going to do about it?"

"We'll go down on our knees and pray for you, every last one of us," cried Mrs. Tull.

"I wont stand it! I'll open the winder and call the police."

"He isn't round. Folks are so quiet nowadays that he don't come round often." "Besides, if we are put

out of your room, the hall is free, and we'll kneel down and pray through the door, so you can't fail to hear us."

"Have I got to hear all you ten sighing and praying for me? I'd rather pray for myself and done with it!" cried Suke.

"Well, do it, Suke; that's all we ask." "If you'll pray for yourself we wont worry you with our prayers." "All we want is you to be prayed for." "Oh, woman, if you ask you may get a blessing."

"I don't want any blessing but to be rid of you," said Suke; "and if saying a word of prayer will take you off, now and forever, I'll do it. How will I begin? What shall I say, seeing you know so much about it?"

It now dawned upon Mrs. Tull that they were pursuing methods very different from those of the older Christians about them—Mrs. Mumsey, Mrs. Bowles, and the ladies of Miss Thrale's household. She began to wish that they had taken wiser counsel before they intruded upon Suke, and she was anxious to end the affair as soon as possible.

"It is simple enough, dear woman," she said persuasively. "We never came here to anger you, but aiming at your good. We'll all kneel down here, and do you kneel down, and just ask the Lord to convert your soul. Come, now."

Down went all the women on their knees about Suke, and there was profound silence.

"Begin; you said you would, Suke," whispered one. Longer silence. "We will have to begin ourselves, then. You lead on, Mrs. Tull."

“Stop; I’m just ready,” cried Suke, terrified at the prospect of ten prayers of uncertain length. “What do you say?”

“Just ask for a converted soul, plain, like you’d ask for a loaf of bread, dear heart.”

“O Lord,” began Suke in desperation, “these women wont let me off unless I ask for to be converted; so here it is. Will you convert Suke Ryan? Not that I care anything about it, and to say it is just as foolish as to pray for rain with the wind set strong from the west.” Profound, alarmed, horrified silence ensued. “Is that enough? Will you go?” cried Suke, opening her eyes.

“You have n’t said amen,” suggested one poor little woman, as a way out of the difficulty.

“Amen!” cried Suke. “Now go, and don’t you bother me again. You said you would n’t.”

The women slowly rose. Mrs. Moss remembered that she had read, “Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone;” it came into Mrs. Tull’s mind that there was a text about casting pearls before swine. As they trooped slowly out of the room they felt that they had failed, perhaps erred. Mrs. Hook, however, comforted them—that, if they had been less than wise, they meant well, and the Lord looks on the heart, and that God accepts according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

“If so be, neighbors, we have n’t got much sense, the Lord don’t expect us to show much. He remembers we are dust.”

“But it is an awful pity, and she with a child to rear.”

Yes; there, after all, was the greatest pity of it. A niece of Suke's had died and left a three-year-old boy, Dorry Hill; and Suke, who rather liked children, had in a gush of sympathy assumed the care of him. He was running wild, and bade fair to be the worst child in the ward, although he was a bright and pretty little fellow. This child's case greatly exercised not only the neighbors but Persis Thrale. As Suke was particularly friendly to her she had tried to do something for the child. "Could he not go to Mr. Trenton's Sunday-school?"

"I don't believe in Sunday-schools," said Suke.

"Send him regularly to kindergarten then, wont you?"

"He don't want to go, and it would be too much fuss to make him."

"I'll persuade him or hire him to come."

"Well, no; axing your pardon, there's too much piety over there."

"Surely you do not wish him to grow up to be a bad man. Sin brings suffering. Think of that. The law deals hardly with the criminal. Think what he may come to."

"That's his lookout," said Suke coolly. "And he *is* a bad un; he takes to it like a duck to water. He swears terribly. I can't make him quit it. Of course, he ought not to do it; he is too little; but he wont stop for me. You'd be surprised to hear him. Swear for the lady, Dorry; that's a man." Whereupon the redoubtable Dorry swore "like our army in Flanders."

Persis turned away heart-sick. She applied to Mr.

Inskip. "Cannot he be taken from such custody? Here is another criminal being trained to burden the State and add to the corruption of society."

"You cannot do anything about it unless you can show that the child is underfed, abused personally, left unclad, or in some physical way harmed. The law takes cognizance not of moral but of physical injuries."

"Doctor Barnardo bought some of his Rescues as low as a shilling each," said Persis with a bitter smile; "but I cannot buy Dorry. I've tried; and it breaks my heart to see a poor little child deliberately trained for misery and ruin."

"Have you offered to adopt him?" asked Mr. Inskip.

"Yes; and Suke refuses. She sees that she makes many of us miserable by her methods with the poor little boy, and it gives her a malicious delight."

It was the astute Mrs. Tull who contrived the rescue of little Dorry.

CHAPTER XII.

REAPING AND GLEANING.

“ And like an army in the snow
My days went by, a treacherous train,
Each silent when he struck the blow,
Until I lay among the slain.”

PERHAPS no one in the neighborhood felt so really distressed in behalf of Dorry Hill as did Mrs. Tull. Her own child had developed her maternal instincts, broadening them toward all children, and her conversion had helped her to take a spiritual measure of things. Dorry lay heavy on her heart night and day. She could do nothing for him, because Suke systematically kept him away from those women whom she termed “the pious ones.” Mrs. Tull was a bright little woman, and had been much mortified at the fiasco of the hastily planned prayer-meeting in Suke’s room. She now laid with great care her plans in Dorry’s behalf. The fact that Suke took a heavy cold, and coughed terribly, came very fortunately for Mrs. Tull’s designs. She concocted various syrups and ointments and took them, two or three times a day, to Suke, being careful to deliver them and go away at once. After a few days she stopped a little to discuss the effects of the remedies. Then she offered to do some washing for Suke, and to mop her floor, and Jonathan did an errand or two to save Suke from going out in bad weather. Next, Mrs. Tull appeared with bowls of soup

or gruel "to build Suke up;" then she brought her work and her baby and stayed to sew and chat: she also asked Suke to sit in her room in the bright sunshine in the mornings. Soon she began to turn the conversation toward Tommy Tibbets. She did not discourse at length upon Tommy, but she "brought him in" to her conversation freely; Tommy's health, looks, dress, manners, smartness. If Suke gave an anecdote about her Dorry Mrs. Tull topped it with one about Tommy. "Tommy Tibbets! I know him; saw him a thousand times round with the Hooks. He's not so wonderful," said Suke.

"Oh you ought to see him now! He's been brought out, I tell you! Why, ladies and gentlemen stop him in the streets! And then the expectations he has, the opportunities! My!"

"What opportunities, along with old Mrs. Mumsey?" said Suke.

"Along with Miss Thrale, don't you mean? She's young, she's rich, and look at her friends! Why, Tommy wont want a thing that he can't get." Then Mrs. Tull would briefly sketch Tommy's prospective progress. "He'll go to school long as he wants to. To college with the big bugs if he likes. He'll be taught a trade, or put into a store, or maybe turn out a lawyer! Who can tell? Miss Thrale could by her influential friends make anything she chose of him!"

"What would it all amount to?" Suke wanted to know.

"What? Dear me!" cried Mrs. Tull, "wouldn't it be worth while to be an alderman, or a judge, or chief of

police, or maybe mayor, or perhaps governor? I tell you, Mrs. Ryan, when I think Tommy may sit as judge, to send some of these kids round here to the penitentiary, or be the governor asked to pardon some of them, like your Dorry, from hanging, it looks queer to me; don't it to you?"

Suke opined that people went through this world different ways, and when they were dead it made no difference.

"It would to me," said Mrs. Tull. "If I thought my boy was to grow up to be some great shakes, and be writ all about it in a book, and my name put into the book too, 'long of being his mother, don't you guess I'd like it pretty well? If Tommy goes to the top of the heap it will be a grand thing for his mother. Who ever heard of Mary Tibbets, a poor woman making horse clothes? But now when Tommy is a great man, and has his life set down in books, there Mary Tibbets' name will go in, and she will have a big stone monument up in the cemetery. Dear knows, folks prospers when their children do well!"

"I don't know as Tommy's bound to do so well," said Suke.

"Can't help it," said Mrs. Tull decisively. "Any one can climb that's well boosted."

"I'll bet you a loaf to a biscuit," said Suke, "that my Dorry can go as high as Tommy."

"'Tain't in reason," persisted Mrs. Tull. "He'll run around the street, and not learn anything but bad, and before he is ten he'll be getting arrested, and a bad name fast to him. No work, no friends, cold and hungry in

winter, and idle and dirty in the summer ; and finally the prison. You've seen the poor creeters, Suke, and so have I. Isn't it a terrible pity they get born ! ”

“ ‘Pears to me you're going out of your way 'bout Dorry.’ ”

“ Look at the difference already, Suke, and see if I am. Tommy is clean and dressed well, and as bright as a button. Folks all notice him. And so smart and manly. ”

“ Dorry's smart. You ought to hear him ; he can swear and lie just like a man. ”

“ Those is n't the accomplishments likely to make him friends or fortune. It's just imitating the bad he hears, poor lamb, as a parrot would. But Tommy knows things worth knowing ; and has good ideas of his own. ”

“ Let me tell you, Dorry could be just as well off this very day if I'd say the word, ” cried Suke.

“ Sho, ” said Mrs. Tull in an incredulous tone.

“ Miss Thrale would adopt him, if I'd give him up. ”

“ Sho ! ” still more unbelievably.

“ She would, sure. She asked me for him. ”

“ Easy enough to ask—to pass a compliment—when she was sure you would n't do it. ”

“ She'd take him this minute. ”

“ Sho ! Sho ! Sho ! ”

The conversation had been repeated several times to about this point, when one day that incredulous “ Sho ! ” aggravated Suke into asserting,

“ I could prove it to you by trotting him over to Miss Thrale this minute ; and you come along. ”

“I dare you to do it,” said Mrs. Tull.

“I wont take a dare. I’ll do it. Come on, now!”

Mrs. Tull had unfolded the progress of her plan to Persis, and when Suke, having fished Dorry out of the slush of the gutter, dragged him to the Gardner Street house Miss Thrale was not unprepared.

“Did n’t you say you’d take Dorry, Miss Thrale?”

“No trouble to say that when I’m sure not to get him.”

“Would n’t you take him, and rear him up as well as Tommy Tibbetts?”

“I might be willing to rear up the King of Spain, but he is not likely to fall into my hands. Talking is easier than doing.”

“Well, will you take him?”

“Try me and see.”

“Ain’t I trying you? Do n’t I ask you? Here he is!”

“Sho! Sho! Sho!” piped Mrs. Tull with a giggle.

“I will not tell you what I would do, Suke, unless you sign a paper to give him up, to show yourself in earnest. After that I’ll speak. I do n’t care to be fooled with.”

“Write your paper out!” shouted Suke, goaded by a laugh from Mrs. Tull.

Persis wrote out: “I hereby give my grand-nephew, Dorry Hill, to Miss Persis Thrale, to remain in her keeping until he shall be twenty-one years of age. Miss Thrale undertakes to provide for his wants, educate him, and furnish him with a home, in consideration of which I agree to make no interference with him, nor assert any rights over him.”

Persis read this document.

“I dare you to sign it,” tauntingly cried Mrs. Tull. “And if you do you wont hold to it!”

“See if I do n’t,” said Suke. “Tommy Tibbets ain’t to have it all his own way, I can tell him.” She signed the paper.

“Now, Miss. There’s what I’ll stick to till I die.”

“Certainly I’ll take him, and be glad to get him,” said Persis. “When I have him all fixed up, Suke, I’ll let you see him.”

“Now, Bet Tull, let’s hear some more of that ‘sho! sho! sho!’”

“Did I ever!” sighed Mrs. Tull; “have you really done it? Who’d have thought you’d have done so well by him! I declare, Suke Ryan, you’ve a power more brains than folk think you have! Well, he’ll live to thank you for it.”

“Next time you and I have some conversation I wont hear so much ‘sho! sho!’ when I express an opinion.”

Suke went off to congratulate herself in a pitcher of beer; Persis delivered her trophy to Mrs. Gayley and the bath-room, while she herself went to a children’s clothing store.

“Dorry has had such hard fortune, he must be made now as different as can be,” said Persis; so she was careful to buy good clothes for the little man. “I mean he shall not know himself,” she said to Harriet. “I want him to stand in awe of his own grandeur.”

“I tell you, Miss Thrale,” said Mrs. Moss, “you’ll

have to knock that little scamp nearly to pieces, to make him quit swearing and lying."

"That is not my style of management," said Persis; "and if I tried such fashions the child would not improve. He imitates what he has heard, just like a parrot. At his age he will forget profanity if he hears no more of it. He does not know what his words mean. He has heard them and repeats them. There is less moral wrong in it, as far as he is concerned, for he has no knowledge, or reproof of conscience. He takes his lying, too, as a matter of course. He does not choose the evil and refuse the good; he simply doesn't know any good. I'll help him to forget these objectionable things, and fill his mind and mouth with nice things."

When Persis Thrale led into Suke's room a very pretty little boy, shingly clean, his short crop of black curls gleaming from scouring and scrubbing, a Scotch cap on his head, a cunning little kilt suit and shirt-waist setting off his stout little person, his big black eyes sedulously fixed on the magnificence of a pair of legs in black hose and button shoes, Suke with a cry of triumph seized that boy, carried him to Mrs. Tull, and setting him up like an image, shouted,

"Who looks better than Tommy Tibbets? Say 'sho!' now!"

A few days after this Suke disappeared from that neighborhood. Whether she missed the child and wanted to go where she could more easily forget him, or whether the more orderly character of her neighbors since the

revival was wearisome to her, none knew. For some time Persis could not hear of her whereabouts.

Persis Thrale found that the care of Dorry was no sinecure. In the first place Cousin Rebecca greatly objected to him. She was a woman of autocratic temper, and secretly felt as if the management of affairs in Gardner Street centred in herself. "There are refuges and orphanages," she said, "and children like Dorry should be put in them instead of invading people's quiet with them; 'most any place would be better than Dorry's deserts."

There Persis took direct issue with her: Dorry had not invited himself to this world; he had not had the privilege of choosing his parents, his antecedents, his circumstances. Upon the helpless receptive child had been rained all manner of evil influences and unspeakable wrongs. Reparation was now in order. The usual rights and privileges of childhood must now be his, *plus* intense care and most vigorous guardianship, to atone to Dorry for his misfortunes and undo the evil that had been done to him. As to orphanages and refuges, they were provided for lack of what was better; but the divine idea for the child had been the home, and a home every child ought to have.

"Rebecca never did like children," sighed Susan.

"She takes a most unchristian position, I think," said Persis. "She has a right individually to arrange her affairs as she pleases, but she has no right to interfere with other people or hinder their conscientious action. I shall not allow her time nor her room to be trespassed

upon, but I shall hold my house and my means open to any call the Lord may make upon me."

Finding that she could not dictate to Persis, Cousin Rebecca looked gloomy and offended for several weeks, and then returned to her normal condition. Dorry she ignored. She privately told Miss Susan that she believed they would be more happy by themselves, where they could choose their own company and have no kindergarten and no children about.

Miss Susan responded that if they lived otherwise they would by no means be able to carry on their flower and dressmaking work so extensively as now. With shelter and board to provide, their little income would be used up. For herself, Miss Susan had never in her life been so happy as since she came to Persis.

Dorry came into Persis' hands in November. All the family except Miss North aided in his moral regeneration. He slept in the room with Mrs. Massey; he went to Harriet's kindergarten; Mrs. Gayley scrubbed him daily and "gave an eye to him." Every one spoke kindly and correctly to him and before him, and perfect honesty was constantly inculcated by example and helpfulness. When evil words rushed over the baby lips, whoever heard him said, "Oh, we do not talk that way," and set him out in the hall or in a room by himself. They were at considerable pains to keep him off the streets and from his old playmates until he should forget former evil fashions. He went on errands with Trinkie; to market with Mrs. Massey, had fine visits to Tommy Tibbets, and day by day the evil accretions of his unfortunate lit-

tle life fell away, and he was growing into the proper image of the child.

The holiday season brought many things new and beautiful to the Gardner Street neighborhood. Mr. Trenton's Sabbath-school had a tree, and Mrs. Sayce's Bible class had an afternoon tea; the sewing-class had a sleigh-ride far out around the suburbs, with hot chocolate and biscuits on the return; the night-school had a lecture on foreign lands, with stereopticon views. On Christmas eve the big church was open for a dense crowd, and there was plenty of music and then a magic-lantern display, where nearly life-size pictures were thrown on the screen—pictures representing the histories of Joseph, Moses, David and Daniel; and these histories Mr. Trenton clearly and brightly detailed to the accompaniment of the pictures.

Persis invited forty of her neighbors for Christmas night to a social. They had music and magic lantern and refreshments, and on each plate was a little gift. The gifts were very simple—a paper of pins, a box of hairpins, a little box with needles and thread, a pair of scissors, a thimble, a little colored tumbler; trifles all, yet all a cause of joy, as kindly given and souvenirs of a happy evening.

The Alma Club House entertained forty more women in much the same manner; Mr. Trenton gave a Christmas dinner to fifty men and boys who were not living in homes of their own; every patient on Persis' nursing roll received from Mrs. Inskip a dainty little dinner; the kindergarten had a Christmas tree and a feast. In fact,

when all was over, no one had been left out, no one had been pauperized, all had been treated as friends and home folks.

After Christmas affairs went on with increased smoothness and increasingly good results. Everything was in working order. Miss Rebecca had the happiness of placing fortunately some of her girls and taking on some new ones, among them two or three from Mrs. Sayce's sewing-class. Dorry improved amazingly. His evil habits were simply crowded out of him by sweet and innocent and childlike pleasures and ways. By degrees Miss Rebecca's sour reserve thawed, and Persis, who had a sincere liking for her relative, was glad to find former pleasant relations resumed.

At New Year's Harriet organized a "Band of Hope and Anti-Cigarette League" among the boys from six to fourteen years old, and the ever-useful kindergarten room was the place of meeting.

"In this neighborhood," said Harriet, "I think the men are 'the neglected classes.' Mr. Trenton does considerable for them, but we here and the Alma Club House ignore them completely. They don't seem to be in our line. The boys I intend to look after, and see if I can do something to make decent men of them."

"It's time," said Miss Rebecca. "I've seen dozens of boys from six to fourteen years old going about smoking; poor little pale puny, spindling, undersized creatures, and bound to grow up without brains or muscle enough to earn a living! I don't see why the State doesn't interfere and stop the spoiling of citizens! To

think of the reformatories, penitentiaries, prisons, hospitals and insane asylums that are full and overflowing with men and boys spoiled by drinking and smoking. I believe the cigarettes do as much harm as rum to the young boys."

"Your opinions are sound, sure enough, my cousin," said Persis smiling, "and, holding them, I should think you would be truly glad that I have rescued at least two boys, Tommy and Dorry, from growing into criminals."

"It remains to be seen what will become of those two. They are not grown up yet," said Miss Rebecca.

"I'm going to rely on the promise, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'"

"How many more do you mean to train?"

"I'm sure I do n't know. It's your turn to take one now."

"My turn!" sniffed Miss Rebecca, throwing back her head. "I hope I know myself better."

Do we ever know ourselves as well as we think we do?

March came in with a cold storm and Miss Susan took cold. The one terror of the lives of the Misses North was lest they should be parted by death. The least sign of sickness in one threw the other into an agony of fear. Miss Susan's cold was not very ominous, but Miss Rebecca was full of alarms and kept her sister in bed for the day, which was Sunday. About midnight, Miss Rebecca, finding that Miss Susan's cough increased and her chest was painful, went softly to the kitchen to

prepare a syrup and a poultice. As she came back tiptoeing along the hall leading to the door where the kindergarten children came in, she heard, as she thought, a kitten crying in the storm. After she had applied her remedies and Miss Susan was comfortable Miss Rebecca's thoughts reverted to the kitten. In spite of her objection to having children about Miss Rebecca was very kind-hearted, and a suffering animal easily won her sympathy. "I heard a kitty crying by the street door," she said. "Poor little thing, it will perish in the cold. I do believe I had better bring it in and wrap it up in my work-basket, and in the morning it can find its home."

"Do," said Miss Susan, "I shall lie awake thinking about it if it is left out there."

Once more Miss Rebecca tiptoed through the hall and her sister heard the key and handle of the door turn. Then she came back more hastily. In her arms she had not a kitty but a bundle. "Mercy upon us, sister Susan, it is a baby!" she cried.

"The poor little mite! It must be dying of cold!"

Miss Rebecca turned up the gas and unfolded her bundle. "Not more than three weeks old—maybe only two. It seems clean, and its gown is clean, and so are the little quilt and shawl; but they are old, mended and coarse. Would n't it have been dreadful to find the little thing there, in the morning, dead!"

"The Lord sent you to hear it, and to save it," said Miss Susan. "Put it here in the bed between us, to warm up, or it will die from the exposure it has had."

Miss Rebecca took from the child the small shawl

and quilt and a nice little infant in a flannel gown appeared. It moved its head uneasily to the light, and began wildly sucking its small red fist. Rebecca placed it in her sister's arms. "It is hungry," she said, "and as I would n't let a cat starve no more I would a baby. I'll slip to the kitchen and get it some food, But I'm afraid I'll get the wrong thing and kill it!"

"I've heard Persis tell women to put some cream with warm water, and a tiny bit of sugar, and give it lukewarm."

"I can but do my best," sighed Miss Rebecca. "Why did any one leave a child there?" Presently she brought the food, and taking the child on her lap by the fire, which she had revived in the grate, she sat down to feed it.

"It is so hungry, Susan! Dear, how it eats! It's eyes are open—big dark eyes. It is nice and plump. Well, I never thought that I could feed a baby and not spill a drop."

"You are doing beautifully," said Miss Susan admiringly.

The baby being fed was returned to Miss Susan, and was soon asleep, snug and warm between the two sisters, and never woke until morning.

"What shall we do with it, sister Rebecca?" asked Miss Susan.

"I can't do a thing until noon. I have the work-room to see to; we have a nice big order to begin on. You can fix some milk for it when I bring you your breakfast, and I'll wash it before I go down."

The sleeping baby was unceremoniously picked up and washed, and Miss Rebecca improvised a fresh gown for it out of an old flannel petticoat. She made no remark about her "find" at breakfast.

All the morning Miss Susan had the baby beside her, and she thought how nice it would be if she and Rebecca could only bring it up for their daughter, to brighten and attend upon their old age! But then Miss Rebecca would never do that. Never! About eleven o'clock Miss North left her work-room to do an errand. When she returned she had a bundle in her hands, and without a word, taking the baby from Susan, she dressed it from head to toe in neat baby-clothes.

"You are making her look very pretty to send to the poorhouse, sister Rebecca," said Miss Susan plaintively. "Send her quick, or I'll feel terribly bad to lose her. A baby is so sweet!"

"Are you going down to dinner?" said Miss Rebecca. "I'll make your bed while you are dressing."

Miss Rebecca made the bed, and laid the baby on it. "Now, Susan, what shall we call our little girl?" she said.

"Oh, Rebecca! Do you mean it! Do you really!"

"I can't get that verse out of my head, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages!' Well it's a girl, and not a horrid boy! There's Persis. Persis! Harriet!" she called, opening the door! "Come in here and see what I have to show you!"

CHAPTER XIII.

TO ALL ITS SEASON.

“That nothing walks with aimless feet.”

It was a spring day, and the Rev. Mr. Trenton on his way home stopped and looked down a long narrow street. At the end of it he thought he saw a familiar form and the progress of events revealed this to be Persis, in her nurse's dress, coming along beside a policeman. After a little she parted from her blue-coated escort and came within speaking distance of Mr. Trenton.

“You seem to have been down into ‘Sodom and Gomorrah,’” said he, giving the local name for the ward out of which Persis had just emerged.

