The Preacher's Son

Melton

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BY

WIGHTMAN FLETCHER MELTON, A.M.,

President of Florida Conference College.

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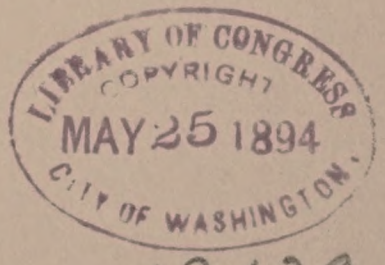

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THIS BOOK

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

TO MY FATHER,

REV. ISAAC QUIMBY MELTON,

Of the North Alabama Conference;

MY MOTHER,

FRANCIS LOUISA MELTON;

MY SON,

OLIVER QUIMBY MELTON;

AND TO PREACHERS' SONS EVERYWHERE.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I remember, when I was a small boy, having said to my mother: "When I grow up to be a man, I expect to write a book and name it 'The Preacher's Son.'" I have kept my promise except that I named the book and then wrote it.

Some of the scenes, events, and thoughts are taken from my own life. A few of the names are family names.

I have carefully avoided exaggeration, and whatever of fiction there is in the book could be *real* under favorable circumstances.

If this work is appreciated by preacher's sons and *all* their kinsfolk, I shall be satisfied. Of course I sincerely trust that it may please, instruct, and profit those into whose hands it may fall.

WIGHTMAN F. MELTON.

Florida Conference College, Leesburg, Fla., April, 1894.

INTRODUCTION.

This is a new book by a new author. That is one reason why the announcement that it was in press was received by me with friendly curiosity. A first book may be a failure, a blighted blossom that perishes at once, or the precursor of ripeness and productiveness in the future.

That it is the work of a preacher's son gives it another claim on my attention and good wishes. Preachers' sons are usually very much like other men's sons, but a study of them with reference to their peculiar environment ought to possess special interest to the student of human life. There is a freshness and frankness about these pages that will not fail to strike the appreciative reader.

My personal acquaintance with the author enhances the interest I feel in his book. He is as sunny of soul as a cloudless Sunday in Florida, as transparent as the waters of Silver Spring or Waukullah at midday.

This is enough. Give the "Preacher's Son" a friendly greeting.

O. P. FITZGERALD.

San Francisco, March 22, 1894.

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THE PREACHER'S SON.

CHAPTER I.

HIS BIRTH.

"A PREACHER'S son is the meanest boy in the world." Many have made this assertion. Some people actually believe it. I give it as my candid opinion, to begin with, that many of the preachers' sons have enough to endure without the addition of such an unenviable taunt.

Friend, let's you and me, for the sake of pleasure and the hope of profit, sit here awhile and talk about this preacher's son.

. . . . . .

Mid the undulating mist of the folded shadows of the beautiful Cumberland Mountains there once stood a rude log cabin, that cabin the birthplace of "the preacher's son."

From the piercing north thick clouds have been ascending all the day, and now as night draws near a fleecy shower begins to fall and wrap the work of man in flakes of purest white. The hoarse wind is wailing piteously, and as its howl lengthens the little cabin trembles and the waves of wind sweep on. A genial fire on the open hearth cheers the narrow hut and its anxious inmates.

Magnificent and deep the night wears on. The stars are muffled in the lowering cloud and the dim

and solitary moon, through her drowsy veil, views the dark brow of night.

Simultaneous with the crowing of the cock for midnight a robust young gentleman plants foot on this mundane sphere and gives a yell which sounds too much like business to be a picture of the imagination. Yes, another preacher's son is born, and the old village surgeon, drawing on his greatcoat, weather hat, and leggings, turns the button at the door, but hesitates to say: "I hope the young 'bishop' will do well." Then out he went into the dark night, leaving in the once lone but now cheerful cot Rev. and Mrs. Gladys with their firstborn, and Sisters Phillips and Scroggins, who just happened to "drap in" the evening before to see how everything was "caming on."

For some minutes not a word was uttered. Rev. Gladys sat in the corner, his chin resting on his clinched fists, his eyes fixed on the glowing coals, and he trying with all his might to realize that he was himself.