“Yes; and I have been thinking that nothing but fire from heaven could ever clean up such a den. I do wonder how those dirty, reckless, tenements escape a conflagration; half the inhabitants are drunk, and the rest don't seem to care. Drink, dirt, laziness, that is the triad that holds sway down there!”

“What did you go down there for? I thought your time was fully occupied in your own district, which is more promising and less of a pest-house than that.”

“I went because I had at last heard where Suke Ryan was, and, do you know, I never can bear to let go of anybody whom I have tried to help. While there is life there is hope, and my instinct is to hold on—to the last breath.”

“How about Suke, does she wish to be held to?”

“No ; frankly, she does not. She was sorry I found her, and told me not to come again. I pointed out to her that she was in a far more wretched locality than when she lived near me, and has also less comforts of life. She calmly replied that she would rather be without any comforts of life at all than be ‘where so much piety was going on.’ She asserted that she wanted neighbors who were not above smoking, drinking and fighting with her when she felt like it. As I talked with her, all at once my imagination placed Mrs. Mumsey beside her : Mrs. Mumsey, clean, small, quiet, gentle, that deep saint-like peace brooding over her, her eyes ‘homes of silent prayer.’ What made the difference? It is wider than the East from the West.”

“The grace of God made it.”

“And how can we answer for the hundreds of children who are brought up practically out of the reach of that grace, as far as men can effect it? The streets down there in Sodom swarm with children, growing up—for what?”

Persis looked so pale and troubled that Mr. Trenton said, “Be careful, Miss Thrale, of taking up a burden never meant for your shoulders. God has set you your work and you are doing it. You can limit your usefulness, your life, by breaking your heart over that which is beyond your helping. I know what it is to rise in the morning and lie down at night overwhelmed by a sense of the suffering and sin that are round about me, and reaching and widening on and on and out, like the rip-

ples on the surface of a lake, until the whole compass of the world is reached. I had to learn to cast this burden also on the Lord, or I should have fallen beneath its weight."

"If we could annihilate the rum traffic, with its demoralizing and physically exhausting effects, secure thorough sanitation in the dwellings, and a compulsory education, with instruction in some occupation, for every child, I think we might get them where the light of the gospel could shine in. It would be like opening spaces for the sunshine to fall into a long-darkened wood or dwelling."

"It is the arm of Christianity that must ply the axe then," said Mr. Trenton. "The Church of Christ is the only organization powerful enough, and widely-spread enough, to undertake the work, or even to realize that it should be undertaken. Man, unregenerated, is not a sufficiently humane animal to work efficiently to eradicate evils which he can by any possibility keep out of sight."

"And when we of the church, and in the name of the church, get to work, we seem to be merely making sham attacks on this great fortress of evil. Picking a little on the ramparts, and a little here and there at the foundations, and the devil's fortress remains as strong as ever."

"How can we prove that it will not crumble into ruin with some sudden rush?" said Mr. Trenton cheerily. "Results are God's. Let us sing in the Lord's harvest field as we bind and glean; that will be better than

lamenting. We have not worked a great while in this neighborhood and we have some noble results. We cannot measure the eternal results of the rescue of even a single one."

"I was talking to my policeman, who finding me yonder seemed to feel it to be his duty to walk with me to safer quarters. I asked him about the population, the death rate, the number of arrests, the chief sources of disorder, the number of ex-convicts, and the relative morals of the women and men. He said—'To sum it all up, ma'am, if you could but clear out the drink, the laziness, fighting, stealing and dirt and much of the disease would be cleared out too.'"

"It is true," said Mr. Trenton. "We need both the law and the gospel in this work of social regeneration; and it seems to be about equally difficult to secure either."

"I am engaged to give a speech, or a talk, or something of that kind, at one of our up-town clubs this evening," said Persis, "and I'm resolved to talk on fragment gathering."

"Human fragments, for instance?"

"Yes, and other fragments. What may be called the rubbish-keeping habit is abroad in the land, and hindering much good. There are wardrobes, trunks and closets full of outgrown, half-worn, or a-little-out-of-date comfortable clothes; there are attics and rooms filled with condemned carpets, furniture of which people have grown weary, bedding that has been replaced by newer styles. Nothing should be hoarded. God does

not hoard, he gives. The law of nature is a law of circulation and restoration. It is my theory that dozens of people down here in Sodom and Gomorrah, especially the women, might be lured and encouraged to do better, to make efforts for home life, if they had something to begin on ; something to be comfortable and look decent. For every two or three wards there should be a 'Fragment Depot,' where such things as I suggest could be under charge, and loaned, given, or sold for a nominal price, under the direction of those at work among the needy."

"The idea is good," said Mr. Trenton as they reached his door. "Meanwhile don't venture alone down in Sodom."

"Nothing will harm me there. Humanity at its lowest is not a wild beast, and even wild beasts feel gratitude. When you were a little boy did you never read about Androcles and the Lion?" laughed Persis.

"Yes ; and when I was a college boy I also read about Una and her Lion. Still, don't go down into Sodom often."

As Persis went homeward she saw a member of what Harriet called the "neglected classes," a young man of about twenty, coming down the street with a hesitant, uncertain air. He met two or three other young men, and they turned to the screened door of a grog-shop. Persis knew that Amos Mason was not given to drink, yet it might be now or never with him in becoming a drunkard. She spoke out.

"Amos Mason, I want you a moment ; I have a

message for you." His companions went behind the screened door, and Amos Mason approached Persis. "My message to you, Mason," said Persis, "is from all who desire your good. Do n't go into a place where you may fall into a habit of drinking. What will your mother do, if you, the only hope of her old age, should be a drunkard?"

"Oh, I hope not so bad as that, Miss Thrale! The fact is, it is hard to find a place to go, or sit down, or have a bit of pleasure, when one is off work for a day."

"Are you idle to-day?"

"Yes, Miss; our engineer had an accident to the boiler, and we're off for a day while it is getting mended. I went round to our room, but mother is at the box factory for the day, and she takes the key."

"And so all your fellow-workmen have a day off, without knowing where to spend it?"

"That's about the size of it, Miss, except one or two that do n't feel well and want to rest—and a few family men who have enough to do at home, or their kids to take out for a treat."

"How would it be if you belonged to the Young Men's Christian Association, and had the use of the gymnasium and reading-room, and all that?"

"We can't many of us pay the year's fee. It is pretty big for fellows with low wages, rent to pay, and days off when they get no wages at all. And then most of us feel that our clothes are hardly fit to go there. I've seen real ragged bummers in there, treated well, too; but we regular workmen ain't of that lot either."

“I see. How about the city gymnasium and swimming-house down by the river?”

“Aye; I’ve been there, miss, and it is so crowded as you would n’t believe, hardly standing room sometimes, let alone a rope, or a trapeze, or a spring-board, or pair of dumb-bells to be had. They need one twice as big.”

“True. Would n’t it be nice if there was a fine large room in this neighborhood, with books, papers, magazines, a few nice games, and a musical instrument or two, and a membership fee as low as fifty cents, or perhaps twenty-five, a month—a place where you had rights, and that was respectable, yet where you could feel at home?”

“Indeed it would, Miss Thrale.”

“Tea, coffee, chocolate, lemonade and sandwiches to be had at a low price.”

“That would be real respectable and comfortable.”

“If you know of three or four of your young men friends who would like something of that kind, and have ideas as to how it should be conducted, suppose you bring them to the Gardner Street house to-morrow evening at seven to talk the matter over and see what can be done.”

“Oh, thank you, Miss; we’ll be there.”

“As for your mother’s room key, Amos, Mrs. Moss has it. Do n’t you think it would be worth while for you to give the rest of the day to cleaning up—washing and mending windows, blacking the stove, buying a pot or so of geranium for the window sill, fixing it real nice for your mother, and having a good hot supper for her when

she gets home? She works hard, and she is getting old, Amos."

"She's had a hard time of it always, Dad and my sister were sick so long. Thank you for speaking of it, Miss Thrale. It is not yet eleven; I can do wonders before six."

Off went Amos with a higher purpose than he had had an hour before, and Persis went on her way to see Mrs. Hook. The weather was good and the neighborhood was in a healthier condition than usual. Sanitary affairs had steadily improved since Persis came to live among these people. Example had done much, instruction had done much, and the raising of the moral tone and self-respect had done more than all to improve the manner of living.

Persis had not very many patients on her list that week. Mrs. Hook's was the worst case, and her state weighed heavily on Persis, especially when she thought of the father off on a long voyage and the six children at home, and the boy who was out at service. The eldest girl — poor twelve-year-old — had come home to keep house and be nurse to her mother. With the instructions of Persis, the aid of Mrs. Moss and Mrs. Tull, the two rooms and the family were kept thoroughly clean; but Persis knew that poverty would soon press sharply, for the mother's work had ceased for six weeks. She found Mrs. Hook looking very despondent.

"Has the doctor been here?" asked Persis, referring to the city doctor from the dispensary.

"Yes, Miss; he came, and he left a line for you, and

he says he is n't sure what the matter is ; but he let fall it was something mighty bad. Oh, whatever will my poor children do left alone in this world—babies without a mother to guard 'em ! A poor sort I have been, Miss ; but I loved 'em and was kind to 'em, and since the Lord converted me I've tried my best bringing them up. And now what will they do? My heart is broken!" She turned her thin pale face on the pillow and burst into bitter weeping, suddenly joined in by the eldest girl and whatever children were in the house.

"Come, dear heart, do n't give up that way," said Persis, laying her cool, soft, firm hand on Mrs. Hook's forehead. "I have read this note, and your children are not going to lose you yet awhile unless you give way like this and mourn yourself into the grave. Hark, now. This very afternoon I will see the most famous surgeon in the city and have him here to-morrow to pronounce on your case. It will be one comfort to know what is wrong ; then we shall know how to remedy it."

"Oh, you're blessed good, Miss Persis. But what if he says it is what can't ever be cured? And these high-flyers they do charge a power of money."

"Never mind the money," said Persis cheerily. "That was what God gave me plenty of it for, to do such errands for him."

"You're the best woman that ever lived in this world, Miss ; I'll stand by that. But I'm hopeless about getting well. If so be I thought you'd look a little after my children"—

"Of course I will—adopt the entire lot of them!

But come, now ; let me do your hair and bathe your face, and make you comfortable, and give you a lunch. You will live to bring up all the children, even the baby."

Her patient in order, Persis left strict directions that the women of the neighborhood should not be allowed to come in and gossip. Her orders, however, were as new ropes on Samson, for a crowd of neighbors coming in to condole and gossip, and cite instances, is the one luxury of being ill, to people of this order ; a luxury of which nothing will induce them to deprive themselves. Persis had a continual contention against this inveterate habit of swarming into sick rooms to rehearse fearful tales of "just such cases," every one of which ended in agony and death. While Persis went home, dined, dressed, went to her club, spoke on "Fragments," and then drove to the famous physician and engaged him for a morning call on Mrs. Hook, Mrs. Hook was surrounded with her neighbor-women, who made surmises, told fearful tales, and gave the most dreadful prognostications.

The next day Persis timed her visit to Mrs. Hook just as the great man was ready to leave.

"She'll have to go to the hospital for an operation ; it should be performed in five days. Until then she should be nursed and her strength brought up. These cases are not in my line. For my patients that can afford it I send to Philadelphia for Doctor T—— ; he is the leading surgeon in the world for these affairs. The others I send to the hospital as private, or free. They will treat you well there, Mrs. Hook. Be brave over it."

Mrs. Hook was ghastly pale. "Doctor, how many live through it?" she asked.

"Oh—a good many. It depends. A very fair number."

"I can't go to the hospital," sobbed Mrs. Hook.

"But you must, or die. If you are not treated you will not live over a fortnight. That is your only chance."

"I can't go. I'll die any way, and if I die here I'll have my children about me to kiss them good-by. If I go to the hospital it is to die all alone."

"Tut, tut! You mean—to come back hearty in six weeks."

"Oh, I know what it is. They all die at the hospital. I have heard all about it. No, no, I cannot go there; no."

The doctor was pulling on his gloves. "It is strange how stubborn these people are and what notions they have about the hospitals—the greatest, most humane institutions of modern times! Well, Miss Thrale, I've done all I can for her. You will have to do the best you can with her and get her to go to the hospital. It's that or nothing. Oh, never mind that check. I've heard of your work, let it go for comforts for this little family."

He was gone; the room was filled with the bitter sobbing of Mrs. Hook and her little daughter, who, cast upon the bed, with her arms over her mother's feet, cried frantically, "Mammy, do n't die—do n't go. I can't live without you. Oh, mammy, what are we going to do!"

The strong hands of Persis lifted the girl up and put her into the hall-way. "Now stay there until you

can act like a woman and help your mother, and not harm her." Then she returned to the bedside.

"Oh, Miss," said the sick woman, "do n't say I'm to go. Nearly all of them that go for this trouble to the hospital die; and the nurses are that sharp!—and you can't see your own family. Oh, let me die here, if so be it is God's will."

"It is perhaps his will that you recover, and he affords you the means. Scarcely any institutions do so much good as the hospitals; skill, care, all the comforts of life, are there for nothing. Their work is Christ-like."

"Oh, Miss, you think so; but I've heard. I can't go; oh, no."

The sobs of the frantic woman shook the bed on which she lay, great beads of sweat stood on her white, miserable face. Persis, the strong, stood looking at her, a great wave of compassion rising over her heart and smothering even speech. Then suddenly came to her as never before the great joy of possessed wealth; she felt as she never had felt the power of money, and oh how noble a thing seemed a fortune held in fee for God! Science could perform a cure, but her money would enable her to calm these fears and make a cure possible. She took Mrs. Hook's hand and said firmly: "Hush! You are not going to the hospital, and you are to get well. Now I know what to do for you. You shall have Doctor T—— from Philadelphia, just as do the richest people; and you shall have every chance to get well, and you will get well. You'll be good and help me out, wont you? You'll not let me throw the effort away?"

“Doctor T—— from Philadelphia,” gasped poor Mrs. Hook.

“Listen, now. I have a friend, Mrs. Doctor Welsh, a first-class physician, who has a beautiful house out here, just at the end of the street-car line. She takes patients there, three or four at a time, in lovely separate rooms, and she has a trained nurse for each, and all is quiet and beautiful—just like a home; and their friends, their relatives, I mean, can go to see them daily. Now, Mrs. Hook, I will go to Doctor Welsh and see if she has a room and a nurse for you. We can manage it, I am sure, and she will telegraph to Doctor T——. To-morrow I will take you to Doctor Welsh’s house, and this afternoon I will send you in the things you will need—a little trunk, neat underwear and gowns, and a nice wrapper, cap, and slippers for your first sitting up. As to the family, do not worry; Maria Jane Moss will leave her dress-making and take care of them for a few weeks. Why, you’ll be at home, as the doctor said, in six weeks as well as ever!”

Persis swept down all resistance by her firm determination. The world began to look a little brighter to Mrs. Hook, and the prospect of a trunk, an article which in her wildest dreams of splendor she had never expected to own, even caused her to smile.

When Persis came in to dinner that day she was decked in the glories of her up-town garb. “I have been shopping,” she announced; “and never did the rabies of buying so possess me. I had to control my excitement rigorously.”

She then stated the case of Mrs. Hook. There was plenty of sympathy; but Cousin Rebecca said firmly, "I think there was no sense in humoring her in that way. You know the hospitals *are* well managed, and quite good enough."

"Yes; but she was past arguing with. I could not force her to see the truth. She was in an agony of terror and distrust which would simply have insured her death. Her only hope is in calm confidence and renewed strength. I am doing all I can to secure them for her. I have ordered her dinner from a good restaurant. I shall go and see Dr. Welsh, and to-morrow morning take Mrs. Hook to a Turkish bath and then to the doctor's. I've no doubt it will be her first ride in a carriage."

About half the neighborhood crowded to doors and windows to see Mrs. Hook's departure. "You're all right now, with Miss Thrale to see to you." "Oh, you're in for a real picnic!" "That great doctor will cure you." "Never fret, we'll look out for the children." "My! ain't you in style." And thus the chorus of the women cheered her out of sight.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RULE OF LIFE.

“And there shall rise a brighter day,
Beyond this scene of calm and strife,
Where love shall hold imperial sway
And goodness be the rule of life.”

WHILE Persis administered as much of her property as was involved in her charities Mr. Inskip was still her man of business. Her absolute confidence in his good judgment and his fatherly interest left her mind free for the duties she had assumed at Gardner Street.

“Persis Thrale,” said Mr. Inskip, with some indignation in his tone, “I’m afraid you’ve lost your head. Here you have spent almost six hundred dollars on one single person!”

It was a lovely May morning. Mr. Inskip was bending over his desk in his private office and Persis was swinging idly to and fro in a rocking-chair by the open window.

“Yes,” said Persis, in calm reply to Mr. Inskip’s heated tone; “I consider that the best-spent money that ever went through my fingers.”

Mr. Inskip whirled his office chair about until he had his back to the desk and his face toward Persis, who brought her rocker to a stand-still.

“How long, Persis, will your property, would any property, stand the strain if you, living among hundreds of the impoverished, begin to allow yourself to give individuals hundreds of dollars? I’ve always been afraid your zeal would outrun your discretion.”

“Until now,” smiled Persis, “I have been beautifully discreet, and have not intrenched on my capital.”

“If you keep other outlays as you have arranged them this six hundred will overrun the income.”

“Maybe my own summer trip need not be so expensive. In fact, Harriet and I think of going where we can have just as good a time, and just as healthful, but where expenses will be less; and what we do spend will go to struggling people who need it.”

“I’ll warrant, some new fad of sacrifice.”

“Now, Mr. Inskip, don’t be savage. Let me tell you that this affair of Mrs. Hook was very unusual, and I am not likely to meet the same need again. I spent nearly six hundred dollars on her, it is true; but what did I get by it? With that sum I purchased the life of the mother of seven children. It gave me opportunity to see and show that I really accept the Christ-doctrine, ‘all ye are brethren.’ Spending it I obeyed my Lord: ‘do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you.’ With this comparatively small outlay I have been able to impress on a number of my people that the religion of Jesus has in it the elements of self-sacrifice and true love. Even on the ground of philanthropy I don’t see how I could have done other than I did, having the means. There was my sister-woman, my Christian sister,

suffering from a terrible affliction. I had seen her struggling to live down and work off her disease until resolution was useless, and she was obliged to give up her painful task of earning her few dimes a day. I saw her haggard, emaciated, terrified, weeping. Could I put the saving of a paltry six hundred against all that terrible misery? For six hundred dollars—or six thousand—would I have been willing to take her physical disabilities, even relieved by all the appliances of wealth? On the one side I stood in perfect health and strength, young, unburdened, with money to spare. On the other side was this mother of seven children, poor, suffering, grown old before her time, and lacking that general knowledge which would have enabled her better to estimate her chances for recovery. You would not have hesitated a minute in such a case, Mr. Inskip. I know you. You would have written out a check. Result: Mrs. Hook is perfectly well, happy, at work.”

When the enemy thus carried the war into his own territories Mr. Inskip wheeled his chair about and began to grumble over his papers. “Well, well, I suppose you will do such things now and then. I must do what I can to make it good to you. A little judicious re-investing would square that all up. I traded the Barber Street property for three houses out on High Street. If I could sell one of those for seven or eight hundred more than I gave for it your extravagance would be cancelled.”

“Couldn’t you sell it for double what you gave for it, especially if you found some one who wanted it very

greatly," jeered Persis, looking up the street to see if Harriet were coming ; for this was Saturday, and the two were intent on going for summer hats.

"Now do n't be greedy," said Mr. Inskip. "That is the natural rebound of lavishness ; I've no doubt you'll die a miser."

"From that may Providence save me ! I'd rather die in the almshouse."

"I should n't be surprised at either *denouement*," said Mr. Inskip. "I shall advertise one of the houses at a suitable figure ; and remember, whenever you are absurdly lavish you put me to all this trouble ; also remember that I do n't do 'real estate' work for any one but you and myself."

"How much I appreciate it !" cried Persis. "As soon as your eldest girl is through school I mean to inspire her with all my notions and bring her into my work ; and wont you have a happy time with both of us !"

"At present I'd be happier to have you go and meet Miss Hughes, not wait for her," laughed Mr. Inskip.

"Just let me tell you some new undertakings. I have started a club of up-towners called the 'Fragment Society.' Also, I have formed a committee of some young fellows about Gardner Street to provide a reading-room—a place of cheerful, safe resort, very simple and cheap."

"Persis, Persis, be careful."

"Just let me tell you how I mean to manage it. I am going to get the rent of the two rooms we have

chosen from business men, applying first to the employers of the young fellows who will use the place. Twenty gentlemen can shoulder that rent without knowing it. The next point will be to furnish the rooms; chairs, tables, books, pictures, games are needed, also dishes and cooking utensils for the little refreshment-room. My Fragment Club can fit those out to a nicety. I should not wonder if a violin or two, a couple of flutes and a parlor organ were to be had. There are some good finds in old family rubbish-heaps. I am going to ask some of my young gentlemen friends to furnish some dumb-bells and a few other appliances for exercise. The young men have set the membership fees at fifty cents a month for those in work, and twenty-five cents for those out of work. These fees will pay for newspapers, magazines and gas. The lunch counter must pay for outlay of material and settle our fuel bills. A cup of tea, coffee or chocolate is to be had with a roll for five cents; a big sandwich five cents, pie ditto. Milk, sandwich and doughnut, ten cents; and so on. We must have a woman who understands bread and biscuit making and the preparation of the other articles on our simple *menu*. A young man must be hired to keep the room in order, look after the books and other property, make the place pleasant and hospitable, and interest himself in any who come there in 'distress of mind, body or estate.' I shall get such a factotum through the Young Men's Christian Association, and his salary and that of the woman must be met. I expect to get Dr. Bond's church to pay the young man, and my friends in our Art and Architecture

Club' to pay the woman. It is time our club was useful as well as ornamental. Now what do you think of all that?"

"I think you are a splendid planner, Persis. All blessing go with you. There is Harriet in the office now."

"One thing more: I want some business men to come on Saturday evenings, and talk of useful things. I shall persuade a physician to come and give some good instruction in hygiene and morals. I want you to come and instruct in certain simple points of common law that all should understand. I'll have one of the hospital Internes give them an Emergency talk; one of the High School superintendents will come and talk about self-education, and so on. Free-and-easy talks they shall all be, questions allowed to be asked. Some traveller will tell of foreign lands with a stereopticon to illustrate the telling; and Dr. Bond and more stereopticon will wake them up about missions."

"Persis," said Mr. Inskip, taking her hand, as he looked at her flashing black eyes and cheeks glowing with intense interest, "did not one of your friends once say that she thought this life you have chosen must be dull and monotonous? I know of no one who has more variety in thought and incident than you do; no one that has wider and more exciting interests and a broader outlook than you have. Your work is one that will never be exhausted; every day will afford new hopes and new achievements. I think I do not know a happier woman than you are."

Yes, Persis was happy. "Each morning saw some work begun, each evening saw it close." Her way opened ever wider and clearer before her eyes. Her friends said of her laughingly, that if there was anything that Persis Thrale did not know it was not for lack of asking questions and searching it out; and if there was any lack of help for her work it was not for want of asking for it. She made her requisitions on all her acquaintances, and few refused her their aid.

The kindergarten was full of children, and as the little pupils outgrew their studies there they passed into the public schools to justify the good training which Harriet had given them. Girl after girl went from Mrs. Sayce's sewing-classes to Miss Rebecca's dressmaking room, or to Miss Susan's flower work, and ere long went from these, sensible, self-respecting, self-supporting women. Season lapsed into season, vacations were taken and given, homes built up, the weakly were made strong, and in this round of duty Persis scarcely noticed that three years had glided by since she projected the Common-sense Club Room, which had saved and built up into manliness so many young fellows of the neighborhood.

Persis came from the club room one morning in June. She had been there to give the secretary in charge an invitation sent through her to all the members of the club. A wealthy gentleman who owned a large country seat had asked the entire club to spend the Fourth of July on his grounds to enjoy a dinner, speeches and fireworks. As Persis reached her house she noticed that her front door stood wide open, and at the bottom of the two or three



C. H. WARREN.

steps leading to it was a big disreputable-looking woman. On her head was a battered black hat, over her shoulders a thin torn cotton shawl, while her faded and soiled calico frock hung about her rough, badly-broken shoes.

Persis went up the steps. In the hall were two children playing horse. A rosy black-eyed six-year-old boy with a crop of close black curls, his sturdy little figure neatly dressed in a brown linen suit, drove for horse a little blond dumpling of a girl in a blue chintz Mother Hubbard gown neatly finished in white ruffles. A pair of reins, knit in gaudy colors and furnished with bells, afforded all that was needed to convert the little maid into an antic horse and the lad into a judicious driver. The laughter of the children and the kindly tones of the boy, gentle in his play, echoed into the street. Looking down from this scene of happy innocence into the red, marred face of the watching woman, Persis recognized her.

“Suke Ryan! Is it you? I have lost you for a long time! I scarcely know you; you are changed.”

“Oh, yes,” said Suke with indifference, “I’ve used myself pretty rough. We all change and run down.”

“Or up?” said Persis suggestively.

“I ain’t the kind that goes up,” said Suke with defiance. “I say, Miss, is that the young un I give you, the boy? Let’s see, what was his name? Dorry? Oh yes, so it was. Is that him?”

“Yes; and he’s a real nice little fellow too.”

“Who’s the other one, the girl?”

“A child adopted by my cousins, the Misses North.”

“See here, Miss Thrale, what would you give to know all about where that un came from?”

“Nothing, I think,” said Persis, with a start. “I believe I had rather not know. It is better for the child to go on her way without any burden from her antecedents.”

“If you mean better for her not to know she’s of scum kind, you’re all out. Her mother was as good as they build ’em.”

“How do you know?”

“’Cause I brought her here.”

“Do you want to come in and see Dorry, Suke?”

“No, I guess not. I’ve quit caring for him, and if he is one of the going-up kind it’s just as well he do n’t have me to remember. I’m a poor lot, Miss.”

“At least, Suke, come into the sitting-room and rest awhile, and have a good cup of tea and some biscuits.”

Suke followed hesitatingly, as if fearing the respectability of the place. Persis looked into the flower-room and asked Trinka to go to the kitchen for a pot of tea and something to eat with it. Suke, while waiting for the tea, rocked back and forth and stared at the room.

“Never was in here before. Women said it was nice, but you mind I wouldn’t come; ’t wasn’t in my line. I s’pose you like it; but I’d ruther a room where I can knock my pipe ashes out onto the floor and upset a jug o’ beer ’thout spoiling nothing. I’d get to fair *hate* the sight o’ them books and pictures and flowers. They look *too* good to me. I’d ruther a bar-room full of smoke and whisky, a pack of cards to play for drinks, and meb-

by a fight coming off to stir you up—I would, now.” She glared boldly at Persis.

“Tastes differ,” said Persis coolly. “An end will come to it all, Suke; what then?”

“Dead and done with,” said Suke. “You need n’t try to get me to believe nothing else.”

Trinka came with the tea, some bread and butter and ginger-cake. Persis handed Suke these refreshments as politely as if she had been a morning caller far higher up in the social scale. Suke thirstily drank three cups of tea; of the food she partook sparingly.

“I live mostly on drinking,” she said. The tea seemed to mollify her. When it was all gone she leaned back in the chair and spoke in a lower, less belligerent tone: “I *will* tell you ’bout that little girl. Her mother and dad were Scotch people and had n’t any relations. The man came over here to look for work, and meant to send for his wife. He took to drink and began to quit writing, and she, poor soul, got fretted about him and picked up her few duds and what little she could earn for her passage, and over she came, and by bad luck she found him. She couldn’t keep him straight, and he dragged her down into the streets folks call Sodom and Gomorrah. She kept her room right tidy and her things together, and did her best; but he got killed by the fall of a derrick down on the docks, and she wasn’t able to do anything.”

“Why did n’t she go to the hospital?”

“’Long of being a stranger in a strange land and having no friends; and the kind of folks that help you

give our part of the town the go-by, don't you see? Anyway, the baby was born, and we women felt sorry for her and looked to her as well as we could. I know I did my best; but I saw right off the heart was gone out of her and the strength, and she wasn't going to get well. It was real pitiful, Miss, to see her lifting up in bed, with her fluttering weak hands, keeping that little baby of hers clean and tidy, and mothering it, and it so soon going to have no mother. When she saw how that was she broke down and cried dreadful."

"Why did you not come for me?" cried Persis indignantly.

Suke looked at her with open-mouthed stupidity. "'T wa'n't in your beat, Miss. You couldn't take care of *all* the city, could you? Besides, I s'pose it didn't look so bad to me as it does to you. I'm used to such things. Then, again, I was kind of mad at you for getting Dorry from me, and mighty mad with myself for being choused out of him; and so—well, I didn't care to have to do with you or this place any more at all. When she mourned to me about the little one left to be abused and wicked she made me promise as soon as she was dead I'd carry it out to be put into some home or asylum; and then she cried again over 'her little girl left to be ill-used,' and she got to praying, and I couldn't stand it; for if there is one thing I hate clean above another it is praying. So I said to her: 'Mrs. Grey, you hold up. I'll do better for that baby nor the Lord can, a far sight.' And I up and told her all about you—how you were terrible rich and pious, and working for poor

critters all the while, and having church in your house, and how you'd adopted Dorry and Tommy; and I said as soon as she was dead I'd take her baby right to you. She asked me couldn't I bring you to her just once; but I didn't want to do that; so I said I would as soon as you got back to town. But I promised firm and sure about the baby."

"Oh, Suke, you cruel, wicked woman, not to come to me!"

"La, Miss, what's the use of crying over spilt milk? She's dead long ago, ain't she? She slipped off very sudden, the baby lying in her arms. Well, soon as we laid her out I took off the baby. We did our best laying her out. I bought four dip candles, and we made a cross of a piece of black cloth for her breast; but, along of her not being a Catholic, we didn't get the priest, and the poor-overseer buried her next day. I rolled up the baby and started for here. It was pretty late, of a Sunday night, and I hated to come in to see you. As I got to the house, by the baby-school door, I saw a light going to the basement. So I laid the baby close to the door, as it was crying fearful loud. Well, the light came back, and the door never opened. I waited about as long as I dared in the storm; then just as I was going to pick the young un up and go round and knock at your window the door opened, and the baby was took in; so I run. In a day or so I found out at the grocery woman's that your folks had kept the baby. So that's the end of it."

"What was the mother's name?"

“Agnes Mac Call.”

“I wish the child had had something of the mother’s to keep.”

“Well, Miss, she told me when I took the baby to you to take her Bible along with it ; but when she said that the Bible was gone. ’T was nothing but a little old black book, and one day I needed some paper to heat up a cup of tea for her, and I just took that ; it did as well as any other paper, and she never knew it ; she couldn’t read while she was sick, her eyes were dim along of weakness.”

“You burned the poor creature’s Bible !” cried Persis.

“Yes,” drawled Suke ; “what harm was that ? I’ve heard say they do n’t cost much, and there’s places where you can get them for nothing.”

“You seem to have no moral sense !” cried Persis despairingly.

“I ain’t much sense of any kind,” she said resignedly.

“Suke, tell me : where did you come from, and how were you brought up ?”

“Do n’t know where I came from, and never was brought up at all. First I remember I was roaming the streets, and I’ve roamed ’em pretty well ever since. I do n’t know how old I am, but I’m gray and I’m wrinkled, and I guess I’ll go on roaming the streets till I die. Some children are children of *homes*, Miss, and some are children of the *gutter*. I’m that kind. I’m going now, and I do n’t mean ever to see you again. It kinder worrits me, and I believe it worrits you.”

She went out, never giving a glance at the two children in whose life-histories she had had so large a share.

Persis watched her going down the street with dogged shambling motion, until a turn of a corner hid her from her eyes for ever. Oh, wreck of womanhood—at whose door to be laid?

CHAPTER XV.

A LIFE-SAVING STATION.

“And now amid the fading light
With faltering steps I journey on,
Waiting the coming of the night
When earthly light and life are gone.”

As Persis turned from watching Suke Ryan, the hall was suddenly filled with her family: Harriet coming from the kindergarten, Miss Rebecca and Miss Susan from their work-rooms, for the noon hour.

“I have something to tell you,” said Persis, taking the little Dora by the hand and turning to the sitting-room. There she told them Suke’s story.

“Oh,” said Miss Susan openly weeping, “it makes my heart ache to think of what that young woman suffered; but is n’t it beautiful, truly beautiful, to be allowed, as we are, to help God—to be his instruments in answering prayer!”

“I was certain,” said Miss Rebecca, sitting very erect and polishing her spectacles, “that this child was not of a common kind. I knew I could n’t have been drawn to her the way I was unless she had good blood.” Thus Miss Rebecca: ignoring the memory of the father who had taken to drink and been killed by a derrick.

“To think,” cried Harriet, “of that wretched Suke refusing to come for you, Persis. What agony of mind

that mother must have felt at the thought of leaving her baby in such a den."

"The Lord comforts his own, Harriet," observed Rebecca with dignity. "No doubt he gave her assurance that he would provide for her child. You know Suke said that she dropped off suddenly, and no doubt up to the last she expected to be able before she died to put her child into good hands. And even if that was not so, I must believe that as soon as she was dead she was led to know that the Lord would make good the promise, 'Leave your fatherless children with me, and I will preserve them alive.' It is a good thought that the Lord may let her see that her child is innocent and happy, and will be brought up as a girl should be."

"I think," suggested Persis, "that the child should have her mother's name. You have called her Dora, supposably North, when she needs a surname. Why not call her Dora Agnes Mac Call?"

"We must," said Miss Rebecca, firmly. "We must call her Dora Agnes, right out. That poor young mother that cared for her child and loved it, and died with it in her arms, has her rights, and must not be forgotten. We will tell the child about her. She must have been a good woman, patient and faithful, coming over here alone to try and save her husband! Yes, Dora Agnes shall know all about her!"

"I'm glad I had the little gown and shirt and piece of patchwork quilt done up and saved. They must be some of her mother's work, and should be more precious than gold to Dora Agnes," said Miss Susan.

“Dorry,” said Persis turning to the boy, who stood leaning on her chair, “run over to Mrs. Trenton’s and tell her that I am coming there to tea this evening. Be brisk and you will get back in time for dinner.”

“Mrs. Massey says she’ll take me and Tommy Tibbets to the Park to play this afternoon,” said Dorry going for his hat. “Can we go?”

“Yes, and take tea - lunch and stay until eight o’clock, too.”

“Persis,” said Miss Rebecca, “what new scheme have you on hand now? I see there is one. I can tell it by the look in your eyes, the set of your mouth, and the way you hold your eyebrows straight.”

“You are very observing, Cousin Rebecca,” laughed Persis, “but you are right. I have a new scheme, and one that must immediately be worked out. It must not happen again that one of God’s hidden ones is dragged down into Sodom and Gomorrah to die, neglected and unhelped, without one comfort of Christianity. The orphans of that quarter, the orphan babies, must not be left to be the stuff they make criminals out of.”

“What is to be done about it, Persis? Seems to me it will take long planning to see it through,” said Miss Susan.

“My plan has sprung from my brain this time fully armed, complete, and panoplied as Minerva from Jove’s head,” returned Persis, “though of course I must discuss it and examine it, and test it in each particular, before I get it at work. My idea is to have a Bible woman and a Bible nurse established together in a room on the

safest edge of Sodom and Gomorrah. We will get elderly women, fit for the work, experienced and kindly, and not afraid. Their two rooms must be made comfortable, and they must have some depository of clothing, food, medicines, needed articles—as bedding—to draw upon for their work. Those streets must be canvassed. The innocent and the babies must not be lost in the crowded dens of vice. We must have a life-saving station on the verge of that sea of ruin and misery! Yes, it must be done quickly. I'll talk it over with Mr. and Mrs. Trenton this evening."

That evening they sat long at the Trentons' simple tea table. The good dame who was both servant and friend, and fellow helper in the mission work, carried off the two children and put them to bed, and still Persis and her friends sat discussing what more was to be done for the heretofore practically neglected neighborhood.

"The proper workers must be found, and their salaries secured," said Persis. "And the first is harder than the second. The salaries shall be had, if I have to break Mr. Inskip's heart by trespassing on capital."

"All can be found," said Mr. Trenton. "The Lord has evidently called for work in that forsaken field. It has for several weeks been on my mind to start a men's mission there, and I have been talking with several real good Salvation Army young men to take three or four rooms for a barracks and start their work. I believe they are the ones for the place, and I have been looking for the needed money among some of our liberal givers."

“Let us go into this work without losing a day,” said Persis; “too much time has been lost already.”

“It will be my last personal work in this quarter, Persis,” said Mr. Trenton.

“You’re not going away!”

“It is absolutely necessary for our children; we cannot keep them here, they need out-of-door space. We cannot house them longer as we are forced to do here. When we felt the need, and yet no door was opened for us elsewhere, we thought it was not the Lord’s way for us to go. Now I am urgently called to a new church formed in the suburbs. I think my way is plain.”

“And who will shepherd these few sheep in the wilderness?” asked Persis.

“The mission shall not be left vacant,” said Mr. Trenton. “You know Mr. Charles Cooper, who has helped me so much? He finished his theological studies this spring. He will take my place; it was decided last night, and if you had not come here I was going over to tell you this evening. He is the very man for this place; he was a wide-awake young physician when he felt compelled, fairly compelled, to study for the ministry. This work is a cure of bodies and souls, and a pastor with a thorough medical education will be invaluable.”

“He is n’t married,” said Persis in a dissatisfied tone.

“The evil is not without remedy,” hinted Mrs. Trenton; “have you not noticed?”

“Harriet!” exclaimed Persis. “Well, there are none so blind as those who will not see. What can I do without Harriet!”

“Now that his future is settled I feel sure that he means to ask Harriet to share it,” said Mrs. Trenton.

“Harriet is so invaluable in that kindergarten, and we have harmonized so well and been such friends! I shall be too lonesome for words if she leaves me. Then, too, no one else is likely to be able to take up that work as Harriet does. She gives her time, her work; she has a small income that suffices her when she has her home with me, but that income must be supplied by salary for another. Well, Mr. Inskip will tear his hair and grow old in a day,” said Persis, with the sweet resignation we can afford for other people’s troubles.

“We must pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his vineyard,” said Mr. Trenton.

“And then keep our eyes open and exercise our common-sense in looking them up,” said Persis. “But, as we are on the subject of marrying and giving in marriage, there is to be a little wedding over there in my sitting-room before I start with Harriet for summer rest.”

“Whose wedding?”

“Amos Mason and Maria Jane. I don’t know any one who has been more benefited than Amos by that reading-room. It has made a man of him. He has been promoted in the factory, gets good wages, and has saved up enough to furnish nicely three rooms. He has rented three on the first floor of the house opposite us, and he means to paint and paper them himself. Amos is so handy; he can do ’most anything. His mother is to live with them and do the housekeeping. Amos wanted her to leave the box factory a year ago, but she

would not ; she wanted Amos to be able to save money for his furniture. Maria Jane will go on with her little dressmaking business. They will be a model pair, and have a model home, as an object-lesson for the neighborhood. When I look at Maria Jane—strong, full of hope and energy—I can scarcely realize that she is the tired, feeble, discouraged, overworked girl of four or five years ago. A little help has done such wonders for her.”

“That is it,” said Mr. Trenton ; “the help that really helps, that inspires courage and self-help. Much of the charity of to-day is like throwing bones to a dog. It is not twice blessed ; it is not blessed at all. To give well we must give ourselves with our gifts. Then daily wisdom will come with daily benefactions, and as we help our brother up and walk with him our own souls shall be enlarged.”

“What will Mrs. Moss do when Maria Jane leaves her?” asked Mrs. Trenton.

“Amos proposed renting four rooms and having her live with them ; but her work for me makes it better for her to be where she is more independent. She sews, cooks meals for the sick, washes, mends, gives out garments, and is called out to nurse the sick, and she might be a member of the family too active for the comfort of the others. I mean to give her a room in my house, and five dollars a week. A room in my house means many perquisites. Coal, for instance, I buy in summer by the car-load, and Jim Bowles distributes the coal-scuttles through the house each day, keeping account of them, and as the price is reckoned by wholesale at lowest-sea-

son rates, their coal costs them about half that it does other buyers of small quantities. 'The destruction of the poor is their poverty' in many ways. I find that the people around me who buy coal by the pailful pay often three or four times as much per ton as the rich do.— If I were two persons instead of one I'd set up a coal-yard at one end of Gardner Street and a pure-milk depot at the other."

"I had no idea of the exorbitant rates the poor pay for fuel."

"It is simply this: the small retail dealers give them the coal by the bucket at from twelve to sixteen dollars a ton, and my way gives it to them at from four to five dollars. I don't pauperize them by presenting it free, except to the sick and entirely destitute during some crisis. The others prefer to pay. All they want is to be helped to self-help."

That visit which was to compel Mr. Inskip to tear his hair Persis paid next day. As she entered the inner office Mr. Inskip said: "Good afternoon. I was looking for you. I have some pleasant news for you."

"That's fine," said Persis, "for I have some bad news for you."

"So? Let us be like the little negroes who always eat their desert before their dinner: let us have the good news first."

"All right," said Persis. "Which is the most comfortable chair in this office, so I may brace myself to bear the shock of joy? And where is a fan? The weather points clearly to summer vacations. Now for good news."

“I have leased the two vacant lots northwest of the city for ten years, so that you will have increase of one thousand a year in your income.”

“Oh, be joyful!” cried Persis. “My bad news has vanished like mists before the sun. I had come to tell you that I must use a thousand a year more, even if it came out of that capital you nurse so fondly. A Bible woman and a Bible nurse down in Sodom and Gomorrah, with the rent of their rooms, will cost me seven hundred dollars, and at least three hundred will be needed to salary a kindergarten teacher.” And the new plans were detailed.

“So Harriet is to be married, is she? { And when are *you* to be married, Persis?”

“As far as I know, I have no vocation in that line. I am entirely content in my work.”

“It appears to me that marriage is woman’s natural and happiest lot,” suggested Mr. Inskip.

“So it may be in most cases; but there are exceptions, and I think I am one of them. If I married I could not possibly live where and as I do. Yet in this work I have chosen my part, and I cannot look back. You remember it is written, ‘The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, but she that is married careth how she may please her husband.’ If I married, a husband would naturally feel that I owed to his home and himself a reasonable portion of my time. He might also hold even stronger views than you assert regarding the inviolability of my capital. His affection for me would cause him deep anxiety lest I should overwork in

my charities, or be exposed to personal injury or contagion. His fears would cause him to interfere with my freedom of action. I don't think I should like that, however good the motive might be. Now I go here and there, carrying out my projects, and very seldom think of myself at all; and you see nothing happens to me. If I am in the midst of legions of microbes and bacilli I bear a charmed life, and am not harmed a particle." 7

"It is my duty, however, to impress two cardinal business principles upon your mind, Persis: the first is, never intrench on your capital. When you begin to do that you will find it melts away like snow in spring. The diminution of capital will mean inability to maintain your undertakings. It is better to do a few things thoroughly and continuously than to begin and give up many. It would be a pity indeed if, having lavished your fortune on your work to the point of its exhaustion, your work ceased and you reached old age or disability impoverished. Extend your work, if it pleases you, as income extends, but do not jeopardize income, especially when it is entirely mortgaged in your undertakings. You have a large constituency to share disappointment or failure with you."

"So I have," said Persis frankly, "and I often think the people whom I help owe more to you than to me; for your business management keeps my work in the region of the possible. I do truly intend to listen to your judgment—just as far as I can. What is your other cardinal principle?"

"Make a will. Every possessor of property should."

“That is true. I have thought of that, and set down some little items. You would better draw me up a will.”

“You must give me instructions. Let me hear some of your ideas on that subject.”

“There are Tommy and Dorry. I want provision made to school them and teach them trades, or such business or profession as they may be fittest for : and at twenty-one they are each to have three hundred dollars. I think a young man with a fair education, a business learned, and three hundred dollars to take him where he may wish to go to establish himself, is well enough off. If he has any thing good in him he has a fair field of development.”

“That is true. I agree with you heartily.”

“That is my plan for those two boys if I live. If I die, I hope you will take them in charge and carry it out.”

“Very good.”

“To Serena Bowles, Mrs. Massey, Mrs. Gayley, and Trinkka, each five hundred dollars. If any one of them should be dead when the will goes into effect the money will go instead to the endowment of my Day Nursery. Oh, has Mrs. Inskip told you how beautifully that Day Nursery is getting on? How it helps the mothers, and improves the children? and what lovely, round, happy, fascinating little roly-polys they are down there?”

“Mrs. Inskip raves about it as you do.”

“Come down and visit it, so you too will be interested.”

“I shall not forget it, be sure. Is it not impressed on my mind by your conduct? I had concluded a little transaction which brought you twenty-five hundred dollars, and I was not even permitted to get it into bank. You took the entire amount to hire and furnish a place and establish that Day Nursery,” cried Mr. Inskip.

“Why, Mr. Inskip! What else could I do? I had been praying to the Lord to make clear my way about that Day Nursery, which seemed to be so much needed, and there came that money. What kind of a sinner would I have been to keep it for myself! Now as to my will. I want an endowment of six hundred a year set aside for that Day Nursery, and the same for the kindergarten work. The house on Gardner Street is to be kept to rent to reputable widows or single women receiving not over seven dollars a week, preference being given to the youngest with the lowest wages; and rents to be graded to cover only taxes, repairs and insurance rates on the building. Then there must be an endowment for a Bible nurse; the nurse to have room, rent free, in the Gardner Street house, four hundred dollars salary, and two hundred in the hands of the committee to be used for food or comforts for her patients. Endow also this new work down in Sodom, and have an annuity of two hundred to help keep up that Common-sense Club and Reading-room for young men. Give a thousand each to the Clarke girls. There, I cannot think of anything else.”

“And who shall be the perpetual executors, the self-renewing Board of Trustees, to carry out these trusts?”

“Three members of the session of Doctor Bond’s church, three ladies of that congregation, and one minister of some other church, which we will further determine upon.”

“You seem to have thought much of this, Persis.”

“Yes, I have thought of it. When you have it all safely and securely set down then I shall be free of care about my worldly estate. I can go right on with my work and have no time for anxieties as to what shall come after me. If I stay in this world I have a work that makes my life happy and not unfruitful. If I go out of this world, you remember ‘it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath laid up for those that love him.’”

“There is one word more,” said the lawyer. “City property like yours may largely increase. There may be more than you have provided for. What then?”

“Let the surplus go to boy-saving, after the methods we are taking for Dorry and Tommy,” said Persis. “That is good work—good for the individual, good for the state, good for the church.”

“In fact, nothing could be better,” said Mr. Inskip.

“The afternoon has slipped away unawares,” said Persis. “I am going out to tea with some of my up-town friends. I hope the impetus of my talk here with you will not result in my boring them about my down-town friends.”

She stood before the glass arranging her hat, and added in a meditative tone, “I don’t see how people

can hoard money, when there is so much real satisfaction to be had in spending it in good, useful, philanthropic work !”

“Personal interest in that work,” laughed Mr. Inskip, “is like the letting out of water. The little ripple may become the outpouring of all.”

“Don’t liken it to a flood : that carries destruction ; better take the simile of the spring and the river, that fills the land with plenty where it goes,” replied Persis.

CHAPTER XVI.

“AND SERENA SAW A GREAT LIGHT.”

“They no more shall thirst or hunger,
They no more with heat shall faint;
Christ for tears will give them gladness,
Blissful rest for sore complaint.”