Presently Sister Scroggins broke the stillness by a long drawn out: "Brother Gladys, I hain't never seed a chile more exac'ly like hits paw than yourn is." To which Sister Phillips added: "Yes, hit is, only hits little nose looks like hits Uncle Timothy's pictur', and hits little eyes is like hits maw's, and hits little mouth looks like hits gran'paw's pictur'."

The reply Brother Gladys gave to each was a whispered "Yes'm."

The two good sisters, after curling their faces into many quaint and curious shapes, by gaping and stretching, tiptoed into the little shed room and lay

down to catch a morning nap. Brother Gladys scarcely observed their going, and remained motionless, still musing as the fire burned. Soon he bethought himself and lay down to dream of the sweet days when the burden of chopping stove wood would be transferred to his only son and heir.

Scarcely had they all closed their eyes till the sentinels from the neighboring farmyards began to awake the dawning day. It seemed to Brother Gladys that he had never heard so much music in a chicken's voice before. Was he dreaming? or had the chickens borrowed larks' voices with which to salute the rising sun? Our good brother only remained in this state of wonder for a minute when he heard a "M'ba, m'ba-a, m'ba-a-a," which fully awakened him and brought to his remembrance the fact that God had blessed him with a stout-lunged son.

As the first gray beams of light began to peep through the cracks in the door, Mrs. Gladys looked full into the face of her innocent darling, and pressing her lips to its cheek she wondered if it ever would be called "the meanest boy in the world," and just because its father was a preacher.

Sisters Phillips and Scroggins, on hearing Brother Gladys stirring about in the "big house," lost no time in appearing before the fire to warm and see what they could do. Sister Phillips threw some oak bark on the fire, to make coals while she ground the coffee and made the dough and prepared the oven. Sister Scroggins reached up to the wooden peg on the wall and got her carpet sack, from which she brought out bunches of catnip, horsemint and blackberry leaves, and prepared a lot of "yarb medisen"

with which to give the "preacher's son" a start to growing.

After breakfast Brother Gladys kissed his wife and baby; charged the good sisters to keep a glowing fire, even if it took every stick of wood on the place; then closed the door behind him, and with elastic step, bright heart, and cheerful face wended his way to the settlement shoe shop where he was a day laborer. (Please understand at this juncture that Brother Gladys was a local preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.)

On reaching the shop he procured the key to the old rusty padlock, which although usually troublesome to unfasten, turned at a touch. Opening the door, he walked in, kindled a blaze in the old rock fireplace, swept out, and hardly realized that he was sweeping with a pine sage broom; pulled his workbench around to the fire, and began to peg with all his might. Our young brother was indeed happy; and can we blame him? How fondly we all recall the time when our firstborn, like a radiant young star, shone into our lives and chased away all gloom. It is not strange that these sweet little things, fresh from the hand of God, should soothe weary souls and make redolent with love and joy the life of man.

CHAPTER II.

HIS PARENTS.

THE Rev. Gladys little heeded the swift-winged hours, or noticed the change of sunlight or of cloud. While thus pegging and meditating, a blustering knock on his shop door reminded him that there was somebody else in the world besides himself, his wife, and his son. Glancing toward the door, he cheerily said: "Come in."

The latch flew up and in walked a friendly-looking stranger, who introduced himself by saying: "Good morning, stranger. A man over at the sawmill told me that this is the shoe shop, and I have called to have you make a pair of traces. I am moving, and one of my sets of harness is about to give out. You see we had such hard pulling yesterday in the snow and ice, and it's no better to-day; in fact, it's getting worse and colder. Can you make the traces?"

"O yes, sir," replied Brother Gladys; "I can make anything that can be made of leather, but what time is it?"

The stranger replied: "Well, I don't exactly know; but judging from the sun when it came out a few minutes ago, it must now be at least half after nine o'clock. How long will it take you to finish my job?"

"Only a few hours, for I have one trace nearly finished, one I began the other day when I was out of shoe work. I am quite sure I can have you ready for travel by half past three o'clock."

"Well, then, shoemaker, you may go to work at it.

I'll go over to the blacksmith shop, roll my buggy under the shed, and get my horses out of this weather; then I will come back and see if I can assist you in any way, for I am anxious to get as far along as I can before the snow gets so deep that I can't travel." With these words the stranger closed the door behind him.

Almost before the latch dropped into place Brother Gladys said to himself, half audibly: "O, I do wish I could finish my work by twelve, for then I could go home and see Louise and the little man. But they will not look for me before sundown; and if the good sisters need me, they will send for me." While thus meditating he unrolled a lot of harness leather and measured the strips, which he cut out and put into the tub of water; then, adjusting the edges, he put in two or three pegs and placed the trace in the clamp ready for sewing.

By that time the traveler had returned and was invited to a seat on a box by the fire. Seating himself, he hurried one hand through the inviting blaze and threw the other up and down as though it were uncomfortably cold. Then he said: "Shoemaker, this is bad weather on a traveler, ain't it?"

Brother Gladys replied: "Yes, sir; it is pretty bad, but not much worse than it was this time last year, when I was moving here from North Alabama."

"You say you are from North Alabama?"

"Yes, sir; I was born and raised there."

"And what is your name?"

"My name is Gladys."

"Gladys, Gladys? that name sounds familiar to me. What is your given name?"

"Isaac, sir, Isaac Gladys."

"Well, Mr. Gladys, if you are related to the Gladys family I know, they went out of the family to find a name for you."

Brother Gladys, proud to meet one who had seen other people of his name, now became interested, more in the stranger than in the trace he was making. Putting on a friendly air, he asked: "And what is your name?"

"My name is Monroe, Peter Monroe. I used to live in South Carolina, and it was there I knew an old man by the name of Ansel Gladys."

"Ansel Gladys?" said Brother Gladys, bounding to his feet. "Why he was my grandfather. He moved to Cherokee County, Ala., over thirty years ago. He was a hatter by trade, you remember, and also a local Methodist preacher."

"Of course I remember him. I can almost see him now driving into Spartanburg with his little cart loaded with hats of all shapes and sizes. His children had all married off except one son, John Gladys, who was raised with me almost the same as if we had been brothers."

"Why, Brother Monroe, John Gladys is my own father."

"You don't tell me so, Mr. Gladys. Well, well, well; give me your hand; what strange things do happen in this world! Who ever thought that I'd meet up with a child of my old South Carolina playmate away up here in Tennessee? Where is John?"

"He is dead, died ten years ago, when I was only thirteen years old."

"How I wish I had kept up with my old friend

John after he left South Carolina! Poor fellow, he, and in fact all of us, had a hard time of it when we were boys. I can remember how we used to have to go without shoes, even in such weather as this, and after we were twenty years old too. We got but little schooling then, but John studied by night and at dinner time till he had considerable book learning by the time he was grown. The last thing I remember of John before he left for Alabama he was licensed to preach at the old Methodist camp meeting. Who did he marry?"

"He married Miss Mary Clayton, with whom he lived happily till the day of his death."

"Well then, he didn't marry any of the girls that moved from our old home when he did?"

"No, for some sufficient reason, of course, he wooed and won a daughter of a good old ferryman living on the Coosa River, between Gadsden, Ala., and Rome, Ga., somewhere near the present towns of Cedar Bluff and Gaylesville."

"Well, well," broke in old man Monroe, "you have no idea of the good it does me to hear of my old friend. Did he ever join the Conference?"

"No, but he did more preaching than most itinerants do at this day. I can remember when he used to be away from home a month at a time holding protracted meetings and assisting the circuit rider in his visitings. I have heard him tell of walking from Ashville to the old camp ground at Chepultepec, in Blount County, on Saturday morning and preaching at eleven o'clock on the same day."

"That's just like John. I knew him like a book. When he felt it his duty to do a thing, he called on

the Lord to help him and then went at it with his might. Let's see; John died before the war, didn't he?"

"O yes, he died three years before the war broke out; but when his country called, three of his sons were found ready to go."

"Are you the youngest child?"

"No, no, I am the middle one. I have three brothers and sisters older than myself, and as many younger. Although I was only sixteen years old when the war began, I made me a fife out of a cane joint, and marched off to Mobile, playing 'Soldier's Joy' as big as if I had been going to a corn shucking. We, my brothers and I, pulled through and got back home alive."