PERSIS in her gray nurse's-garb, bag in hand, stood on her door-step one bright May morning. A boy and a girl stood one on each side the step. Each had a little lunch-basket and a strap of books. These were Dorry, now eleven, and Dora Agnes, eight years old, both pupils at the public school. They looked down the street for Tommy Tibbets, who always went with them. Presently Tommy, with his basket and book strap, came running up.

“Miss Thrale, Aunt Serena says will you come see Gran'ma Mumsey this morning; she's sick, and can't get up.”

Persis had expected such a summons; she had seen how that frail life was lapsing to its close.

Years of trouble are the years with histories. There is little to tell of months gliding by one after the other marked only by the growth of children to youth, the waxing of maturity to age, the slow upbuilding of business, the quiet progress of undertaken work towards the ideal, never attained, that we would have it be. In these years that had seen those baby kindergartners,

Dorry, Tommy and Dora Agnes, growing almost out of childhood, all the work of Persis had seemed proportionately to thrive and enlarge. The club increased in numbers and effectiveness: it had now a regular weekly lecture on popular science, and a Sunday afternoon Bible-class, while the restaurant department had extended until it afforded work and a living to a cook, Mrs. Picot, and her eldest daughter. The “Alma Club” of ladies had done such a noble work that on a neighboring street the “Brothers Club” of young college men had been established to do for men the work the Alma Club did for women.

The Day Nursery and the kindergarten had made what seemed a new race of the children about Gardner, Webster and Ramsay Streets. The mission begun by Tom Trenton in the midst of that great revival had grown and extended into three outposts. Most of all the heart of Persis exulted in the change wrought in the quarter known as Sodom and Gomorrah. That name was now falling out of use. The work of the Salvation Army and the nurse and Bible women supported by Persis could be read on the records of the police, where, instead of constant fights, thefts, assaults, killings, cuttings, brawls, were blank leaves, suggestive of quiet days, and a marked decrease in the number and enormity of crimes. The change could also be read in the appearance of the people thereabouts. They looked better fed; there were clean babies to be seen, and women who wore whole gowns and had their hair combed; and one going down there could at times hear the laughter of children.

There had been men and women born again even in that dismal and evil locality. "The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people that this and that man was born there."

As they who reap rich harvest rejoice that they persevered in sowing seed, so Persis when she saw these moral sheaves come in was glad that she had been led to sow with no niggard hand. Besides these harvests that were reaped on earth there were others gathered into heaven, and as Persis, bidding the three children good-morning, went to visit Mrs. Mumsey, she felt that here was one to be gathered "as a shock of corn fully ripe."

Mrs. Mumsey was lying with her eyes shut. Serena had left nothing for Persis to do. The room was neat and shaded, the windows raised to admit the spring air, which even the city pavements and brick walls could not rob of all its sweetness; on a little white-draped stand near the bed were some pinks in a glass.

"Tommy brought them," said Serena in a whisper. "He had a dime some one had given him, and he ran to market for them early, because *she* likes 'em, and they mind her of times when she was a little girl."

Mrs. Mumsey opened her eyes and held out her small shrunken hand to Persis.

"I'm going, dear. I don't feel any sickness or any pain; I'm just drifting out, like. I feel just as the baby does that its mother is rocking to sleep with a little song. You can't hear it, you and Serena, because it is n't for you but for me, and it just hums sweetly through my mind, soft and low, 'Even in the valley of the shadow of

death I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me.’” She closed her eyes again and lay listening, with the peace of childhood on her thin, wrinkled face. Persis sat beside her. After a little she spoke again :

“I’ve lived much longer than I thought to : it was the child did it. He gave me fresh life, hearing him talk and laugh, and seeing him running about, and having him to love and to love me. When he was off at school I thought about him, and it was a pleasure to go in his little room there and fix it up neat. And the last thing at night I went to take a look at him, and the first thing in the morning he put his head in at yon door to ask, ‘Granny, can I do anything for you?’ Oh, Tommy’s a good boy. I know he’s safe with you, Miss Thrale.”

“Yes, indeed,” said Persis. “When you are gone home I will take him right over to Gardner Street and bring him up with Dorry. I’m going to have a room for them cut off at the lower end of the hall. It will be nice and sunny, and I shall make it comfortable and teach them how to take care of it. Tommy will be a good man, and he wont forget you, you may be sure.”

“I’d like him to remember me,” said the old lady. “None of us likes to be forgotten.”

“We can none of us forget you, dear Grandma Mumsey. You have helped us all toward heaven.”

“This world has seemed like home to me, Miss Persis ; but for a few days past it has not seemed so any more, but heaven has seemed to be the real home, and its doors wide open. With the people about me here—Serena and Tommy and the rest—I still seemed to see

and hear those who went away long, long ago. They all seem as near and as dear as ever. I was married when I was eighteen, Miss Persis, and my husband and my two little girls died before I was twenty-four. A good kind man my Jason was, and he says to me going, 'It may seem long to you, Anna, before you come, but it will not seem long to me.' And now I am eighty almost, and the waiting has been long, though now it is over it don't look so long as it felt; it seems only a little; and I see my mother and father and Jason and the girl babies as plain as ever."

"Is there anything I can do for you? Do you want anything?" asked Persis.

"I would like to see Doctor Bond and have one more talk with him. He has been a blessed help and comfort to me. He is so old, and not strong, I hate to ask the trouble of him."

"After I have made my rounds this morning I will take a carriage and go after him. I know he will wish to come. What else is there?" said Persis.

"Nothing. The Second Bank has thirty dollars that has been kept for me a good many years for my burial. I want to have that used and no more. I put in twenty, and it has grown to thirty; and I want to do for myself, and not be beholden, though I know none of you would grudge it. There's a little jug up on the mantel—I got it at the missionary meeting three years ago—and there's a wee bit of money in it I laid up for missions. Send the society that. Give Serena what she can use of my things, and divide up the rest among the poorest ones

about here. My hand got so thin years ago that I could n't wear my wedding-ring. It is hung round my neck with a cord. Give that and my Bible to Tommy. And for you, Miss Persis, there's only an old woman's blessing. You've been good, good, good to me, Miss, and the Lord said, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least one of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.'”

When Persis made her rounds next morning she went first to Mrs. Mumsey's room. Her room was no longer the humble tenement that had housed the frail, self-denying, simple body. Wider realms and more glorious habitations had opened for the redeemed soul.

It was such recompense as this that made the years of her chosen labor seem to Persis short as the years which Jacob served for Rachel, which were to him but “as a day, for the love where with he loved her.” A going out like that of Mrs. Mumsey brought the heavenly horizon very near—as near as the sky seems to children when the rainbow meets the earth just beyond the limits of their home, and they set forth to touch the arch of splendor and gather the treasures where it rests upon the sod.

Serena Bowles missed her old friend and neighbor, for whom of late years she had done more and more kind offices rendered needful by the good woman's increasing age and feebleness. She missed Tommy, too, who had been taken over to Gardner Street. Persis, appreciating Serena's bereavement, went often to see her as she made her nursing visits. One morning she found Serena seated in the middle of her room, the rolls of clothes drying in her big basket, the fire going out in the laun-

dry stove, the irons cooling. Serena appeared as one amazed.

“What is wrong, Serena? Are you sick?”

“Sick, Miss Persis! Bless me, you could knock me down with a feather! There’s a lawyer-man been here.”

“Certainly not to give you notice to quit or to distrain for rent,” said Persis, smiling. “What *did* he come for?”

“That’s the thing, Miss. Why, I’m clear upset over it. You know old Mrs. Bingham, she that was of Doctor Bond’s church, and died a month back? I washed for her twenty years. And long ago, when her children died of sore throat, and the servants were scared and left, I went up there and did her kitchen work for her six weeks. ‘I’ll never forget it of you, Serena,’ she often said to me. But, land, I never thought she’d remember me this way!”

“What way, Serena?”

“Why, she’s left me twenty-five hundred dollars! The lawyer-man says it’s to me, and I can have it when I like, to use; and she fixed it some way that Jim Bowles cannot take it. And I up and told the lawyer-man that Jim Bowles didn’t want it; that he might have his ways, as we all have, being the way we are made, but Jim was not the man to lay out to rob his wife; and since he has been with you there isn’t a nicer man living than Jim Bowles. I told him that.”

Persis privately considered that Serena was no doubt more vigorous in regard to Jim Bowles’ virtues for having the assurance that the twenty-five hundred dollars was safe from him.

“That is grand news, Serena,” said Persis. “I am delighted with it. Twenty-five hundred dollars is not a large fortune, but it will secure comfort to your old age.”

“Dear knows, I can’t see what I shall do with it!” said Serena.

“You are not required to do anything with it to-day,” said Persis. “You have plenty of time to meditate. Except for this knowledge of possession you are in just the same position that you were yesterday.”

“That’s so!” cried Serena, looking much relieved, “and my work is here just the same; and I’m bound to do it, just the same as ever!”

She poked the fire with great energy, sprinkled some water on the rolls of clothes, arranged her ironing board, and having tested one of the irons with the tip of her fore-finger, and found it not hot enough, she put her hands on her hips and addressed herself to Persis.

“Why do you suppose I got all that money, Miss Thrale?”

“Because the Lord wished you to have it, I suppose. Such a bequest is not an ordinary incident, and Mrs. Bingham might easily have left this legacy somewhere else. I think, Serena, that our heavenly Father is like our earthly parents, in delighting to see his children happy and in readiness to give them indulgences when he sees it will not injure them. He perhaps sees that you can be indulged without any spiritual harm, or he may have in this legacy some new lesson to teach you.”

“What do you suppose it would be right for me to

do with it? What have I a *right* to do with it?" urged Serena.

"Anything which you like, I think, Serena. You are not likely to set up a rum-shop or a gambling-table! Perhaps you have had some plan, or dream, or hope, that you have long wished to fulfil, and now the Lord gives you opportunity. If a child has longed for a doll, and the mother gives her unexpectedly its price, no doubt she is meant to buy the doll. Buy your doll, Serena."

As Persis went on her morning rounds she smiled to herself over Serena's excitement about her twenty-five hundred dollars.

"It is not likely to do Serena any harm," she said to Cousin Rebecca that evening. "Serena is level-headed and she has sound Christian principle. She is so accustomed to watching for the guiding of God's hand that she will not go far astray from what is really best for her. Jim is the one to be damaged. He will think himself nearly a millionaire, and very likely refuse any honest labor."

"Jim has done wonderfully well for us," said Miss Susan.

"So he has," said Miss Rebecca grimly. "He likes to ride in the elevator; it is a ceaseless delight to him. The work he does here gives him plenty of time to sit down. Distributing the hods of coal and keeping the accounts for each one of the tenants' rooms, and finally making it out, gives him a fine feeling of importance. For the rest, cleaning the sidewalk and door-steps, washing a few windows, going errands, running a furnace and keeping the cellar and laundry clean make just about a half-day's

work each day. Jim spreads it out over the whole day, and likes it first-rate. However, I suppose a notice to quit will be in order.”

They saw nothing of Serena for some days : then she came in looking joyful, excited, hesitant, anxious—in a very tumult of conflicting feelings.

“Miss Thrale! Where do you think I’ve been!”

“I’m sure I cannot guess, Serena.”

“I’ve been on the cars, forty-five miles!”

“Where?”

“Back to where I was born and brought up, Miss! I felt fairly pulled there. I found the same little church I used to go to, and the river is the same, and the popple trees all along it in a row! I found two old people that were young married folks when I was a slip of a girl; and there are two or three of the ones I used to go to school with there yet. Sara Jenks’ man has got rich, and gone to Legislature, and she has a fine big house; and Ann Kent is well to do, and Lizzie Weeks is a widow and poor. Dear knows, how queer it seemed to see them all! There’s a new school-house, and there’s a rail-road three miles off, and I sat down under the bombergilear trees that used to be by my father’s house, though the house is n’t there: it was pulled down ten years ago! But oh, the air seemed so sweet there, Miss Thrale, and the sky so blue, and the grass soft and green beyond anything, and there were blue flags by the brook, and buttercups all along the roadside. There was the little low Davis house, with laylocks and snowballs blooming by the door, same as ever! Miss Thrale, that Davis house—it’s a bit

of an old thing of four rooms, but it is sound, standing in half-an-acre of garden—is for sale for five hundred dollars! 'Pears to me I *must* buy it and Jim and I must go there and live! What do you think?"

"Tell me more about it, Serena."

"You see, Miss, there'd be the garden, where we could raise about all we'd use. We could keep a cow, and chickens, and a pig or two; so there'd be eggs, milk, butter, fowls and a pig to sell. Jim could take care of the garden and the pigs, and I could do a little nursing or laundry, or sewing for the neighbors, and the two thousand dollars would bring us a hundred and forty dollars a year. It does seem as if it would be like heaven to get into the quiet country, and go to the same little church and Sunday-school I did when I was small; and evenings Jim and I could walk under the popple trees, or sit under the bombergilears, same as we used to do! Jim is fairly wild to do it. Miss Persis, do you think it would be right? Do you think we ought to do it? Do you suppose the Lord means us to?"

"I cannot see that it would be wrong, at all, Serena. I am sure you have every right to do it. Possibly this money was given to you for this very purpose. It may be, however, that you would not find it all you expect, and you might be unhappy. Still, in that case, you could come back. The investment of five hundred is not very heavy. No doubt you could sell again for that price."

"I'd never want to, Miss!" cried Serena rapturously. "If I could once own some ground, could feel that my

place was my own, could step out of my door on green grass, and bleach my clothes on soft sod as I did long ago, oh, I'd never want to leave it! There's two apple-trees and a cherry nigh the back of the house; and a row of currant bushes. I could have a hive of bees! Oh! how I love to hear bees hum about the door. The man that lives there has the garden all made for this spring, and he wants to sell out, cash down, and move out West to his son. I've thought it all out, Miss Thrale. I have furniture enough to do, and Jim and I, we've saved up a little since you came here, enough to move, and to buy the cow and pigs and chickens. I've thought of it all!”

“You seem to have planned it all out,” said Miss Rebecca.

“I believe it is just the thing for you, Serena,” said Miss Susan. “This has been your hope, your plan, that you never expected to realize. Now it has come, and you will be right happy. It was so with us: we had planned for just what we are doing now, never expecting it, and we have been just as happy as we expected to be.”

“Yes,” said Serena, “my mind's made up. We'll buy that little place, and move next week. We'll miss you all a sight, but maybe you'll come and see how well we are fixed. And you'll let Tommy and Dorry and Dora come too.”

“It is not Serena that I doubt about, it is Jim,” said Persis, after Serena had gone away, looking as happy as possible. “Jim will promise anything in the glamour of change; but he will not be out there long before he

finds himself too feeble to work, and will leave cow, pigs and garden to Serena ; or wish to take the interest on the two thousand to hire a man to do his work for him."

"Yes," said Miss Rebecca, turning the heel of a stocking that she was knitting for Dora, "Jim will soon find that riding up and down in the elevator suits him better than picking potato bugs, or weeding onions, or hoeing corn."

"Mrs. Hook told me to-day that her second boy was out of work ; the firm he was with have closed business. I can take him in Jim's place until he finds something better," said Persis ; "his mother will be glad enough to have him busy."

"Jonathan Tull came in here, while you were out, to say he had got a foreman's place in the new piano factory, and they could move into a little house with a good yard just outside of town," said Miss Susan. "I was so glad to hear it. With four children they ought to get out of these crowded streets."

"Yes, that is great good fortune for the Tulls ; and they deserve it."

CHAPTER XVII.

ENDURANCE.

“Mine was no light-winged fantasy,
Gnat-passion of a summer’s day;
I worked not in the common way.”

“TEN years, my Persis, ten years of work at Gardner Street,” said Mrs. Inskip. “When missionaries go abroad they are expected to come home at the end of ten years, for a rest. That is supposed to be needful to maintain their efficiency. I think it is time you took a year off.”

“Not a year,” said Persis. “I could not spare that, and I do not need it. Remember, I have refreshed mind and body with a yearly vacation. Quebec, Niagara, Saratoga, the seaside, the Adirondacks, the White Mountains, have all seen me since I began this life. I have not neglected self-care. And do you know that I have come home from every summer vacation with new friends and helpers stirred up for this work, or kindred work? Although I do not need a year I have been thinking of taking a longer vacation than usual; perhaps six months.”

“How glad I am to find you in such a frame of mind,” cried Mrs. Inskip joyfully, “for Mr. Inskip and I have been plotting to carry you off for a tour.”

“To Europe?” asked Persis. “My heart has been turning to the ways I travelled long ago.”

“Not to Europe. We think better than that. What do you say to a pleasant little party for the Northwest : Portland, Alaska, down to California, camping in the mountains, the Yellowstone Park, tenting among the Rockies, and so back by Thanksgiving, after a six months’ wandering?”

“I think well of it,” said Persis. “I should like it of all things.”

“How much breath I am saved by your reasonableness,” said Mrs. Inskip. “I expected to have all my powers of persuasion put in requisition. We should like to start in a week. Could you?”

“Yes, indeed. I have been considering about a long absence. I thought it would revive my energies and give freshness to my methods. Then, too, I want to see how all my work will fare in other hands. I shall perhaps find that I am not as indispensable as I think. The workman passes away, the work moves on. My people will learn to stand alone while I am gone. Perhaps they have been too long in leading-strings.”

“What will you do with Dorry and Tommy?”

“Their school will close in three weeks after we leave, and I had arranged for them to go for the three months’ vacation to stay with Serena. She moved back to the popple and bombergilear trees yesterday. Good soul! She wanted to take the boys for nothing. She said she wished to do something for the Lord. I told her to find some other way, for I should furnish one of the little upper rooms for the boys and pay at least what their board would cost. I am intending to make a rule that

they shall work one hour and a half each day. That will be good for them and sweeten all their play."

"Jim Bowles will like that," laughed Mrs. Inskip; "and I'll warrant you he'll find a hundred crafty dodges to get nearly all his work done by them. Jim is smart in nothing but saving himself trouble."

"Serena will see that the boys are fairly treated. They will come home two months before we do, but Katherine and my cousins can look after them."

"Does Miss Rebecca tolerate them?"

"I believe she has a sneaking affection for them which she does not like to exhibit. The fact is, just as soon as Cousin Rebecca found that she could not interfere with the affairs of every one, and administer all lives and consciences to suit herself, but must allow each person individual liberty, she has settled down to be very agreeable. Moreover, she is one of the best women I know; not as saintly as Cousin Susan, but nobly practical."

"Arrange to go with your mind free of care, especially about your nursing work," said Mrs. Inskip.

"I have Mrs. Moss so well trained in this that she will get on nicely, with the supervision of Katherine Clarke, Cousin Rebecca, and Mr. Cooper and Harriet. I think they could even see an epidemic through. However, we do not have epidemics in our neighborhood since we studied sanitation and the laws of health. Infant mortality is reduced about one-half, owing to healthier mothers, cleaner homes and better care and feeding. Just now we have a new treasure in the man at the dis-

pensary. He is an elderly man, a Christian, sympathetic, and his wife was for years a hospital nurse. You have no idea how much good they are doing in a quiet way."

In spite of all these arrangements for the good of her district during her absence there was general gloom in all that precinct when the news spread that Miss Thrale was going on a journey, to remain until winter snows began to fly. What should they do without her? Her smiles as she went and came, her cheery words, her prompt suggestions, her quick wit in emergencies, had brightened and strengthened all their lives. They felt as if sunshine and summer were going out with her. All along Webster, Ramsay, Gardner and Dorsey Streets, and down into the unsavory purlieus of Sodom and Gomorrah, now somewhat less unsavory and less frequently known so opprobriously, went the news, and there was mourning.

When the day came for Persis to go, and the carriage was at the door, her trunk strapped on, the sidewalk was lined for some distance with friends and pensioners. "Good-by, dear lady," cried an old woman. "I'm fearing I'll not be here when you come back, and how can I die without a word from you?" "Oh, bella signorina," said a little Italian accordion-player, "grazie, grazie!" and, pointing to her feet, she added, "freddo, freddo! scarpe e calze;" for one winter's day Persis had brought her into the house, warmed and fed her, and given her shoes and stockings. A flower-seller pressed near with a cluster of violets as a parting gift; little children threw kisses. The whole Hook contingent was out

in full force, Mrs. Hook, stout and comfortable, at the head of her band. "Good-by, good-by!" "Come back soon." "Why do you go?" "We shall miss you so." "Half the world will seem to be gone." These people, who had not been cultivated into self-repression, and whose feelings gushed forth with the spontaneity of childhood, burst into loud weeping as Persis waved her hand in farewell.

She had known their souls in adversity; she had been in living, sympathetic touch with their poor joys and their heavy woes. Among them, bearing their burdens, making part of their lives, one of themselves in the kinship of sympathy—this had been one side of their joint experiences. But hers had been a two-phased existence. She had stood in the brightness of ease and comfort, and had reflected it upon them. She had seen wider horizons, and had helped their eyes to the vision. She had brought friends, life, help, beauty, good cheer from the more fortunate side of existence, and had endowed them with some of these rich heritages. They lost in Persis a sister and benefactor. "What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies."

The wheels of Persis Thrale's carriage rolled away from this mourning company, and the days and weeks of the summer also rolled away, finding the mourners becoming accustomed to their bereavement. Humanity has wonderful power of self-adjustment. There came also a new glory and joy to these people, in the shape of letters from Persis, now to one now to another. Generally this was an entirely new experience — the recipients never

before had a letter. Then the letter was carried from tenement to tenement, and read and commented on by one or two, or by a whole group, as the case might be, and grew soiled and thin, and ragged at edges and creases, from much folding and unfolding. The arrival of a letter might have been divined by certain signs which followed it: the good dame so honored held her head a little higher, there was something slightly supercilious in her eyebrows; her shoes were promptly tied up, and her hair received an extra brushing. Her apron was turned, or exchanged for a clean one; if there was a rent in her gown pinned up, a needle and thread were called into service; the lady's English became for a few days markedly better, and the tones of her voice were on the middle instead of the head register, and for at least half a day she became scrupulous as to the manners of her children.

At last Trinkka, Katherine and Mrs. Moss carried the news to every dwelling in the neighborhood that Persis would be at home on Thanksgiving Day, and would be glad to receive calls from all her friends: and by way of Mrs. Massey it became known that there would be continuous tea and toast, sandwiches and doughnuts, from morning until bed-time, and that dinners were to be sent out to all on the sick list.

That was a high day and a holiday such as had never before been known in the vicinity of Gardner Street. Every one who called saw and talked with the "beloved Persis," had plenty to eat and drink, and on leaving received from the hand of Katherine Clarke a souvenir.

There were two barrels of these souvenirs standing in the hall : simple little things, shells—pictures, cups, plates, needle-books furnished, little statuettes—some of the thousand and one knick-knacks that serve to mark some pleasant reminiscence. Katherine dealt out one to each impartially ; and when the notable day was over, and Mr. Inskip saw the bills, he remarked to Persis with great vigor that ‘if she spent as much as that every day she would arrive at the almshouse.’

“But I don’t spend as much every day,” said Persis.

Work was resumed and went on as if there had been no break of absence. New people moved into the Gardner Street quarter, and old settlers there moved away, but Persis had the pleasure of seeing that her people were usually on the up grade, and when they went away it was to get better quarters—not to relapse into the slums.

If those who are amply able to accomplish such work as Persis Thrale and her friends had undertaken would but awake to their responsibility and do the work, there would be no slums. That old question, asked first of Cain, has not slept in silence all these ages. Against how many of the forgetful ones of the earth has it been written, “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground !”

The winter passed, and warm April airs breathed across the world. Persis sat by her open window reading. Glancing up she saw Serena and Jim Bowles approaching the steps.

“Walk in, Serena,” she called. “Have you come to town for a trip?”

“No, Miss,” replied Serena, looking sedulously at the corner of her shawl, while Jim became deeply interested in the toe of his right boot; “no; if you please, we have come to stay.”

“To stay! Where?”

“At the old place, Miss. We moved in yesterday, and are settled just as we were before. The rooms happened to be vacant.”