"Did John remain in Alabama all his life?"

"Yes; he settled a place in St. Clair County near Ashville, and lived there all his life. This was the home and farm we boys left when we went to the war, and the farm we found when we returned."

"Do you mean that the home was in bad shape when you got back?"

"Yes; it was in pretty bad shape, I assure you, but it could have been much worse. Mother and the children had managed to make a living, but had incurred a debt of about sixty dollars, and you know sixty dollars was no small sum for a poor widow to owe just after the war. I took my shoe tools in a little bag and walked up into Georgia—about a hundred miles—and found work for six months. With my wages I paid off mother's indebtedness and bought me several yards of Kentucky jeans."

"Ah!" interrupted Mr. Monroe; "you mean that you were fixing to get married."

"You are a good guesser, Brother Monroe. I came back home and got married that same fall, and like my father, I was licensed to preach just a short time before I married."

Mr. Monroe chuckled to himself and said: "Just what I always thought: the Gladys people are born to preach—the men are. Who did you marry?"

"I married Louise Atkins, daughter of Rev. Enoch Atkins, a local Methodist preacher who lived near us."

"The idea. Let's see; you a preacher's son, a preacher's grandson, a preacher's son-in-law, and married to a preacher's daughter."

Brother Gladys had been half crazy to tell about it, so, seeing the opportunity, he broke out in a hearty: "Yes, and the father of a preacher's son."

"That beats the world," said Mr. Monroe. "If 'a preacher's son is the meanest boy in the world,' what is to become of your child? Let's see; he is the great-grandson of a preacher, the grandson of two preachers and two preachers' wives, the son of a preacher and—but that's enough. I'll wager these traces that your boy will be hung for murder before he is twenty-one, or else he will make one of the finest preachers that ever lined a hymn. How old is he?"

Brother Gladys, as if to count the beatings of his own heart, hesitated, then replied: "He is now just about fourteen hours, three minutes, nine and a quarter seconds old."

He amused the old man, who replied: "Allow me

to congratulate you, my young brother. May the Lord bless you and your wife and your baby! and may you be spared, and guided by Divine Wisdom in the training of your boy, that he may grow up to be a useful man and a zealous Christian!" When Mr. Monroe had made an end of talking, he picked up the finished traces and, eying them with a marked degree of satisfaction, inquired: "How much do I owe you?"

"Pshaw! don't insult me by asking me what I charge for the only little favor I may ever be able to do for the only man I have seen in five years that ever knew another Gladys. Take the traces as a gift, and anything else you see in this shop that you need, take it too."

"No, I thank you; I can't afford to rob a man just because I have known his father, but I must now be off."

CHAPTER III.

"YOU JUST MUST SEE OUR BABY."

"WHAT? can't you go home with me and stay awhile with us?"

"I wish it was so I could, but a part of the wagons went by the way of Nashville to get a supply of provisions, and I am to meet them in Murfreesboro next Friday evening. It is now Tuesday evening, and the roads are so bad, I guess I had better be going."

"O Mr. Monroe, you just must see that boy of mine. He is the finest-looking Gladys that ever lived. Where are you moving to, anyway?"

"I am moving to Gunter's Landing, about halfway between Florence and Chattanooga, on the Tennessee River. I was down there last year, and I think it is the prettiest country I ever saw. I am going down there to settle and spend the rest of my days. You see I am already fifty-five years old, and it's time for me to quit this running about. But I must be going. Good-bye, my dear boy. May God bless you and yours, and spare you for many years, that you may be useful in winning lost souls unto his kingdom!"

Brother Gladys, with tears in his eyes, and something that seemed choking him, only said: "Good-bye, and God bless you!"

Long and firm was that farewell grasp. Mr. Monroe hurried to the shed to put his horses to the wagon, while Brother Gladys began to arrange things in the shop preparatory to going home; for, although it was only three o'clock in the afternoon, he felt that

he could not live another hour without going to see Louise and the "Bishop." Swinging across his arm his dinner bucket and a pair of shoes he had half-soled for Sister Scroggins's son Bobby, he pulled the chain through the auger hole, put the padlock in place, and was just fixing to turn the key when he heard the rattling of wagon wheels, and, turning, he saw Mr. Monroe start off down the road. They spoke a few words as Mr. Monroe hurried along. The last good-bye was said. Brother Gladys stood with his hand on the unturned key and watched the old traveler disappear, as though some inexplainable something had gone forever out of his life.