“Sit down, Serena, and let me hear all about it. Sit down, Jim.”

But Jim had already drifted off to the elevator, shouldered out the Hook lad, and was triumphantly taking the Picot detachment up.

Serena told her story in a few words. “It was no use, Miss; nothing was the same. The friends were not the same, the birds did not sing the same, the flowers were not as sweet, it was chilly or dusty under the bombergil-ear trees, the popples did not give so much shadow: the food did not taste as it used to taste; the nights were so deadly still we could not sleep. Nothing was the same, perhaps because we were not the same ourselves.”

“‘We change our skies, but not ourselves, who go across the sea,’” said Persis meditatively. Serena looked blank.

“Tell me all about it,” said Persis.

“There is n’t much to tell,” said Serena. “Nothing happened. When we first went there, in the spring, the garden was in nice order, the weather was lovely. I was just delighted to have a whole house of my own, if it was only four rooms, and I worked from morning till night

making everything as pretty as I could. Jim felt as if the acre was a whole farm, and he gardened and tended to the cow and pig wonderful—yes, wonderful for Jim; because he do n't take to things, not being made that way. At first I did n't notice that nobody had come to see us except Lizzie Weeks that used to be. She's a widow now, and keeps house for Farmer Glass, new folks there. Lizzie did n't live nearest, but she came. Poor Lizzie! She's the complaining kind, and made me feel real down-hearted whenever she dropped in. After a while, as I did n't want to be stiff, and had n't much to do, I went to see old Mr. and Mrs. Bent; but they'd forgotten all about me, and when I did bring myself to mind they did n't seem to care. The Woodses remembered us, and asked us to come often; they never get out, being both lame. Their son's wife keeps the house, and being a bit of a high-flyer, when she found out I'd taken in washing she made it clear I was n't the sort she cared about. Then I called on Sara Jenks. Sara has come to be pretty toney since her man went into Legislature. We used to go to school together, but I felt hurt, she acted so toploftical to me. That shows, Miss Persis, that I've more pride in my heart than I ought to have, and am not of the 'blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' I told Sara Jenks I laid out to do fine laundry if I could get it, or nursing, or sewing. She said her daughters had a good bit of summer company, and very likely there'd be some dresses to do up for them. During the summer I did do up a dozen, and I'm sure I made the price as low as I could, and they found fault, and

said they did n't look to pay city prices. Ann Kent was another of the old-time ones, and she was pleasant to me, and promised me the washing for her summer boarders—but Ann is n't what you may call sociable. Before we had time to be lonesome the little boys came, and they kept us company. They did a good bit of work, and Jim liked that; he could sit round under the apple-tree and look on. The boys fed the pigs and the cow and chickens. They found it good fun and wanted to do it. By the time they went away Jim Bowles was tired of it all. He could n't bear to work in the garden, and he hated to feed things. You see, here he'd been all the time in your house, where there is n't any weather, and now no kind of weather suits Jim—warm is too hot, and cold freezes him, and dry chokes him, and wet bothers him—and what can you do in the country with a man that is set against any kind of weather? It is all weather there. Jim said it hurt his back to dig potatoes and turnips, and he could n't bear to shell beans out dry, and it was more than the whole thing was worth to get him to tidy up that garden right for winter. Jim was fearful lonesome. You know in your house here he has people to see and speak to every half hour in the day. He pined after Mrs. Massey's cooking, because out there we could n't get fresh meat every day, and of course I could n't afford to have dessert every day; we had to live close. But Jim does dote on a dessert; he is made that way. So winter came, and we were rained in and snowed in, and there was only church every other Sunday, a mile off, and bad walking; and Jim Bowles and I

are used to go to church twice a day. It was powerful lonesome, Miss Persis, and very little to do, and nobody to see, and for twenty years and more we've lived with lots of neighbors in the house to pass the time of day with every half hour. Round here we knew folks, and could do for them, and they seemed to need us and we needed them. When winter came, why, you've no idea how bare those popples and bombergilears looked! When I'd been remembering them here at my work I'peared to see them all the time green and fresh, and the fields all grass, with buttercups glinting gold, and butterflies swinging over them. But there the fields were all bare and brown so heart-sickening long, and the buttercups only lasted about two weeks, and the butterflies soon went away. Oh, Miss Thrale, it is sing'lar how very different you think of things from what things are!"

“ ‘Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centers in the mind;
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws can make or kings can cure!
Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
Our own felicity we make or find.’ ”

Persis quoted half to herself, and smiling at Serena's experiences.

“I do not know what the poetry means, Miss,” said Serena; “but I do know we could n't either of us stand it any longer. Jim Bowles said to me, ‘Serena, I have to go back and see to Miss Thrale's coal, and run that elevator; I know she needs me. I shouldn't ought ever to have left her. I'll go back, if I have to work merely for my bread.’ ”

“Of course Jim and I could n’t part company after all the long years we’ve been married, and Jim is a very good, quiet, kind, well-meaning man. So I sat down and wrote to our old landlord, did he have rooms, and he wrote back the very rooms we had so long would be ready to rent to us this week and he asked for no better tenants. Then, too, I wrote to some of my ladies, if they were in need of my work, and four or five of them said they would be glad enough to have me do for them as before. So, Miss Persis, we just sent all our goods, and few they are, in here, and we locked up the house, and there it is. Mr. Kent said he’d pay the taxes for the use of the garden and pasture field, and maybe we can sell it pretty soon. I reckon, to stay in the city and do my work and help my poor neighbors is what the Lord means me to do. Don’t you, Miss?”

“It seems so,” said Persis. “Perhaps you would like your place just for a short vacation in summer.”

“So I would. Jim Bowles says he never wants to set eyes on it again ; but I’d like it for a time in summer. Of course, I can’t afford such style as that, Miss Persis, so I must sell it if I can.”

“Dorry and Tommy thought it lovely,” said Persis. “I think I will go out there and look at it, and perhaps I will buy it to keep as a summer home for feeble children. I might furnish it, and send some little folks out for a month at a time. How many could you take care of out there, Serena?”

“Half-a-dozen,” said Serena eagerly.

“Would you like to be there for June, July, August

and September, taking care of such children as I should send out? I would see that you had some large enough to help you do the work. For instance, Tommy and Dorry, who will be better for a country month, although they are strong and hearty, could be there one month with four small ones; and then the next month two girls of eight and ten, with four little ones, and so on. We could give about twenty-five children a country month that way. Are you equal to it?"

"I think it would be lovely," said Serena.

"We will arrange a bill of fare, healthful and plain. A plenty of bread and milk, bread and soup, mush and molasses, fruit and potatoes. You must let the children wait on themselves, teach them to help you and each other, and I think you will enjoy it rather than find it burdensome. I was wishing for just such an opportunity when you came in. Thanks to Mr. Inskip, I have some more income to spend, and I want to lay it out in a healthful building up of the rising generation. Money spent on children brings good interest. I will go and see your place to-morrow, Serena."

"Thank you, Miss. Oh, thank you ten thousand times! What about Jim, Miss?"

"He can settle right back in his old place. I have found work for Mrs. Hook's son with Jonathan Tull in the factory, and I don't want him to waste any more time running an elevator."

"Jim Bowles thinks there's nothing like it," said Serena taking leave.

Presently Miss Rebecca came in.

“Persis, that Jim Bowles is acting like a lunatic, he is so glad to be back. He is riding up and down, skipping and dancing, and throwing up his hat. I did not know that a grown-up person could be so silly.”

“Cousin Rebecca,” said Persis, “I am convinced that it is not so much years as education that ‘grows people up.’ A cultivated child will be more reticent and dignified than an ignorant man. Centuries ago all the world was in a large degree childish, station and grey hair making very little difference. Cousin Rebecca, let me beg you to take a trip with me to the country to-morrow and help me plan a new enterprise.”

“As soon as I heard you had more income I looked for new work,” said Cousin Rebecca.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ACCEPTED LOT.

“ There from the music round about me stealing
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.”

PERSIS THRALE, Miss Rebecca and Miss Susan, Katherine and Annie Clarke, Harriet and Mr. Cooper, some of the Alma House Club, and several of the Brother's Club, were gathered together that evening. Serena had gone home fully satisfied, and Jim Bowles was investigating the coal cellar and running the elevator with great diligence. Persis detailed the case of Serena and her husband to her gathered friends, and they discussed it philosophically in its bearings on humanity's ideals. Then Persis explained her plan for children's vacations, and the entire company with great enthusiasm expounded the most advanced views as to food, clothing, exercise—physical culture generally.

“ As soon as I heard that Persis' income was increased by a few hundreds,” said Cousin Rebecca, “ I knew that she would devise some new method for giving it away.”

“ What is the measure of giving ?” asked Miss Susan.

“ The needs of our neighbor,” replied one of the Alma Club. “ It is written, ‘ if a brother or a sister

among you be naked and destitute of daily food, and ye say unto him—' etc."

"I'm afraid we should find more *needy* than *worthy*," said a gentleman of the Brother's Club, fresh from his college and studies in political economy.

"If worth is to be the measure of our receiving," said Harriet, "I fear many of us will be greatly straitened."

"Goldsmith's model village-preacher," said Mr. Cooper,

"quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings leaned to virtue's side."

"Our ability is the proper measure of our giving," said Miss Rebecca, with authority. "The Scripture for that is 'she hath done what she could.'"

"It is possible that with plenty of ability we might lack opportunity," said Katherine. "We are only required to do good to all men 'as ye have opportunity.'"

But here Katherine drew upon herself the fire of all the company. "Opportunity! Whoever lacks opportunity is wilfully blind and deaf! The world is full of opportunities, of terrible needs, and only intense selfishness can say that an opportunity is lacking. 'Go out into the highways and hedges!'"

"Our conscience is our measure," said one of the Alma girls. "Conscience is bestowed upon us for our monitor and guide in all things; why not in our giving?"

“Conscience is not always in a normal condition,” said Mr. Cooper. “In many people it is half dead, or more than half asleep. If one has been brought up apart from a knowledge of the needs and sufferings of mankind, if one has been cradled in selfishness, one may absolutely have no conscience about supplying the necessities of others. Doubtless the Queen of France was sincere when she said that she ‘should suppose people would rather eat bread and cheese than die of starvation.’”

“God’s providence should be our measure,” said a young theologian. “God’s providence in bestowing upon us the means to give. ‘Let every one lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.’”

“Those who make a business of giving,” said Annie Clarke, “find so much delight in it that it becomes second nature to them ; they give naturally and royally, as the sun pours forth light and heat. They find so much happiness in benevolence that to be deprived of opportunity to give would be to lose a chief joy.” She glanced gratefully towards Persis as she spoke.

“With them, then,” said Persis, quite unconscious of any personal application, “giving is only a highly refined form of selfishness. There is no real virtue in it.”

“Be careful there,” said Harriet. “Do you not suppose that God himself takes delight in giving, and that he pours forth benevolence as the necessary outgo of his generous nature?”

“We have all missed the true statement of what should be the measure of giving,” said Persis. “It can

be no other than the glory of God. 'Honor the Lord with thy substance,' 'Man's chief end is to glorify God,' 'Whatsoever ye do, do it all to the glory of God.' That thought of God's glory is the salt upon the sacrifice. 'Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.' I remember one day speaking with Dr. Bond about giving, and he said to me that a great hindrance in benevolent work was that so many people waited for the call of extraordinary situations and opportunities, instead of quietly taking up the small possibilities of every day to serve God in them. A city swept by fire, a county inundated, a section ravaged by an epidemic, will call forth widespread generosity, sympathy, heroic self-sacrifice. The little daily demands, the poverty and discouragement ever before our eyes, cease to move us, because we are habituated to them, and there is no magnetic wave of excitement and popular lavishing to carry us out of our indifference."

"Tell me, Miss Thrale," said the theologian: "how many people do you think could or should do the work that you are doing? Is such work as yours the right of all?"

"I felt called to it, found I could do it, and have never thought of abandoning it," said Persis. "Any one else so called of God would, I think, feel in that way about the work. To try to do other work than that to which God has adapted us is to misuse God's tools and have work ill done."

"Well!" cried one of the Alma Club with great energy, "to me the thought of the misery, poverty, suffering, despair, vice, in the world is perfectly dreadful! I

think my chief reason for wanting to get to heaven is because there will there be no suffering or sorrow, and I am sure that there I shall be delivered from knowing that there is any, anywhere else. If not, how could I be happy? If I stay down here at our club the realization of the wretchedness in the world makes me nearly sick. If I abandon the club and stay at home, then I hear the 'wailing of the children,' and I cannot be at rest."

"You are too sensitive; it is a pity you ever were drawn into charity life," said the theologue, looking at the girl with great admriation.

Persis also fixed her eyes meditatively upon her. In her she seemed to see a resurrection of her former self. Once she had felt in that way exactly: drawn to the rescue of distress, yet shrinking from it in a sensitive agony. Wherein lay the change? Merely in having shaken herself free of self. She had become absorbed into the life of others, so that she no longer thought what effect their disasters produced upon her, but only of how they might be lightened for them.

"I have my doubts," said the theologue, "whether it is really necessary for any one to come and live among the needy classes, as Miss Thrale and some of the rest of you are doing. I really think the work could be as well done by all of you living in your own natural quarters and coming down here to look after things. I am open to conviction, and I came to spend a month at the Brother's Club to be convinced."

"Perhaps a month is not giving yourself time enough," said Mr. Cooper.

The company rose to go. It was ten o'clock. The theologian had promised to wait at Gardner Street until a friend came for him. He repented of his promise, for his friend was late, and he wished to walk home with the young lady of the Alma Club. The others went away; he was left alone with Persis. His disappointment vexed him. He was silent and Persis was paying no attention to him. She was standing on the front step looking up and down the street. It was an unusually warm evening; the women of the neighborhood had been sitting on their door-steps talking and resting. Many of them had their babies lying asleep across their knees. One by one they were retreating to their rooms. Persis thought of the change in the neighborhood during the last ten years: these women were so much more orderly, quiet, friendly towards each other, neater in dress, more careful of their duties to their children. Persis thought with a smile of four several grog-shops which she had *lived out* of that neighborhood. They had faded away for want of support. *Would* it have been as well if she had remained "up town" and come down here occasionally?

The discontented theologian, waxing lonesome, came out to the step beside her. Persis did not speak to him, she was listening. Her quick ear, accustomed to divide the night sounds about her home, detected far off the sharp sound of a young girl crying, angrily, hopelessly, in a self-despairing abandonment of woe. She bent forward and her eyes searched the distance. The moon shone full in mid-heaven; the lamps were lit. Far up at the end of the street a little dark group detached itself

from the shadow of the tall houses. Then from this shifting group one fragment of darkness divided, and grew larger, coming down toward Gardner Street, and the remainder of the moving bulk parted and melted away, received into houses or other streets, and the shrill crying grew shriller as the slim dark form came on, and then all at once it disappeared. Persis promptly stepped to the sidewalk and went swiftly toward the point of disappearance. She never thought of waiting or of escort, forgot entirely the theologue; here was her home, her accustomed place, her work; these streets were as familiar as the walks of a garden to her. Erect, strong, fearless, she moved on her way. The theologue pursued her—the fact that she was a woman made her methods seem to him dangerous, and he questioned their necessity. His own part was plain: to follow for her protection. He had seen and heard what Persis had, but to him it meant little, and he would have lost himself in the maze of narrow streets and the treacherous night lights. Persis, unwavering, pressed on, turned where the weeping shadow had lost itself, passed under an archway and was where four ways met under one flaring light. There was the jutting corner of a building, and against it shrank a slim dark figure with a white face and clasped hands, uncertain; two ways were before her. One led to the black sullen roll of the river, the other took hold on death and its guests were in the depths of hell. Persis, calm and direct, went to this sobbing shadow and put her arm around her.

“Come, my child, it is late for you to be out, and

you do not know where you are going. I have a place for you. Come, my little sister."

The girl drew away. "Who are you?" she cried. "Where are you going?"

"I am Persis Thrale, and I am going home. And you are going with me to the corner of Gardner Street."

The girl yielded at once. She had heard that name as of a haven of refuge and a tower of strength. Still with her arm around the girl, and walking slowly, Persis retraced her steps, and the theologian followed.

"Where were you going, child?" asked Persis' voice, full, low, clear, harmonious in the silent night.

"To the river, I think," said the girl, with a sob.

"And why to the river?"

"Because there was no place else."

"God has made a place. Tell me all about your trouble."

They moved slowly, for the excited girl trembled and panted so that she could scarcely walk, even with the support of Persis' arm.

"My aunt brought me up," she said, "and I've sewed at cheap wrappers and aprons since I was fourteen. There's so much slack time without any wages that I got in debt to my aunt for board. Then she died, and my uncle wanted to drive me out, because I was behind in the board, and they were a big family for two rooms. I got work with Brown, the sweater, and he made me buy a machine; he makes all the girls buy them; they pay a dollar and a half a week out of what they earn until the machine is paid for. I begged so hard, and some of the



neighbor women begged for me, and my uncle said if I'd pay the rest of what I earned for board I might stay until the machine was paid for, and then pay my back debt. The machine is all paid for but five dollars, and two days ago Brown turned me off."

"What for?"

"To get the machine, you know," said the girl simply.

"Explain more. I do not quite understand."

"It is a trick of the sweaters. They make you pay half your earnings a week till the machine is nearly paid for, and then you are discharged, for nothing at all. And as you can't go on paying the machine has to be given up, and the sweater and the agent divide the profits. Oh, they do that way constantly. Indeed I was a good steady hand, and quiet in the work-room. You may ask any of the women. It was just a cruel trick to rob me. We girls have n't any one to defend us, or any money to go to law, and so they plunder us. I dared not tell my uncle I was out of work, and I've walked these two days to find something to do. This morning one of the children told him, and he ordered me off. He said he would n't have me living on him. I was not his kin. But I went back early and went to bed with the three little girls I slept with. He found it out when he came home drunk, and he turned me out into the street. He did n't let me have my little bundle, he said I owed him enough. Some of the women told me to go to the House of the Good Shepherd; and some said, 'Find a policeman, and make him take you somewhere.' Some said I could

sleep a night on their floor, and some said they would do for me if they were n't so mortal poor. One woman told me this was the way all my life would go, and the sooner I finished it the better. It seemed to me I must run and jump into the river, Miss! What else could I do? A man can lie out on the park benches, or if police finds a man asleep in the doorway he doesn't notice, or he says 'Move on;' but he'd arrest a girl. And what name would I have if I'd been arrested, Miss?"

"Why did you not look for house service?"

"I did; but I had n't any recommend for such work; and I did n't know about it; and folks would n't take me."

"And so?"

"And so I was driven mad, and I was just going to make away with myself one way or another if you had n't come up."

"Had you not heard of my house, and of my work?"

"'Pears so, but I never thought it *meant me*, and none of the women round seemed to think it, either. Oh, where'd I been now if you had n't come after me?"

Persis turned and gave one long look into the eyes of the young man following at her elbow.

They had reached the door. Jim Bowles stood at the open door waiting for Persis' return. She sent him to bring Mrs. Gayley. "Mrs. Gayley," she said to the girl, "will take care of you. She will provide you with a warm bath, a gown, a bed, and a breakfast; and to-morrow we will see about getting work for you. If you

go away from here without work, money or friends it will be because you choose to do so !”

“Oh, Miss, I could n't do that ! I'd do anything, I'd black shoes and scour steps, to be just *safe* !” And suddenly the girl bent her head on Persis' breast and renewed her weeping ; but now her tears fell as a relief, a refreshing rain softening her heart.

Mrs. Gayley, accustomed to calls at all hours, and all duties, quietly led her away. Then Persis laid her hand on the arm of the young theologue, and looked him steadily in the face. “It was not without reason that our Lord left his glory and came to *seek* the lost, and to *dwell* among those whom he would save. If we are to raise those who are down we must stoop. When the fold was full of well-cared-for sheep the shepherd did not stand at the gate and call the one that was lost : he went down into the wilderness and carried it back on his shoulder.” Then a sudden change came on her mobile face, and joy, superior joy, shone in her eyes. “Let me tell you that to-morrow Brown, the sweater, will begin to pay for his deeds. There is a society of women for defending working women from just such fiends as this poor girl has suffered by. One of our best lawyers gives us his time. This rascal shall find the screws coming down on him swift and tight ! But see : who would have found out that this girl needed help and defense if some one had not been *down here* ?”

There was a sound of swift steps and the long-awaited-for friend arrived. “Pembroke, do pardon me. I positively forgot that I had promised to come here for you !”

“It is well that you did,” said Pembroke. “I have been kept after school to learn an important lesson!”

A week later Persis Thrale’s friends were again met together at her house.

“How is your young derelict?” asked Mr. Pembroke.

“Busy and happy. She seems a nice, well-behaved girl. Mrs. Picot took a fancy to her, and as her last daughter married a month ago she offered to take this Bessie Jay into her room. Cousin Rebecca took her as one of her apprentices, and Miss Lawrence, our kindergarten teacher, gave her enough clothing for the present. It may be written down, ‘One more girl saved!’”

“One more soul for your hire,” said Mr. Pembroke. “Do you think you shall ever leave this work?”

“Never,” said Persis firmly. “It grows upon me daily.”

“You do not feel that you have reached its limit?”

“No. That flies like the horizon line as one advances. Just now my whole heart seems drawn to that quarter from which this Bessie Jay came—Verne, Cado-gan and Beldon Streets. They have lain outside of my work so far, but now they *must* come into it. I have talked with Bessie about the locality, its needs, its evils. It seems as if the way must open. I am now waiting for my directions!”

“Explain that a little, please, Miss Thrale,” said young Pembroke.

“It is just this: when my mind is strongly turned

to some needed work, when I have seen a want and felt drawn to supply it, I have often found that very soon God raised up helpers and means exactly fitted to the especial need. When these three—need, inclination, and opportunity—meet, I take it as my marching orders ; I have received direction, and I simply go on doing what my hand finds to do. I know many great and useful workers take a different way. They see a need to be met and they undertake it in faith, without helpers or means ; others go out to find both. People show their individuality in philanthropic work as in other things. My disposition is cautious. I move slowly and carefully in beginning. I fear failure. I need to be very sure of what I am doing. Once fairly begun, I have staying power. I keep my object well in view and refuse to be turned aside. The very day when I began my work here Dr. Bond said to me that when one heart was directed to any special service for Christ others were almost simultaneously directed. The Master does not leave the toiler alone in the field.”

“Two and two, that is both Old Testament and New Testament doctrine,” said Mr. Pembroke. “How long do you mean now to wait for help and helpers?”

“I don’t know. As long as the Master sees fit. I feel as if I marched like the Israelites in the wilderness, led by a pillar of fire by night, of cloud by day.”

“Yes, I remember,” cried Mr. Pembroke—

“When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out from the land of bondage came,
Her fathers’ God before her moved,
An awful Guide, in smoke and flame.

By day along the astonished land
The cloudy pillar glided slow ;
By night Arabia's crimson sand
Returned the fiery column's glow."

"It is true, Miss Thrale. I do not believe that God's
guiding is less real in these days."

CHAPTER XIX.

JOSIE, BESSIE AND OTHERS.

“A little while to keep the oil from failing,
A little while faith’s flickering lamp to trim,
And then, the Bridegroom’s coming footsteps hailing,
To haste to meet him with the bridal hymn!

“And He who is himself the gift and giver—
The future glory and the present smile—
With the bright promise of the glad for ever
Will light the shadows of the little while.”

“COME here, Bessie Jay,” said Persis, standing one evening in the door of her bed-room. “I want to talk with you about where you came from.”

“I do n’t even like to think of it, Miss,” said Bessie, coming in shyly; she considered a private talk in Miss Thrale’s room a great honor. “It seems—it seems—like it would be to think about the bad place after you got to heaven.”

“‘Between these two there is a great gulf fixed,’” said Persis, “and I am sure your old neighborhood is not separated from us like that. If help had not come here to Gardner Street it was on the down grade, to become what Verne and Cadogan are now. If help is carried to Verne and Cadogan they may be put on the up grade, to be quiet and agreeable and decent, as Gardner Street is now.”

“Oh, do you think it, Miss? I wish it might, for

my little cousins there are the makings of nice girls ; and there is poor Josie."

"Tell me, to begin with, what is the chief trouble there, in Cadogan, Verne and Beldon Streets."

"Why, Miss, that is n't far to find ! There's a liquor store—a big one—on the corner of Verne and Cadogan, and one not quite so big on the corner of Cadogan and Beldon. Most of the men go to one or the other, and their wages are wasted, and they lose work, and get cross, and fight and scare the women, and beat the children, and break things. A many of the women drink hard, or have a lot of beer brought in every day. The boys and girls are coming up in the same way ; and so, Miss, it is all noise and quarrels and dirt, and want, to make a body sick. And there is Josie—"

"Tell me, Bessie," said Persis, ignoring Josie : "suppose those two whisky shops were gone, would that locality be improved and have a chance of betterment?"

"Oh, no indeed ! It is such a good stand for the liquor trade they'd be opened again right off !"

"Suppose that they could *not* be reopened—that no liquor was sold in the neighborhood ; what then?"

"That indeed, Miss. There'd be some hope then ; but, you see, things are n't done that way. The liquor men are rich and they keep it up, and you can't drive 'em out. If they were driven out, why, the women would be better right away, and the boys and girls would have a chance for themselves ; and being a quieter place more decent people would go there, and the quiet-like ones would not move out."

“I see. The liquor saloons are the Gibraltar.”

“Miss?”

“Now let me hear about Josie.”

“She is my friend, Miss, though Josie knows much more than I do. She had a better education. Once she was a book-keeper! You might not think it, but she was. She’s a good girl, and means well, but she’s had lots of trouble. Things have not gone right for her and—I saw her last night, when Mrs. Picot sent me out for bread and meat. I felt so dreadful I cried about her in the night. Josie has got into trouble, Miss Thrale! She’s been arrested! You may guess what that is to a well-brought-up girl!” and Bessie incontinently began to cry bitterly.

“Tell me what Josie was arrested for,” said Persis after a few minutes’ waiting.

“Drinking,” sobbed Bessie.

“Oh! First time?”

“No, Miss, second! But do n’t think Josie is bad, or is a drunkard. No, she is not. She wants to be good. She hardly ever takes drink. The trouble is, Miss, she cannot stand a drop, the least little sets her wild, while some girls that take five times as much seem real steady. And so, as soon as poor Josie is betrayed into having one taste, she has the police after her. Oh, Miss, those police—they’ll pass by a man roaring, staggering drunk, or lying flat on a park bench, and arrest a girl that is just singing a little loud, or can’t walk real straight. Josie’s just heartbroken, and it’s going to be the ruin of her, I know!”

“ Has she any work ? ”

“ Yes, Miss. She ’s got a place. She went to it two weeks ago, over on Rood Street, not far, you know, from Cadogan. It is a boarding-house, poor, like, but respectable. Josie is chambermaid, and the woman that keeps the house, Mrs. Bell, likes her ever so much. There are four hired girls. It is a pretty big boarding-house. Mrs. Bell told Josie not to mind, she would keep her ; and Josie says she wont set foot out of doors. She ’s on probation.”

“ What is that ? ”

“ She ’s been left off of any penalty because she promised not to touch another drop ; but each month she has to go to the police office and report herself. That is horrid hard, Miss ; Josie hates it, folks stare at her so, and she feels so ashamed. That boarding-house is a hard place.”

“ You tell Josie to keep her courage up, and hold fast to her resolution, and as soon as I can I will get acquainted with her, and try and find something for her to do away from the boarding-house, if she is there tempted more than at other places.”

“ Oh, but she is, Miss ! The hired folks there all use a lot of beer, and there ’s beer and porter served out at all the meals for them that order it. They are mostly machine-shop men, and firemen, and laundry women, and they work hard and think they need their ale.”

Persis returned to the question of Verne and Cadogan Streets, with their needs. Had they a day nursery, or a kindergarten, or nurse, or reading-room, or Sunday

meeting? Evidently these streets lay in outlawry ; they had nothing at all. Persis sent Bessie to her work, and sat thinking—of Josie. The Gardner Street house was full : there was no room there for Josie, even if Persis had felt it right to receive her. All the women in that house were of the thoroughly respectable class of work-women : some, like the Clarkes and Mrs. Picot and Trinka, really refined and fairly educated. Persis owed it to them not to take into the house as an inmate a girl given to drink and subject to arrest. Her heart ached for Josie, and later that evening she told Bessie to bring her around to see her.

“If I meet her. I don’t like to go to the boarding-house,” said Bessie with hesitation.

“Is it so bad as that, Bessie?”

“Oh, it is n’t bad ; but—well, Miss, there’s a man there I’m afraid of. He asked me to marry him, and when I said I would n’t he said he’d choke me the first time he got a chance!”

Here was a rough manner of wooing ; and how many fears and perils environ a poor homeless girl ! Persis felt that there was something heroic in Bessie’s refusal of a marriage offer, in the face of starvation. Why had she refused ?

“You are too young to marry, child,” she said.

“It was n’t that, Miss,” said poor Bessie ; “there’s plenty of them married at fifteen ; but he was twice as old as I am, and awful ugly in his cups, and folks said he had a wife living somewhere, though he said not ; and I thought I’d rather die !”

Poor child ! Think of it, mothers of daughters who at fifteen have but lately laid by their dolls, still wear short gowns, and dote on story-books, and whose pillow is blessed nightly by the mother-face bent above her sleeping child.

“Ask her when you meet her, and by all means keep away from the house yourself,” said Persis.

There seemed to be no immediate way open to help Josie, and there was the Cadogan neighborhood to think of.

Next morning Persis received a note from Dr. Bond that put Josie quite in the background of her thoughts : “Come when your nursing rounds are finished, to-morrow, and spend the rest of the day with us ; I have very important business to present to you.”

“I truly believe it is about Verne and Cadogan Streets !” cried Persis, handing the note to her cousins. “I feel sure of it !”

“Yes,” said Miss Rebecca, wiping her glasses, and giving the note a second reading, “I should not be surprised if it was. I have noticed when we are planning to take up new work we get help.” Miss Rebecca had by this time fully identified herself with all Persis’ work ; in fact Persis smilingly noted that Cousin Rebecca assumed the chief credit of all past and present undertakings. That made no difference to Persis ; like traders who “deal only for cash” she was concerned not with credit, but with solid results.

“Persis,” said Dr. Bond, when she was seated by his side in his library, “I want you to help in a great work

which I see opening. I feel a personal interest in it ; it will lift a burden from my life, and bring good out of a great sorrow."

"I had thought that your life moved only in sunshine," said Persis, laying her hand on her old pastor's arm.

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness, Persis, and 'no lot below for one whole day escapeth care.' My days of actual labor are over, but you have about you a strong band of workers who will well carry on what I shall be happy to see begun—the regeneration of a neighborhood."

"Tell me, Dr. Bond," said Persis bending eagerly forward : "is it about Verne, Cadogan and Beldon Streets? I have had that locality on my heart for two weeks !"

"Yes, Persis, that is the very place !"

"Go on ; tell me all about it : once more all the lines are leading to one point."

"It will be a long story, Persis, but old men are garrulous."

"Never too long. I want to hear every word !"

"You know that I was not born in the city, but in one of the large towns of the rural districts in the interior of the State. My youngest and favorite sister, a number of years younger than myself, married a wealthy farmer, the heritor of two large farms ; he was a pleasant, energetic, fine-looking man, the one objection to the match being that he was not a Christian. They had two daughters, and after a lapse of ten years a long-desired

son. With that boy's birth a demon of avarice seemed to enter my brother-in-law. He was frantic to amass a great fortune for the boy, both by saving and gaining. He lived in the midst of a rich fruit and grain country. He set up a distillery. If the growth of such a business was prosperity, he prospered. My poor sister was nearly heart-broken. That made no difference : he had but one idea—his son. The two daughters were kept at home, only educated as the country school could educate them. The household was on the simplest footing, except that the large, handsome house was kept in scrupulous repair to be the son's future home. The boy was gifted and gracious, but frail in physique ; he died in his fifteenth year, and his mother soon followed him. The daughters had been kept closely at home—they were not permitted even to visit me ; they were shy, unversed in any of the ways of the world ; dominated by their father, who had grown bitter and inordinately selfish. The greed of gain possessed him, and after his son's death he kept on in the same methods. As is done by many distillers, he established liquor saloons in the city, buying properties and renting them to rum-sellers. He had one of these places on the corner of Verne and Cadogan, the other on the corner of Cadogan and Beldon Streets. Evidently you do not need to have me tell you of their work in those places. The daughters, my nieces, found the sole comfort of their secluded, restricted lives in their religion and their mutual affection. The little country church near them was their true home, and their father's avarice obliged them to earn with their own hands, by embroidering or making jellies

and cakes for the neighbors, their slender offerings toward church support and mission work. They never travelled, never visited, had no books except those books and magazines which I sent them. They were almost as cut off from the world and its ways as if they had lived in a convent; as for means, in the midst of wealth they had not so much as a chicken or the produce of a churning which they could call their own. Almost a year ago this man died suddenly. I was ill, you remember, and my son was abroad. Laura, my daughter-in-law, went to my nieces. They were between forty and forty-five years of age, sole inheritors of over a million, and both millions and possession meant to them no more than so much Coptic. The day after the funeral, Sara, the eldest niece—their names are Sara and Eliza Stafford—asked Laura, my daughter-in-law, if they had any right to stop the working of the distillery on Sabbath. The Sabbath work had greatly distressed her. Laura told her that as absolute owners they had every right to dictate, and they ordered the establishment shut on Sunday. Laura told me that that first Sabbath a Missionary Sermon was preached, in which they were intensely interested. Papers were passed around for subscription, and they had a whispered conference, then appealed to Laura whether she thought they could give much. She replied 'as much as you wish.' After another whispered consultation, pale at their own audacity, they subscribed twenty-five dollars apiece, to them an enormous sum, saying that if there was no other way to raise it, they could sell the Jersey cow!

The following evening they had gone to the graveyard to plan for the improvement of their burial lot. In their interview with the old sexton and the village schoolmaster, who was present, the conversation turned to the business affairs of the deceased and especially the distillery; and in answer to their questions the sisters learned something about men and families wrecked by it, and especially of the two shops on Cadogan Street, and the horrors they sowed in their neighborhood. This was to the two women a revelation: kept apart from the world, and ignorant of business, they had had no realization of the deadly nature of their father's traffic. The truths now learned were bitter, but they recognized them as stern truths. Laura said they came home in a pitiable condition, overwhelmed with shame and sorrow. It suddenly occurred to her to tell them that to weep over the past was idle, but that the reins of power were in their own hands. They could shut the distillery! It was open to them in some way to restore the years that 'the canker worm had eaten,' by doing good, and using in doing good the hated gains of evil. Their long-repressed but naturally strong natures asserted themselves: next morning they sent orders to close the distillery instantly. The superintendent, a life-long crony of their father, rushed to them fairly tearing his hair, and crying out on the destruction of property and the ruin of turning so many men out of employment. The sisters ordered the workmen's wages to be continued until they could decide what to do. Happily, Laura knew our friend Trenton was in the neighborhood seeking a summer home

for his family. She sent for him, and—you know what Tom is—he threw himself into the affair with all his heart. He advocated turning the distillery into a canning and jelly factory, retaining such hands as wished to work at the conversion of the buildings and the new business. The workmen's houses were repaired, enlarged, and improved, a reading-room and school set up, sanitary and temperance information promulgated, and new times were inaugurated. Meanwhile the superintendent, zealous for property, shipped to the city store-house all the liquor in stock and sold the machinery, after which he severed his connection with two women whom he called 'too cranky to get on with.'

"By the aid of a new superintendent, and of their lawyer, a really splendid man, my nieces have in this year learned something of business and of their own rights. On their first awakening they wished to close the Cadogan Street dens; but as the leases did not expire until this coming June, and the holders would not be bought off, Cadogan Street had to be let alone for a time. They not only own those saloon properties, but so many other houses in that neighborhood that, if they undertake a new order of things there, they are in a position to keep liquor pretty well out and bring decency in. They came here last fall and my son took them to see their property. They nearly died of horror at the revelation. Since then they have read up all that they could on the city poor, the tenement-house system and the slums, and Tom Trenton has given them plenty of information. They are resolved to come to Cadogan Street and go to work,

spending nine months of the year in the city and three at their country home, which they mean to turn into a kind of sanitarium for sick poor. They feel as if in coming to the city they were entering a den of wild beasts. Two weeks last fall represents their whole experience of city life. They think that they take their lives in their hands, but they are resolved to undo some of their poor father's miserable work if they die in the attempt. They remind me somewhat of your cousins, the Misses North, of a dozen years ago, in their appearance and many of their ways; but your cousins had experience, and these two have, instead, only money."

"Money!" cried Persis. "Blessed possession, when it is consecrated. Without money we could do little for Cadogan Street, but that money will be the lever to raise that wretched locality into an estate of decency and sobriety. They have the power, the will, the opportunity; what more can anybody want?"

"They are coming here next week; I want you to take them to your Gardner Street house for a whole fortnight, to see your work in all its departments, to become acquainted with your people. I think your cousins will be very congenial and a great comfort to them. To see you, Persis, as you are, after over a decade of this work, that will allay their terrors. Remember, they have no experience, no knowledge of affairs; to all that you must help them. Then their money will bring for philanthropy its best returns. They are willing, anxious, to be directed. You will have Trenton's knowledge and strong common-sense to aid you in suggestion. It seems to

me to be such a wide and promising field that I almost wish to be young again to undertake it. In my time no such immense possibilities opened before me. The harvest was great, but the laborers were few; their implements were feeble."

"Dear father," said Laura, the wife of the doctor's eldest son, a pastor in one of the suburbs of the city, "you have had your day of work and, whether with few helpers or with many, you have gathered great sheaves." She had come in while Dr. Brown talked, and had seated herself by Persis on the sofa.

"There will be laborers raised up, I know," said the old man. "Persis, you can provide some from among your constituents."

"No doubt. There will be many needed, many and choice."

"Why don't you ask me?" said young Mrs. Bond, turning her pretty, roguish face toward Persis.

"It is against my principles. You are of age, speak for yourself. I never call the workers; I leave the call to God, who only can make it imperative. There is much work in the world, and of many kinds. This may not be your field at all. Certainly not, if you are not drawn to it without my urging. You will never be idle; it is not in you. Over in your congregation what do they call you?"

Mrs. Bond laughed. "Something too complimentary for me to repeat. However, truth is, I was not made for the Cadogan Street work. Once, do you know, one of our good ladies summoned me to go with her on an

errand of mercy to a terrible tenement house, to see a sick woman. Suddenly I found myself being dragged to a window and my head unceremoniously thrust out. Having been aired in this fashion for a while, I was escorted to the street, taken to a drug-store two blocks away, given some ice-water with camphor and other things in it, and then kindly advised to go home and never come back. My good parishioner had discovered my limitations; I presume she thought me a very poor specimen of a pastoreess, and she never invited me to do that kind of work again. I do not faint at the sight of blood; I can assist most respectably at a surgical operation; I do not fear lunatics nor drunken people, but I cannot stand foul air."

"To every one his work," said Persis; "but once we are in possession in Cadogan Street we will proclaim a crusade against foul air, and some day you can come down there and see how the New Evangel progresses."

"My nieces wish to renovate those two saloon properties as soon as they are vacated, and to make them headquarters of good as they have been of evil. Trenton told them of your Gardner Street house; that will be the model for one of them, I suppose. They intend to see to the whitewashing, repairing, re-plumbing and thorough sanitation of the houses they own in that quarter, and to rent all their tenements on the most reasonable terms possible. They are planning a night cooking-school, a mothers' club, a sewing-school, day nursery, kindergarten, labor bureau, a training home for domestics; what-

ever they see advocated in a book or magazine they wish to inaugurate at once. You will have to limit them to the possible, and teach them your way of building slowly to build surely."

"Oh, wont Cousin Rebecca rejoice to take them in hand!" laughed Persis.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DAUGHTERS OF SORROW.

“Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us ;
All our weakness thou dost know.
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe,
Lone and dreary,
Faint and weary,
Through the desert thou didst go.”

THE coming of Misses Sara and Eliza Stafford to Gardner Street was a great event in the lives of the Misses North. The four elderly women made friends at once. The Norths felt for their new acquaintances the respectful admiration accorded to wealth, when its possessors are not especially iniquitous ; while the shy, country-bred women looked with almost reverence at women who thoroughly understood the city, and were at home, fearless, among its pitfalls. Since Persis had found them, Rebecca and Susan North had been touched lightly by time ; they were relieved of fear of penury, and of the pressure of daily needs ; they were engaged in congenial work. Miss Rebecca had become more gracious, and Miss Susan more self-reliant. Miss Rebecca constituted herself the guide of the strangers through all the neighborhood where they were to make their home ; each department of the work was exhibited, and where the enthusiasm of the new workers would have under-

taken too much, and too hastily, Persis came to the rescue with her moderation and careful planning.

“You will need to keep Luke 14 : 28 well in mind,” said Persis ; “ ‘For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish?’ ”

“I know,” said Miss Sara, “that, having never until this last year had the disposal of any money, we are now likely to think what we have inexhaustible. No doubt it looks larger to us than to any one else.”

“It is a very large sum,” said Persis, “but in my hint about counting costs I included more things than money. We need to consider whether time and place are suited to our designs ; whether what we wish to see done can be carried through, or whether the hostility of those whom we wish to help may not be so great that it would be better for us to work on some less oppugned lines.”

“Oh, if we were only wise in these things as you are !”

“I have nearly twelve years’ experience. It will not seem long to you before you have as much.”

“Of course you know just how we feel,” said Miss Eliza. “Of the money that we have, we only desire enough for ourselves to cover our simple needs through life. We have no one to leave the property to ; we should not enjoy spending on luxuries money that was gained out of the ruined bodies and souls of our fellow creatures ; and we not only wish to restore to society what was wrongly taken away, but we feel as if time

presses ; so much evil is going on, and has been, for many years, through our poor father's mistaken course, that now we cannot bear to lose a minute."

"You will think we have lost a whole year, Miss Thrale," said Miss Sara ; "but you see we could not get possession of the property here, and we had also to get a new agent for the houses, a good man, who would understand our wishes, and help out our reforms, and be able to advise us. I'm afraid the last agent was cruelly hard ! We had a good deal to do up near our home too, so much that sometimes it seemed as if we should not take time even to sleep. The superintendent and the lawyer would sometimes keep us for two or three hours at a time discussing affairs, because we knew nothing about business, and had it all to learn !"

"But being relieved of the housework and sewing was a great deal," suggested Miss Eliza.

"Yes, indeed ! Do you know, Miss Persis, that during our father's life we did all our own sewing and housework, except having a woman now and then for the heaviest scrubbing and washing. It did not at first occur to us that that might be changed. Our cousin Laura, who can see to anything, took the matter in hand, and hired two women and a man for the work, and as we did not know at all how to manage with servants she settled all for us, and showed us how to do, while she was with us three or four months. Our work people are a woman with her son and daughter, very nice folks ; the father had gone wrong through that distillery, and they had lost all, so it was well we could provide for them.

It is a lovely old place. You must come home with us some summer and see it. Cousin Laura found just the person to manage it while we are gone ; it is to be a kind of sanitarium for sick women and children."

"But, sister Sara, I think you were the one to suggest Mrs. Lane for that place," said Miss Eliza.

"Was I? Well, you and Cousin Laura showed me how very suitable she would be. Miss Thrale, several years ago she was our pastor's wife ; she is a widow now, with a crippled daughter, and they have nothing to live on. Uncle Bond says that so often happens with the families of the ministers who all their lives serve the small churches. Mrs. Lane is a fine housekeeper, and nurse and economist ; you may guess how well she will look after our place up there. We feel so easy about it, now that we have come here to work."

These good, simple souls were delightful to Persis ; they were a revelation to her, something new in her experiences. It was a privilege to aid them, to make the way which they had resolutely chosen seem less dangerous and difficult.

They had decided to use the long-time liquor stand on Verne and Cadogan Streets for a home similar in every way to Persis' Gardner Street home, and already the work of alteration had begun. Great changes were being made in all that locality ; the tenements owned by the Stafford sisters were being repaired ; paint, plumbing, paper, whitewash, drains, new windows, new doorsteps, new stairs ; the tenants looked on with amazement ; with some satisfaction also, when, by the ladies' orders, men

and boys of the vicinage who were out of work were, as far as possible, given employment in the renovations.

“If we are to go on well over there, and make our home like this,” said Miss Sara to Persis, “we must begin by robbing you. We need Katherine and Annie Clarke. We are so ignorant of the ways and the trickery of the city, and are so full of pity for the miseries that we see about us, that if we do not have with us some one that understands city work we shall be constantly going wrong. You will miss the Clarkes.”

“Yet I shall be glad to have them with you. Katherine has been for years like my right hand, and I shall be glad to see her give up her sewing entirely and go into work for which she is so well fitted,” said Persis.

“For the first year or so,” added Miss Eliza, “we will divide the nursing among four of us. We want to become acquainted with our neighborhood. Meantime, we hope you will train a nurse for us, taking her into your work until she is able to do well alone.”

“I shall be very glad to do so,” said Persis.

“Then you know of a suitable person?”

“Oh, no; I cannot think of one just at present; but I feel sure that if such a nurse is needed the person to be trained will soon be sent. I look for these supplies for needs that arise as confidently as a little child looks for its dinner.”

“We shall not have the flower work,” said Miss Eliza, “but we know of a young lady, a friend of Cousin Laura Bond, who makes fans and the expensive kinds of Easter cards and valentines, the kinds that are

made up with celluloid, satin and silk ; she will come to us, and we will have a little establishment for teaching that work and filling orders ; she has quite a large connection in the trade now. Instead of the dressmaking, we will have apprentices for plain family sewing of all kinds, for knitting and crocheting, because we understand and can teach those things, and we think we can get orders for our people's work."

"Where they have broken up a saloon at Beldon and Cadogan Streets," spoke up Miss Rebecca, "they mean to have a cooking-school in the basement, a reading-room and employment office for young men on the first floor, and Mr. Trenton is going to hold a Bible class there every Sunday afternoon and form a temperance society. The second floor will be a night-school for men and boys ; the third floor, rented rooms for respectable single workingmen, and the attic will be free lodging-rooms for those out of health or employment."

"It is in memory of our brother Newton," explained Miss Sara ; "he was such a dear, good boy, and it was our father's great love for him that tempted him to go into the business we so much regret. We shall call that house Newton House, and the employment office, reading-room, renting of the lodging-rooms, and the use of the free rooms are to be in charge of a man we shall get through the Y. M. C. A., but we shall need an elderly woman to live in the house also, and give a home-like look to it and see to keeping it in order. Just the right person will be hard to find, we are afraid, but we look to you to find her, Miss Persis."

“I have her,” said Persis, glancing out of the window and smiling at a passer-by. The Misses Stafford looked, and saw a stout, motherly lady of about fifty, dressed in widow’s black, going by, leading two very small children.

“Her name is Mrs. Hook,” said Persis; “those are her grandchildren. Her eldest son and eldest daughter are married; each has one child. Mrs. Hook’s husband was a sailor, and died in China a year ago. She has seven children, but only the youngest, a girl of twelve, is dependent upon her. Next older is a boy, so very bright that a member of the School Board became interested in him and has taken him to educate; he is to go through the Polytechnic. Next older is a girl with spinal trouble; she has been admitted to the Hospital for Incurables. She is a dear little girl, of those who ‘also serve, who only stand and wait.’ Above her is Ellen, a girl with such a passion for missionary work that she desired to go even as servant in some foreign field. She is eighteen, understands housework and plain sewing, and graduated at the grammar school. A year ago she went to Alaska with a young missionary couple, to whom she will be servant, friend, helper in every way, and by and by grow into more direct missionary work. The other one of the seven is a young man who has been with me for a year, but is now in a factory; he is a very excellent fellow, lives with his mother, and could go with her to your house, making a little family of plain, pleasant, Christian people there that would be very helpful.