Starting at the fresh recollection of the young "Bishop," he turned the key in the lock and began to measure paces on the mile and a half to his humble habitation. The snow had abated, and the north wind was howling and moaning amid the bending branches of the forest. Timid rabbits, chattering snowbirds, and frosty-beaked quails were startled by his footfall; but they did not attract his attention, for he was bent on something beyond. Reaching the summit of the last ridge, he looked down the long, frozen path to his "sweet, sweet home." He saw the smoke curling and wreathing from the stick and dirt chimney; he heard the lazy bark of his faithful watchdog, and realized that he was nearly home. But it did seem to him that his legs were never so short before. Jerking his hands from his pockets, he struck off down the hill in a sweeping trot, jumped over the little rail fence, and in a few seconds pulled the string to his cabin door, which flew open as if to grant him entrance. "Louise, how are you?"

"Don't talk so loud, Mr. Gladys; you'll wake the baby," were the words that came from the half-hidden, luscious lips of the fair young mother. Then turning her face toward him and pettishly presenting her lips for a kiss, she continued: "I am getting along first-rate. I had an idea that you would come back to me sooner. What has kept you so long?"

"Why, Louise, I have been making a pair of traces for a traveler who used to know my father when they were boys together; he told me all about—but where is the baby?"

"O, he is over here under the cover, fast asleep."

"What? my baby covered up head and ears? You'll smother him to death. Let me have him awhile." So saying, Brother Gladys took hold of the cover and started to raise it, when old Sister Scroggins jumped from her chair, seized him by the arm, and exclaimed: "You, Isaac Gladys, don't you lay the weight of your han' on that chile. You don't know nothin' about nussin' younguns. You'd break hits little back afore you could git hit outen the bed."

Brother Gladys, with much reluctance, left the bedside, took a seat by the fire, and related the incident of the day. Somehow the fireplace failed to throw out heat to suit Brother Gladys, so he stepped out in the yard, picked up an old tin pan, and returned to take up the ashes; but just as he took hold of the shovel Sister Scroggins had him by the arm again, and looking him "square in the face," she said: "What? Brother Gladys, air ye fixin' to take up them ashes? Don't you know hits the worst luck in the world to take up the ashes before a baby air three weeks old?"

That was something new to the young preacher, but he soon found it his province to obey. He pitched the pan out into the yard, took a seat and acted as a silent observer till he learned what he *might* and *might not* do.

Sister Scroggins was very restless. After awhile she remarked: "Miss Gladys, hain't Miss Phillips a long time a-gittin' back with that 'ere sage and life everlastin'? Ef she don't git here dreckly, Brother Gladys must go arter the yerbs hisself, for you air compelled and obleeged to have some tea made outen them this very night."

While they were thus talking Sister Phillips returned, made the tea, and administered it. The baby woke and uttered a few shrill notes which charmed Brother Gladys's ears. Supper was soon over; then they knelt around the family altar for a word of prayer, after which they all went to bed, for they were tired and sleepy. Sister Gladys slept peacefully and quietly, like a Christian woman. The little "bishop" grunted and whined occasionally. Brother Gladys undertook to snore several times, but, remembering that he might wake the baby, controlled his nose with scarcely an effort. But in that shed room Sisters Phillips and Scroggins, especially Scroggins, slept like cold-blooded demons. Such snoring has scarcely been heard in these latter days.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TIME APPOINTED FOR NAMING HIM.

"LET'S see, Louise; the baby is three weeks old to-day, is he not?"

"It seems to me that you ought to know, Mr. Gladys. What have you done with that piece of paper on which you were marking off the days since he was born?"