“How nicely you plan things,” said Miss Sara. “Do you think we can get Mrs. Hook to go there?”

“I feel sure of it.”

“I will take you to see her,” said Miss Rebecca. “She will do whatever Persis says. Ten years ago she would have died if Persis had not laid out six hundred dollars on curing her.”

“Verily I have had my reward,” said Persis. “Look at what a nice useful family she has kept together and raised. If she had died, what would have become of the poor scattered things? That family has been a rebuke to my lack of faith. I used to think there were far too many of them, and that room and work in the world could not be found for them. Now only see! ‘God has his plan for every man.’ As to what was done for her, Cousin Rebecca, was it not all a consequence of her charity to little Tommy Tibbets? ‘Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days’ has come true in her case.”

“You told us,” said Miss Eliza Stafford, “that you had been thinking of other work needed over at Cado-gan Street. What is it?”

“It is simply this,” said Miss Persis. “You are trying to renovate a neighborhood which for years has had two drinking-places as headquarters for all the men round about. If they were tired, lonely, thirsty, faint, or hungry, in they went and had their half-and-half or beer or whiskey, and maybe crackers, salt herring, or rolls. The drinking-places are banished, but the habit, the desire, the provocatives of desire, remain—the men will miss the old resorts, and still be hungry, tired, lonely, thirsty, hot, cold. They will not have

far to go, not over three or four squares, to find just such places as you have closed. What I think is needed is to give them something to make up for what you take away; something in its own line. Right beside the transformed Verne Street liquor-store I should put a coffee-house. Take for it the lower floor of the house that you own adjacent, and use the cellar for a kitchen. Have the room well-lighted, well-ventilated, in winter well-heated, in summer shaded, aired, and with green plants in the windows. Have tea, coffee, chocolate, sandwiches, bread, rolls, corn-bread, cold meat, pickles, pies, and in summer iced lemonade, at the very lowest prices which will make the place self-supporting. Until its constituency is assured you will have to throw in the rent. The coffee-room should be always clean and orderly; run in the cheap way of oilcloth-covered tables, tin spoons and cheap dishes; but I hold that it can be made attractive by walls with pictures, dishes of pretty shape and colors, clean floor, newspapers at hand, and the plants I have mentioned. Have a board at the side of the door, announcing your prices as five cents for hot coffee and a roll, five cents for iced lemonade and a sandwich, and so on. You will need to find a man and wife, honest, kind, neat, rigidly economical; the woman a good cook for the simple things you need, the man for waiter and to keep the coffee-room in order. Thus you will fight your saloons with their own weapons of an open place, not too rigidly nice, and refreshments of the cheapest. Your customers should not be hustled out as soon as the coffee is swallowed, as in the French cheap

cafés ; let them sit with their paper and cup as long as they wish ; that rest and refuge may tide them over the hour of temptation or despair.”

“We will do it !” cried both the sisters. “We will go and look at the house and speak to our agent about the changes this very day. Oh, Miss Thrale, this sounds as if it would be the best thing of all ! Shall we have such another coffee-house on Belden Street ?”

“I had thought of something else,” said Persis, “perhaps you will like it. It is a cook-shop, such as I used to see in Italian cities. The poor people there have no stoves or cooking-places in their houses, and there are shops for cheap hot food. Many of our poor have no accommodations for cooking, fuel is scarce, the mothers are away all day at work, or are busy, or sick. If there could be a cook-shop where bread, hot stews, soup, broths, corn-bread, hotch-potch, boiled potatoes, vegetable hash, boiled beans, or pork and beans, could be dealt out in quantity, to be carried home, and served wholesomely prepared at rates as cheap as persons could provide it for themselves, I think the whole neighborhood would be benefited. The cheapness could be secured by buying in large quantities—by wholesale ; fuel bought in the same way. There is saving in cooking large quantities of food at once, and in having scrupulous economy, allowing no waste in the cooking, and by good judgment in buying. With such a cook-shop, well patronized, the health of the neighborhood would improve by reason of healthful and nourishing food. Very much drunkenness and other vice results from bad and insufficient food.”

The housekeeperly instincts of the Stafford sisters were now awake. They were full of delight over a plan which they could thoroughly understand. "I believe, Eliza," said Miss Sara, "that we shall be happier here than we have ever been in all our lives."

"Yes, Sara; and I think, after a while, with all these friends to help us, we shall begin to know what to do, and how to do it."

The visit of the Misses Stafford at Gardner Street ended, and the improvements in the Cadogan Street district continued to fill the long-neglected inhabitants with amazement. There were some who resented the new order of affairs, and moved away when prohibited the dear delights of flinging slop out of the windows, or getting rid of a tub of washing suds by the prompt fashion of turning it over at the top of the stairs. With most, however, better quarters, with rents not raised, even lowered in some instances, and a kindly, firm, helpful agent in place of a loud tyrant, made even decency endurable.

Persis Thrale stood on her door-step one morning waiting to speak a word to Tommy, Dorry and Dora, before she joined Miss Rebecca, who was seated in a carriage before the door. Persis and Miss Rebecca were due at a morning session of the "Woman's Protective Club." Just as Persis was about to cross the sidewalk to the carriage she saw Bessie Jay running blindly along toward her, tears pouring over her face, and scarcely seeming to know what she was doing or where she was.

"Oh, Miss Thrale, Josie! Josie!" she sobbed.

“What is it, Bessie?” Her calm, firm voice at once stilled some of Bessie’s excitement.

“She’s arrested!” cried Bessie.

“Drinking again, Bessie?”

“No! For not drinking.”

“Softly, Bessie; tell me about it.”

“Mrs. Picot sent me for sewing-silk, and up there, round the corner, I met them. The policeman taking Josie off. She was pale as the dead, and could hardly stand. Oh, I ran to her, and put my arms round her, and kissed her, and asked her to tell me about it, and I walked a little way with her, until the policeman said to go back, it was no business of mine. And Josie wishes she was dead.”

“But tell me for what she is arrested.”

“For not reporting. She was to report each month, while she was on six months’ probation, you know. And she never went out of the house, she was so afraid of going wrong, and so ashamed of being arrested. She thought as she was all right they would not care, so she didn’t go and report, and they came and arrested her. Now she’ll be sent to the Women’s Prison for a year, and oh, Miss Thrale, what’s a girl going to do when she has the name of ‘jail-bird’ on her? Can’t you save Josie, Miss? They’ve taken her round to the court-room. I’spect they’d have sent her in the Black Maria, only it was full of dreadful ones from the precinct. Oh, please, Miss Persis!”

“Bessie, go up to the work-room and wait; I will go and look after Josie. A tall girl, you say?”

“Yes, tall and neat, and very nice-looking, with brown hair and a round face, a little bit freckled. You’ll know her. She looks nice—and she is, *she is!*”

“There, there ; go up to the work-room, Bessie,” said Persis, realizing that her work as a member of the “Woman’s Protective Club” was that morning to appear at the Court, and not at the Club.

“Cousin Rebecca, if you will drive round to the Court House with me, and leave me there, I will have to ask you to go to the Club alone.”

Cousin Rebecca agreed. She enjoyed the Club meetings, and moreover had on for the first wearing a nice, new black silk gown and bonnet ; it would have seemed a cruelty not to take them to the Club. As for the court-room, she would not have known what to do there, and Persis was competent to all her own undertakings.

Cousin Rebecca drove away, and Persis, tall and dignified, went calmly down the court-room, looking for Sorrow’s Daughter.

CHAPTER XXI.

LED INTO HOPE.

“ Though the circling flight of time may find us
Far apart, or severed more and more,
Yet the farewell always lies behind us,
And the welcome always lies before.
Meanwhile God is leading, surely, slowly,
Through the shadows, with the hand of love,
To the home where, 'mid the myriads holy,
Only welcomes wait us all above.”

A TEDIOUS and apparently much entangled case of two men and a dog was occupying the judge and several lawyers. A knot of idle hangers-on looked and laughed as the witnesses testified, and for said laughter were called to order by the judge, who threatened to have the courtroom cleared. Several men, evidently well known to the Island, were on the left side of the room, waiting their turn, under police charge, for His Honor's consideration; the deplorable band of women just descended from the Black Maria filled two benches on the right. Behind these, alone in a chair, near the policemen who were looking after the culprits, was a tall, well-made girl, in a neat calico dress and white apron; her face was bowed almost to her lap, and she shook constantly, as with suppressed weeping.

Evidently this was Josie. Persis passed around behind the benches, spoke a word to the policeman, who

was known to her, as were by this time most of the members of the force, and taking a chair beside Josie, gently clasped her hand, and whispered in her ear.

“Your friend Bessie sent me to you. I am Miss Thrale. I think I can do something for you if you will tell me all about it. We are sheltered behind these women, and if you speak very softly no one will hear us.” Persis’ words were in those low-breathed, soft, not whispering or hissing tones, which the experienced nurse soon cultivates. Her very presence brought hope and strength to the heart-broken Josie.

“How came you here?”

“Beer did it,” said Josie, with a gasp.

“Bessie says you were once a cashier.”

“Yes, I was.”

“You look as if you had been well brought up. Tell me all.”

“Yes, I was well brought up.” And then, with a little question here and there from Persis, here was the story of poor Josie: “The one thing I am most glad of every day is that my dead parents do not know that I am here, that I am so disgraced. My father was a mechanic, a good, quiet man, but not very strong. My mother had a number of children; all died when they were babies, but me. I was unfortunate to live! My father fell from a scaffolding, and was helpless for two years before he died. So much sickness and death used up all our little savings. I was seven years old when my mother and I were left alone. We furnished two rooms and my mother sewed. I went to school until I was

sixteen. Then, as I had had my course at a business college, I got a cashier's place. My mother had worked hard, and suffered much. She died when I was seventeen. The bills of her sickness used up all we had laid by. I sold our furniture to pay the funeral expenses. I see now that it would have been better to have kept one room and got one decent woman to share it with me. But I was only seventeen, and the women I knew said that I must board somewhere. My salary, for eleven hours' work daily, was five dollars a week. I could not get respectable board for less than that, and at respectable places they will not let girls do their washing in the kitchens at night. My employers demanded that I should be decently dressed, but if my board cost all my wages what was there for clothes and washing? I told my employer all that, and he said, 'How I made up the deficiency was my look out; plenty of girls would take the situation if it did not suit me.'

"All I could do was to find cheap board. I got it in a workman's family, at two dollars and a half a week. We were three in a room. The other girls all drank beer. Often all our supper was bread and cheese and beer. For noon we had cold meat, bread and beer. It was too much trouble for our landlady to make soup. My mother had been a good, economical cook, and I was accustomed to wholesome food, and enough of it. I felt weak from poor diet and hard work. They all told me to use beer, it would 'keep up my strength,' they said, and was just what I wanted. So I began to use it. I suppose I am easily affected by beer. What I

took always made me noisy and careless. The rest of them laughed at me, but it was more than a laughing matter. I went back to my work one afternoon, swinging my arms and singing 'Grandfather's Clock' pretty loudly. I was met and dismissed before I got to my desk. I could not get another place as cashier, but I went for sewing at the shop where my mother had had work, and I lived by sewing until work gave out. Then I went to an intelligence office, and as I am strong and tidy I had no trouble in getting a chambermaid's place at a boarding-house. The work was hard, and all the servants had beer sent into the kitchen for them. I had grown fond of it, and I took my share. One evening I was noisy on the street, and was arrested. As it was a first arrest my mistress got me off. Three months after we had been to a show and had some beer coming home. I knew I was not doing right to use beer, or go to low shows, or to mix with the rough girls I did. My mother would have been heart-broken! That night I was singing, and jostling the other girls, and I was arrested again. That time I was released on probation. Then I had to find another place, in a cheaper boarding-house, because—because I had been twice arrested. You see, I was to keep straight and report myself at the police office. I was told if I did not report I was liable to arrest. I did not touch another drop of beer. I was thoroughly frightened and sick of it. But I did not report at the office, and so I was arrested."

"But, Josie, why did you not report?"

"You see, I was busy, and I was keeping in-doors to

be out of temptation to drink, and I felt so ashamed to go to that office and report! I fancied that as long as I was doing well they would not mind about the report. Oh, how I felt when they came and arrested me, and to think—I am only twenty-one, and here I'm likely to get a year in a Reformatory, just for using beer! If it had n't been for that horrible beer I might be yet in my cashier's place! And yet, Miss Thrale, as you may think, a little, hot, untidy room on a noisy street, three of us in one bed, and only one window in the room; poor food, and beer, beer, beer always around one, and one's washing, ironing and mending to do after dark—and making, too, for there was no money to pay for making clothes—well, that was n't a happy or easy life for a girl."

"No, it was not. And you paid two dollars and a half?"

"Yes, for fire, lights, food, shelter, soap. They said it was as cheap as they could do it. And the woman didn't know much about cooking or cleaning, or any housekeeping. She had been a factory hand. You see, for shoes, and hats, and dresses, and all my clothes, two dollars and a half was not over much. I had to wear a good woolen or sateen dress at the store, and a decent hat and shoes. They expected me to dress respectably if I had only five dollars a week for all my living. Working girls have it pretty hard; don't they, Miss Thrale?"

"I'm afraid they do."

"And every block in those poor quarters where we have to live has its beer-shop—and people urge us to buy, and we are hot, and tired and hopeless,"

“Do n't be hopeless,” said Persis.

Josie continued her history : “In the city boarding-houses most of the servants have the habit of beer drinking, and they urge all the others to join them so there will be more to help to pay for the beer.

“Now who 'll hire me for anything, after I've had a year in prison? I hope I'll die there! The woman I lived with says she'll take me back any time; but who will think well of me, or treat me as if I were a decent girl, with the name of 'jail bird'?”

“It is only the story of one poor, homeless, motherless, city working-girl, an industrious, cleanly, virtuous girl, who has found life too hard for her,” meditated Persis.

The story had been told, with pauses for Josie's weeping, with little breaks for Persis' questions. The case of the men and the dog had been concluded. The file of men had stood up and in short order received their sentences to the Island; one after another the women on the benches were called and rose; testimony, chiefly by the arresting officers, was given; sentences were announced, and once more the Black Maria was receiving its complement.

“Josie Martin! What charge?”

Josie rose, but would have fallen had not something happened. The lady by her side clasped her hand, and walked forward with her. The charge was made: then that clear, full, rich contralto was heard.

“Judge Thwait, will you allow me to say a few words before you pass sentence?”

The judge started, then bowed with more than mere courtesy. He and Persis had met before. Nearly a year before they had been guests at a party given by Mr. and Mrs. Inskip. Judge and Mrs. Thwait had been greatly charmed with Persis. Her conversation, her manner, her beauty, and, above all, the account given to them privately by their hosts of her great work among the poor, had drawn them to her in a strong desire to know her better. The illness of a daughter, and a trip abroad, had prevented them from continuing the acquaintance as they had wished. Now for the first time since that brilliant evening they met, the judge on the bench, Persis before him holding by the hand a prisoner.

“Miss Thrale! Is this young woman one of your *proteges*?”

“She is now. I came here to find her, although I had not seen her before. May I tell you her story? I think you will feel that she is rather sinned against than sinning; that she should be dealt leniently with; that the charge now lying against her is a result not of evil inclination, but of sorrow and shame for past misdemeanor, and of earnest effort to escape wrongdoing.”

The judge bowed. “The court will be glad to hear all that you have to say, Miss Thrale; such powerful preventive work as yours is often stronger for justice and morality than the weight of the law.”

In brief earnest sentences Persis told the story which she had just heard of Josie’s Martin’s life.

“If now,” she said, “you will remit this girl’s sen-

tence, and allow her to go home with me, I will aid in her efforts at reform. I feel that I can assure you that she will lead a good and useful life. After a year in prison how little hope there will be for her! The world's heart is cold and hard to the ex-convict."

"I will dismiss the charge against Josie Martin and place her in your care," said the judge. "The city owes you, Miss Thrale, a yearly increasing debt of gratitude for what you are doing in behalf of the suffering and tempted."

Persis took Josie from the court-room, and seeing that the girl was scarcely able to stand she signalled a carriage and took her to Gardner Street. Jim Bowles was then dispatched to Mrs. Bell's boarding-house for Josie's small luggage, with word that she was with Miss Thrale and would remain under her care. Persis delivered Josie to Mrs. Gayley and, sending word to her faithful cook to give her luncheon as soon as possible, she went to her room to lay aside the dress which had been assumed for the Club meeting and take instead the nurse's garb, to make her delayed rounds. Presently in came Miss Rebecca.

"I was so sorry you were not there, Persis, it was such a fine meeting!" She walked up to the bed and spread out and carefully surveyed the dress which Persis had thrown there. She was justly proud of it: it came from her own work-room, and Miss Rebecca's establishment was now turning out some very fine work and very skilled workers. "To my mind, Persis, there was not a dress there handsomer than this one. You should have

been there to show it, as a sample of what my girls can do! However, without it, I got Ruth Hamlin a place at eight dollars a week. Wont that make her happy! Tell me what you did this morning."

Persis finished buttoning her gray serge gown, gave a glance into the depths of her bag to see if it were provided with all necessaries, then seated herself to await her luncheon, and meantime told the story of the morning. "I have many times realized the expediency of retaining my place among my old friends, and in my usual station in social life," she said. "I think half the efficiency of my work, its breadth, its vigor, are due to the friends and interest and funds and suggestions I have gained in that way. I felt it more than ever to-day. My seemingly chance meeting at a party with Judge Thwait has been probably the means of saving one more woman to society."

"If you had given up your old friends, your early associations, your social life, Persis," cried Miss Rebecca with vehemence, "you would have been flying in the face of Providence! Your place in life was ordained by God, and he gave you all its advantages as means of success in this work. Oh, here is your lunch; while you eat it let me tell you that the Club selected you to go to the Central Court to-morrow to watch over the most shameless, terrible case of oppression of a woman that has ever been known! It makes my blood run cold to think of it!"

"You very nearly frighten me, Cousin Rebecca."

"The Club heard of this by accident—no, in God's

providence—only last week. They have secured for the poor wronged creature a lawyer and the case will come up to-morrow morning, and you are to be there, Persis, and bring the whole strength of the Club, in its social, friendly, helpful work, to shelter and comfort this victim of brutality.”

“But, Cousin Rebecca, tell me: what was the brutality?” said Persis, who had found that sometimes Miss North’s heroics were greater than the occasion required.

“She has been in prison, in a common prison, with the lowest of criminals, taken there too in the Black Maria, with thieves and drunken negro women—think of that!—and kept in prison three long months.”

“Who is she?” demanded Persis.

“Miss Crane—a governess, thirty years old. Oh, the outrage of it, Persis; my blood boils to think of it. I know I shall not be able to eat nor sleep until the affair is over! There were three splendid speeches, and some of the ladies just sat and cried to think how terrible it was! Oh, if we had known it at the very first! If three months ago we had only heard! Persis, why are such cruelties allowed?”

“For what crime was she imprisoned?”

“For the crime of innocence. Innocence and poverty!” cried Miss Rebecca, quoting impressively from one of the speeches. “Is n’t it the law to believe people innocent until they are proved to be guilty? This girl has been treated as guilty until she can be proved to be innocent! There is not the shadow of

a doubt that she is innocent ; yet she has lain imprisoned under a false charge for three months, her reputation and health ruined, her means of livelihood destroyed."

"What was the accusation?"

"Theft," said Miss Rebecca scornfully.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CRIME OF INNOCENCE.

“The wounds I might have healed,
The human sorrow and smart!
And yet it was never in my soul
To play so ill a part;
But evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as want of heart.”

IT is a common fiction that the law holds every man innocent until he is proved to be guilty. As a matter of fact, too often, the person is treated as guilty until he is proved to be innocent. Even in this late 19th century our boasted code needs some amending. For instance, theft being punishable with imprisonment, a person charged with theft may lie in prison and await trial until he has perhaps been imprisoned for as much time as sentence would have covered had he been proven guilty. Such time is subtracted from a sentence; but suppose the verdict is “Not guilty!” A stranger, friendless or poor, accused of theft, unable on account of lack of means or acquaintance to procure bail, is forthwith put into prison, and suffers all its horrors, possibly for months, while awaiting trial. This prisoner has the added tortures and shames of being carried to and from court-room and jail with the filthy and intolerable crowd of the lowest criminals, the chronic criminals, who daily fill the Black Maria. During imprisonment, while an individual cell is granted at night, during the day the prisoner—whose guilt

is still a matter of question—is compelled to share a sitting-room in common with the filthy, blasphemous and vicious. During this period, of penalty before crime is proven, the prisoner is not given the good and sufficient diet which the law allows the proven guilty in the State Prison or Penitentiary, where meat, good air and quiet sleep, are supposed to be needful to the health of a prisoner.

The food is tea and bread at night, coffee and bread in the morning, soup and bread at noon. The soup may be very poor; the tea and coffee may not agree with the prisoner; drunken shrieks, profanity, howls of fury, prevent peace, sleep, thinking, or praying time; and after enduring all this penalty the prisoner may be proven not guilty, and walk forth—reputation blasted, business gone, and health ruined. No wonder that Miss Rebecca North became earnest and vigorous in expression when she heard that all these miseries had been heaped upon Louisa Crane, a governess, aged thirty, who had come to the city from a distant State, had no relations, and few acquaintances except the employer, a rich man, who accused her of theft, and had her put in prison to await trial, because a ring, value two hundred dollars, had disappeared.

This was the story Cousin Rebecca finally told to Persis. The ring had been found in the writing-desk of the governess. Three months Louisa Crane had awaited trial; finally a day had been set, and a lawyer appointed for her by the benevolence of the Court! Accusation had come to her toward the end of her quarter's work, when

the salary of the previous quarter had been expended, and the employer, even after the finding of the ring, had withheld earned salary until the case should be concluded. Miss Crane had not been able to retain a lawyer, nor to buy for herself any food or comforts while in prison. The Women's Protective Club, having heard of her case, had seen the lawyer who was assigned to her, and not only had found him zealous and able, but had received from him assurance that she would be proven innocent.

Innocent, after all this penalty !

She had then been three months imprisoned for the Crime of Innocence !

It was to stand by this unhappy woman in her trial that Persis Thrale appeared that May morning in the Central Court, and awaited the coming of the prisoner.

Miss Crane was not allowed to walk to the courthouse, but was placed in the prison van with a white woman and a negress, both of whom had been convicted of infamous crimes and who were going into court to be sentenced. She would have cheerfully walked miles to have escaped such companionship, but she had no choice in this matter ; and so she rode in the Black Maria, while the boys in the street ran after the strangely-named vehicle and derided the miserable creatures inside. She was placed in a small room, barred off from the courtroom, where she and her degraded associates waited to be summoned before the bench. It was near an entrance to the room, and every one who entered there looked at the prisoners through the iron grating of that pen. It

was perhaps the worst of all the humiliations the accused woman had suffered.

Her name was called at last, and her trial began. Her employer and his daughter told the story of the ring. She had suffered from so much injustice that she was beginning to expect to be convicted when her lawyer cross-questioned her pupil. Against her will he made the girl admit that the ring had fitted her finger loosely, and had several times slipped from her hand and been recovered. Little by little he drew from her unwilling lips admissions that she had sometimes visited the governess' room without her knowledge, and had often examined the contents of her writing-desk and dressing-case; and finally she acknowledged that she had been engaged in this meddlesome business an hour before she had missed the ring. The girl was mortified by these disclosures, but the cross-questioning continued persistently, mercilessly, until she broke down and admitted that she might have lost it in her teacher's drawer. In addressing the jury, the Judge remarked that he was surprised that the court's time had been wasted by so flimsy a case, and he directed the jury to render a verdict of acquittal, which was promptly done.

During all this process of law, Louisa Crane, overwhelmed by these last injustices and humiliations, dealt out to one against whom nothing had been proven, had sat with bent and covered face in unutterable anguish of spirit. She knew nothing of the strong and stately woman, a few years her senior, one of the fortunate ones of earth, who stood near her, with resolute face and

pitying eyes. She heard, as in a dream, the testimony of witnesses and the finding of the court.

Persis had, however, been recognized by the Judge, by several of the jurymen who were waiting about, and by a number of the lawyers. Her social standing and her work secured both acquaintances and influence, and as the judge finished charging the jury he bent down and whispered to a friend, "We shall hear from Miss Thrale about this wretched case."

He heard.

"May I say a word, I think a needed word, about this case?" Then she continued: "I know the case, as far as the Court is concerned, is ended, and I thank the Court for its courtesy in hearing me for one moment. I have only this to say: though for the court and for the accuser the case is ended, for Miss Crane, the accused, it can never be ended; it is burned into her very soul. The city's prisoner has had to travel a long and painful path before she found any protection, any consideration, any justice; and yet in the end it is admitted by judge, jury, and even by her accuser, that there had never been any evidence of guilt against her! Her suffering has not ended yet. So long as she lifts her face to the daylight people who see her will remember how she looked in the fetid atmosphere of crime. So long as she lives the horror of her experience will haunt and influence her life. In the eye of the law the presumption of innocence may be a safeguard, but it must seem like a mockery to those who experience it. The foolishness of an ill-natured child, the hasty cruelty of a man who lacks nothing of

earthly good but a sympathetic, considerate heart, have made this present wreck of what three months ago was a healthy, honored, useful woman."

She bent down to Miss Crane. "Come. You are free, and hereafter you and I will find a path to walk together." And together they left the court-room and entered the carriage that waited for Persis.

When Persis had chosen her life work it had not occurred to her that it would ever carry her into the purlieus of courts and prisons, but just at this time courts and prisons seemed to claim much of her attention. At the moment of her return home, while her thoughts were absorbed by Louisa Crane, Persis received intelligence of her appointment upon a committee who were to visit the women's prison the following morning. While she was reading this note Jim Bowles knocked at her door: "The clerk from Wex Brothers is here."

Persis asked her Cousin Rebecca to come to Miss Crane and then went to the elevator, where Jim and the "clerk from Wex Brothers" were chatting.

"Ah, Frank!" said Persis with her usual friendly smile, "always on hand where there is business?"

When Persis first came to Gardner Street this Frank was a fourteen-years-old gamin, given to playing truant, a devotee of dime museums and cheap theatres, picking up precarious gains to obtain entrance to these beloved resorts. Persis and Harriet had promptly taken him in hand, invited him to the house, beguiled him to night school, slowly elevated his taste above the cheap theatre and dime museum, found him regular employment, later

made him a member of the young men's club, and the result was a bright, well informed, honest, industrious, polite young fellow—one more criminal saved, one more man gained for the State.

Persis went up with Frank to the room vacated two days before by the Clarke sisters when they had removed to Cadogan street. It had been painted and papered the previous fall. Clean, bright, empty, it made Persis lonely to look at it, as she thought of her two friends—who yet were not far away. She must fill it up promptly.

“Frank, you are to do your best with this room and have it ready to-morrow noon ; that is twenty-four hours for you. Use your best taste in selecting a good ingrain carpet, and a set of simple, well-made ash furniture : pick out a set of wash-stand china that will suit the carpet, and mind you carry the scheme of this paper in your mind, so that the carpet will not quarrel with that. Have a table-scarf to suit the carpet, and choose two or three things for that mantel-piece. Get three pots of blooming flowers ; have dark shades for those windows, so that a nervous person can have darkness when it is wanted, but bring some dotted swiss to Mrs. Gayley to make draperies. Add a pair of blankets, a white counterpane, and a pair of pillow-shams.”

Frank was eagerly jotting down orders. He had been for some years working his way up with a great firm which traded in all manner of house furnishings and fittings, and this was his first order for the arranging of an entire room left to his own taste and judgment ; he longed to do his best.

“Then,” added Persis, “get me those six books for the table, and by noon to-morrow have a room here where it will be a benediction to a tired soul to stay alone.”

“You’re always doing some good, Miss Thrale, and you make what you do help several folks at once! Here you are providing for somebody and giving me a great lift at the same time. I’m obliged to you, indeed I am,” said Frank.

As Persis and Frank came back into the hall Mrs. Gayley came from her room. “Miss Thrale, will you come and see Josie Martin? She does n’t get any better; I think she’s worse. She lies in a kind of stupor this two hours. I don’t like it.”

Persis went to the hospital room to see Josie; the crimson face, muttering lips, half-shut eyes, told the story to her experience. “Brain fever, poor child! Send for a doctor. Let me know when he comes;” and telling Mrs. Gayley what to do Persis went down stairs. Dorry was swinging the dinner bell and Persis was hungry; so were Tommy, Dorry and Dora Agnes, who, freshly washed and combed, waited in the lower hall for their elders to go to dinner. Miss Rebecca appeared at the door of her room.

“Miss Crane has had a warm bath, and I have sent for Dolly Murphy to come and shampoo her head—that is so resting and refreshing. I have made her drink a cup of bouillon, but I tell you, Persis”—and she shut the door and whispered—“if I am not very much mistaken, Louisa Crane is down with nervous prostration, and, if she ever gets over it, it will not be within a year.”

“Is she in your room? Well, Cousin Rebecca, coddle her to your heart’s content, and let her know that she is at home, and will be as long as she chooses to stay with us. Not coming to dinner?”

“I must see to making her comfortable and put her to bed. Why, Persis, she shivers and twitches like St. Vitus’ dance. She’s a wreck.”

“No wonder,” said Persis, grimly; “her experience is a way modern justice has of wrecking people. Come, children, to dinner.”

Jim Bowles was opening the front door. There was Mr. Cooper, and behind him a messenger boy with a letter for Persis. She asked Mr. Cooper down to dinner, and read the note while he was carving for her. Her face crimsoned, her eyes flashed. The note, with a few curt words, enclosed the long-delayed quarter’s salary paid to Louisa Crane by her employer and persecutor. The man was a half millionaire, but he had not offered one dime as money’s poor amends for ruined health and happiness and loss of employment.

Miss Susan was explaining to Mr. Cooper the case of Louisa Crane.

“See there!” cried Persis, laying the note and small check before him, as she took her plate. “I feel a most vehement desire for vengeance. Something ought to be done!”

Mr. Cooper looked at the two bits of paper. “The scoundrel!” he said; “he is not glad, but mad, that his accusation has been proven unjust. Let me have those two documents, Miss Persis, and I will see if I cannot

bring him to some kind of terms. Money can never make up to this woman for what she has suffered, but it may be a comfort to her to feel that she has five or six hundred of her own, and is not wholly dependent upon even the most willing strangers."

"How will you do it?" asked Miss Susan, eagerly.

"The old pillory is discarded," said Mr. Cooper, "but there is the more efficient pillory of the daily press. I think this man would rather make Miss Crane compensation than have this story in every paper in the country. It is a very telling story; it would spread like fire. There is that happy dearth of news just now that suggests a land at ease and quiet."

After dinner there was the doctor to see about poor Josie; Bessie Jay's tears to dry with encouraging words about her friend's restoration; then a simple outfit to purchase for Louisa Crane, whose little possessions had entirely disappeared during her imprisonment. At evening Mr. Cooper came back, weary, as if from a field of strife, but bringing a letter of humble apology, five hundred dollars, the unfortunate writing-desk, and Miss Crane's watch, which last had been received from the jail. "I went to the lawyer that defended her, and then with him to the prosecutor, and here is the result. It is better than nothing."

Persis sat by her front window to rest. This was the life that some of her friends had suggested might be monotonous!

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MOTHERS OF CRIMINALS.

"In vain remorse and fear and hate
 Beat with bruised hands against a fate
 Whose bars of iron only move
 And open to the touch of love.
 He only feels his burdens fall
 Who, taught by suffering, pities all.
Pray for us !"

PRISONS for women, officered by women only, superintended and inspected by women, are among the methods grown out of the Prison Associations and extended studies in penology of the latter half of the nineteenth century. To one of these prisons Persis was called to go with others on a visit of inspection. Even to her the sight of a thousand criminal women in prison dress—living, working, under prison rules—was a revelation. She had for years worked along the edges of the maelstrom of criminality, striving to rescue the hundreds that might be drawn into its seething depths. Here she realized in one fell vision the fearful aggregate of those whom no eye had pitied, no strong hand had saved. To her it was a terrible study, nerving her to new efforts to rescue the imperilled and falling ; giving new views of what the dangers were, and of the long, long chain of events which result in the crime-records of to-day.

"To think," she said to one of the committee, as

together they stood in the great ward where the prisoners were first received from the officers of the police, who brought them after sentence by the courts, "only to think, if to each one of these thousand women, in childhood, strong protecting help and tender care and guardianship had come, they would have been among the world's useful ones to-day. There were people enough, philanthropists, Christians enough, to rescue all, if the burden of the errand had lain upon their hearts. What a fearful exhibition this is of missed opportunities! If only these had been saved as children! If only the children of to-day can be kept from such a life-story!"

"You will need to make over the mothers first, perhaps the grandmothers," said the young doctor of the prison, who was in waiting; "and the making over of the mothers—that is the problem."

"At least, in the children of to-day," said Persis, "we could make over the mothers and grandmothers of the coming years. It does not take long for one generation to grow up and others to come. Are these chiefly the children of criminals?" and she thought of Josie, so thankful that Josie had been rescued from coming here: and of Louisa Crane, thankful that her innocence had been established.

"Many of them are daughters of criminals. Some of them are starting the pedigree of evil on their own account. I see entering by that door several old offenders. Come down there with me, and very many of the questions rising in your mind will be answered by what you see and hear," said the deputy.

The deputy matron with the clerk by her side stood to receive another file of prisoners. The last one in the line was a young girl.

“Here’s Clara again!” cried the deputy.

“Dear me, Clara, will you never be reformed?”

“Not much,” said Clara, setting her arms akimbo.

“Here’s the fifth time she has been sent in here, on sentences from six months to a year; and she’s only twenty-one now,” said the police officer.

“Twenty-one! she must have been an infant in arms when she first came,” said the assistant doctor, who was “new” in the reformatory.

“She was in her fifteenth year,” said the matron.

“Came in as drunk and incorrigible, and had trembles,” volunteered Clara, whose dissipated life had not robbed her of some prettiness, whose dirty hands were small and shapely, and whose uncombed hair was long and fine. “You might well say ‘an infant in arms,’” she said turning to the young doctor. “I was born in the county jail, and my mother served a six years’ sentence here, and went out three months after I came in first; didn’t she, matron?”

The matron admitted the facts.

“One of the reg’lar bad ones; wasn’t she! Full of tricks, and always in a fight. Wore your life out of you with her capers; didn’t she, now? I heard you say as much to the superintendent. Didn’t I, now?”

Again the matron nodded.

“And you’re surprised at my being here, doctor! Where else would you expect me to be? I reckon your

mammy and your chance in life was precious different."

The young doctor granted the difference. She was the child of a gracious mother, reared in a refined Christian home, graduate of a State university and of a medical school.

But what had been done at all for this child of the prison and the criminal?

"Where is your father?" the doctor asked Clara.

The girl laughed hardly.

"Never see him. Don't know who he was. Fathers don't count much for such as we."

"He may have counted for a good deal in your heredity."

And what's heredity? Something to drink? I say, now, matron, do you feed us slops for tea same as ever? Can't you give me a good stiff cup, would bear up a potato, if I behave real peaceable?"

"No," said the matron shortly. She was indignant at Clara's return; it meant a world of trouble to her.

"Then I'll sing—loud—my loudest! Split your ears!"

"Then you'll be put in the dungeon."

"Then I'll kick and yell till I'm tired. You'll have to take me out some time, and then I'll be just awful."

"Couldn't you turn over a new leaf and be good, just for a change, Clara, and to see how it would seem?" said the deputy.

"How'd I do it? I never had any examples. Shall I copy after her, or you, or that one?" indicating with her finger the various officers standing near, and striking

their pose in apt mimicry. "Dress me up like 'em and give me their innings, and maybe I will."

"Environment counts for so much," said the doctor.

"What's environment? Something to eat or to wear?"

"If you took girls like Clara, dressed them in elegant clothes, and set them in a palace, they would reduce it to a slum in a week," said the matron with conviction.

"Why not?" demanded Clara. "Isn't the slum all we know about? What else would we pattern after? Do we know nice people? Have we been learned manners? Do I know how to play a piano, or read a book, or work lace? How do you know but I'd have been as nice as other folks if I'd had half a chance!"

"Come," said the matron, "it's your turn now to get your bath and your clothes."

"Oh, I know, and all the rest of it—locked up, with nothing to do but sit on a straw bed."

"Because you wont do anything, Clara. I'd give you sewing or ripping or knitting, if you would do it."

"If I could, you mean. Who ever taught me?"

"I've spent hours trying to teach you."

"Did my mother want to learn before me? All right; but I'll sing. I'll split your ears; and I'll call to all the other women in this corridor. Who's locked up here, anyhow? Any of my pals?"

"There it is," said the matron, as Clara was marched off. "She'll act like a fiend; and then will come the dungeon, and she'll try to starve herself or choke herself,

and she'll get over into the hospital, and she'll serve out her year without learning to iron a shirt or sew a decent seam, or learn one thing by which to earn a respectable living. And she does n't want to earn it, either. Why, that girl served a six months' sentence, and the day she left she said, 'Now, I'm going to get as much whiskey as I can hold,' and in three days she was back, raving—sentenced for a year. And she's only twenty-one."

"Nursed by a drunken mother and fed gin from her birth," said the doctor; "all her veins filled with poison, her inheritance unchained appetites. Back of these prodigies of vice lie the mothers of criminals. And who can say how well the money would have been invested that took Clara out of that criminal mother's hands at her birth, and brought her up in quiet comfort, to habits of self-restraint, order, industry? Ought not the State, ought not society to step in and insist that these children should be rescued from the slums, allowed to know what decency and peace are, and taught to read their Bibles and do honest work?"

"There are other mothers of criminals in higher stations than Clara's," said the superintendent; "mothers who turn over the care of their children to servants; give them no moral training, no immediate supervision; the heredity of their children is often appetites as unrestrained as those of Clara's mother, though with less coarse exhibitions. I know two lads, under twenty-one, who are practical outcasts from all decent society; one dying of debauchery, the other phenomenally bad. And each of these lads inherits eighteen thousand a year

and comes out of what is called a 'high family.' Balls, operas, late hours, cards, wine, days spent in idleness, rising at noonday to sit up until the next sunrise, no high ambitions, no useful occupations, no deep moral inspirations, worn out, fevered, nervous constitutions, these make mothers of criminals just as surely as the conditions of Clara's mother : the pawnshop, the slum, the gin-bar, the jail, the street. The criminals resulting are perhaps less numerous in the first case, because the children are less in number and the personal influence of outsiders upon them may be better, and more numerous opportunities open by their environment for an escape to better things."

"You find the mothers of criminals in the two extremes of social life," said the matron.

"How about the middle-class mothers?" asked the doctor.

"I find mothers of criminals wherever there are mothers unconscious of their great calling, neglectful of their children, indifferent to their religious training, given to self-indulgence, blind to the moral grandeur of self-restraint. The necessity of personal labor, the pressure of general industry, the safeguards of education, may make the ill-reared child of the middle classes less likely to be a criminal. Take this reformatory. As years go on we shall find that, while some are really reformed here, many will return again and again ; and the children of women who are and have been here will be coming to us. It will not be all heredity, not all environment, not all the indifference of the State to infan-

cy, not all the neglect of society shown to its infant members, but all of these combined, in greater or less degree, produce criminals."

"Solomon then was right in saying, 'Every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands,'" said Persis.

"You come nearer the mark than you know, when you say foolish. For statistics show that a terribly large per cent. of these mothers are 'foolish,' in the sense of being more or less idiotic; not merely moral idiots by inheritance and environment but born feeble-minded; and what of strong character, of enterprise, of moral discernment has the feeble-minded mother to confer upon her child?"

A look of despair and anguish crossed Persis Thralé's face; then she brightened. "How could I endure the weighty thought of all this misery and wrong if I had not a Burden-bearer to whom to go, a Prayer-hearer, a Miracle-worker for the mighty load! There may come some day an answer through the hearts and lips of God's people to the question, What is to be done for such as Clara?"

"At present," said the deputy, "there is no place for Clara but this, and this evidently merely restrains her for the time being, and works no real moral improvement."

"Some are improved, very much improved; reformed," said the superintendent, jealous for the credit of the institution.

"I am going back to my own small section of work,"

said Persis, "to be more zealous than ever for the mothers and the little ones. It is a small section of the city in which I work, they are but few whom I can reach, but every one counts."

"That is true," said the deputy. "If some one had saved Clara twenty years ago it would have saved me a world of trouble to-day. Do but hear her singing and shouting! She bends all her energy to tormenting us."

Those songs, those shouts, rang in Persis Thrale's ears as she went back to Gardner Street to tell her story of Clara to her cousins and the Misses Stafford.

Between the work of Persis and that of the Misses Stafford there was the closest harmony and interest. Every day the members of the families in those two houses on Gardner and Cadogan Streets met to counsel or to help each other. All problems which faced the Misses Stafford were referred to Persis or to Miss Rebecca, and whatever of new work was undertaken in Gardner Street the Misses Stafford were ready with hearty coöperation. The case of Josie and that of Louisa Crane had enlisted their fullest sympathy.

"What can we do for them?" urged Miss Sara and Miss Eliza.

"I can think of nothing at present," said Persis. "Josie has a fine constitution, and although it is weakened by anxiety, sorrow, and hard fare, she has still abundant vitality; she will be about in a few weeks. As to Miss Crane, absolute quiet and safety, such as she has now, in a healthful, pretty room, and with those about her who treat her with tenderness and respect, will by

degrees calm the nerves and soften the sharpness of her distress."

"As soon as she and Josie can travel," said Miss Sara, "we want them taken out to our old home to stay for the summer. They could be in no more healthful, beautiful place; and dear Mrs. Lane will be goodness itself to them. Miss Persis, cannot you take them there, and stay for the summer also?"

"I shall be glad to take them there; I think by the first of June they may both be able to travel. Before that I must go down to see Serena, and take her a little youngster or two to play under her 'bombergilear' trees. Serena is singing 'A charge to keep I have' louder than ever this season. She says she finds that each year the Lord gives her more comforts with the charge. When I take Josie and Miss Crane to your home I will stay for a day or two only; I find that if I am to be efficient in my work I must take my vacations outside of its range, or at least so far outside that I have no feeling of responsibility, as I do where any of my own people are. I will tell you what I am now planning: I will send Miss Crane to your place for June and July, and meanwhile I will attend to affairs here. My cousins will have had their vacation, and so will Harriet and Mr. Cooper; and Miss Lee, our kindergarten teacher, and the nurse who supplied my place last year, can come here, so that I can have two months, August and September, free. I want to take Louisa Crane and go to England, and spend those two months on the south coast. A sea trip, the entire change and the lovely south coast will cure her,

if anything will. I feel ready to make any effort in her behalf; I never felt such intense sympathy for any person as I do for her, when I think of her terrible experiences."

"Is it harder to suffer justly or unjustly?" asked Annie Clarke.

"As far as the suffering is concerned, and setting the matter of your conscience aside," spoke up Katherine, "I should think there would be some satisfaction in thinking you were getting only your deserts. But injustice itself is a cruel pain, if it is only the injustice of thought, or word, and not added to by the cruel act."

"Your plan, Persis," said Miss Rebecca with pride, "is just what one might expect of you; you will do for Miss Crane as you did for Mrs. Hook—spend hundreds on her."

"If it is necessary, and brings good returns, what better can be done with hundreds?" said Persis indifferently.

"You saved a grand good woman when you saved Mrs. Hook," said Miss Eliza Stafford.

"Do you know," said Persis, "that though I have seen but little of Josie Martin, I believe she will be the very person for me to train for a nurse for your district! I will ask your Mrs. Lane to give her opportunities to wait upon the sick, to care for the children and the aged, and Mrs. Lane will observe what aptitudes she has for such work. I think she will prove the right person. She has strong muscles, a good constitution, a pleasant face, a sweet voice, supple hands. That much I have noticed."

“Are you sure,” said Miss Sara Stafford nervously, “that as nurse she might not relapse into beer drinking? She might have temptation and opportunity more than in other occupation.”

“Dear Miss Sara, her beer drinking was the result of the unrecognized hunger of a hearty young creature shamefully underfed. Beef will be the antidote for beer. It is the required antidote in more cases than we know,” replied Persis.

“Of course I should rely entirely on your judgment,” said Miss Stafford. “You have done a great work, and I cannot see any mistakes in it.”

“Perhaps,” said Persis with a merry laugh, “that is because my mistakes are so well covered up!”

“You make few mistakes, Persis,” said Miss Rebecca. “I might almost say none. I think it is because you do not rush wildly into new work, without thinking and praying over it. You take your work to God, and I am sure you are divinely guided.”

“I feel that it can be said to me, as to Israel in the wilderness, ‘Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice,’” said Persis earnestly.

“That can be true of all who will ‘wait to hear what the Lord my God shall speak,’” said Mr. Cooper. “Whoever waits upon the Lord shall renew his strength: he shall mount up on wings as eagles, he shall run and not be weary, he shall walk and not faint.”

“That walking was well put last,” said Harriet. “It is easier to run, on the spur of great excitement, than daily to persist in dutiful walking.”

“That is true,” said Mr. Cooper ; “and as to the supplies of grace, both of ability and knowledge, we may rely upon them with assurance, if we look for them. Did not our Saviour look up and say, ‘O righteous Father’? ‘Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’”

“Yes,” said Persis, “and when people prophesy of failure, and wonder that we do not fail, they leave out of the account that potent, ‘Whereas, the Lord was there.’ Mr. Pemberton, here, asks me if I do not sacrifice too much, or shall not weary in this work. If he considers Christian privilege he will realize that in any life, this as well as any, the child of God dwells ‘under the springs of Pisgah.’”

“Your work, indeed, has a rich reward,” said Mr. Pemberton ; “but it seems to me that you resign much for it—a home, a family.”

“Here is my home, here is my family.”

“And when your fellow-workers fail you? You have now lost the Misses Clarke.”

“True. I emigrated them! But countries grow by emigration as by immigration,” said Persis. “One goes out at the providential call; another comes in to keep on the work. I feel sure that this Miss Crane can grow into the place that Katherine has left. Her terrible experiences will do their part to deepen and enlarge her sympathies. It is in sorrow’s garden we gather the herb called sympathy. Workers will always be raised up. My unbelief has, as the man said to Christ, been ‘helped’ or ‘healed.’ Experience has taught me that the Lord shall supply all our need. ‘I have all and abound.’”

“It is true,” said Mr. Pembroke again; “and yet there no doubt is a great sacrifice required, a sacrifice to which many would be unequal.”

Persis leaned back and meditated for a time.

“It is true,” she said, “I may have missed much that I should have enjoyed; but why should my choice or sacrifice seem greater than that of hundreds who have gone to labor in far-off mission-fields, or have not counted their lives dear, nursing strangers in the midst of deadly epidemics?”

“The eclat of those undertakings, the feeling of having a large constituency back of the worker—a Board, a Committee, a great Church, or the on-looking of an aroused nation, are not there,” replied Mr. Pembroke. “You miss such a stimulus; you have gone a warfare at your own charges.”

“Why ask from others what I could supply for myself? I may have missed much—” she said again, meditatively, “missed much—of pleasure—but, I have built for eternity! This kind of life, no doubt, is not for all. It was for me; for here God called me with an imperative voice. I do not regret. I rejoice, rather. I will not forecast. I work; I wait; and I know that at last I shall be SATISFIED.” 7

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