"I think I left it at the shop; the last time I remember seeing it was when I was telling Brother Dodson the baby's age. And I came near forgetting to tell you that Brother Dodson and Sister Dodson, and Brother and Sister Driskill will come over to-night to sit till bedtime. I told them we hadn't named the baby yet, and I think they want to help us decide on a name. You know they have the reputation of having named or helped to name every baby in this part of Tennessee for the last twenty years."

"I am glad they are coming, and I am anxious for us to decide on a name, for I am tired of hearing people call my baby 'Dewdrop,' 'Honeycomb,' 'Dirt Dobber,' 'Toad Frog,' 'Young Gladys,' and the like. I want us to name him and then call him by his right name, for I am sick and tired of nicknames," replied Mrs. Gladys.

"Well, Louise, if we name him to-night, I must let Sister Scroggins know about it, for she would have a duck fit if she couldn't be here. I don't suppose Sister Phillips would have anything to say about it,

hence I will not try to send word to her; it is too far over there anyway."

"Yes, Mr. Gladys, Sister Scroggins must get the word if you have to take it yourself, for she said the other day that she had a name for him, but wouldn't mention it till the proper time. I think I heard her call the baby 'Ezra Washington' when she was dressing him. It may be that that name is the one she has 'fixed up' for him, but gracious knows I don't want any such name as that. What do you think about it?"

"Louise, I hardly know what to say, for I have had a name in my mind for him ever since he drew his first breath."

"What is your name for him, Mr. Gladys?"

"You know, Louise, I am a great hand to want to preserve family names, and I think it would be nice to call him 'John Enoch,' after your father and mine. What do you think about it?"

"I think it is a very pretty name, but I have been thinking of calling him Isaac for you, and then adding something for a middle name. But we can talk this over to-night. You had better watch the road for some one passing, and send Sister Scroggins word."

Before she had finished her remark they heard some one coming down the hill, whistling. On looking out they found it to be Sister Scroggins's son Bobby, who was returning from an all-day rabbit hunt. They sent the message to his mother, and Brother Gladys proceeded to get in wood for the night and pine knots to make a light.

As soon as supper was over Brother Gladys pushed the table back against the wall, dusted the

the ashes off of the oven lid, placed it on the oven and put it back out of the way; then, accommodating his height to the length of the broom, he bent about sweeping behind the doors and under the beds, and in every nook and corner where it was possible to find trash. When he had finished, his face glowed with pride, for he thought everything was as nice as if Louise had arranged it.

Sister Gladys was somewhat amused, but she thought her husband really had a right to be proud of his superior housekeeping qualities.

"Mr. Gladys, please move my chair a little back from the fire. You will drive me to the wall with such a log heap as that if you don't mind."

"O, well, Louise, there is plenty of wood, and I don't mind getting it, so let's have a good fire. You know Brother Driskill's fireplace is eight feet wide, and they sometimes burn half a wagonload of wood at one fire. We just must have a good fire, so as to make them all feel at home."

"But, Mr. Gladys, had you thought of where they are to sit?" I could go to bed and let one of them have my chair, but I'd rather sit up."

"That's so, Louise; I hadn't thought of that. Let me see. I can sit on the side of the bed, you can keep that chair, and Sister Dodson and Sister Driskill can have the other two chairs. Sister Scroggins can sit on our trunk, and Brother Dodson can sit on the end of the old shoe bench in the shed room. I can pull it in here and turn the end to the fire, so that it will not take up so much room. Brother Driskill—where in the world can he sit? O yes; I can take the dishes out of that box, and he can sit on it. If Bob-

by Scroggins comes, he can sit on the wood there in the corner." Then, drawing a breath of relief, Brother Gladys added: "And the *little man* can occupy all of the bed that he wants."

When Brother Gladys had emptied the box safe, placed the trunk nearer the fire, brought in the shoe bench and made the other necessary arrangements, he took a seat to rest and think a minute. Presently there was a slight movement of the cover on the bed, and a pair of baby lungs began to scatter sweetness on the evening air. Brother Gladys had scarcely had time to hand the baby to its mother when he heard the crowd in the yard, and before the baby hushed they were all in the house.

CHAPTER V.

HE IS NAMED.

AFTER a few "How d'y's" and inquiries concerning the health of the neighborhood, and observations concerning the weather, they all "took seats." But they didn't sit as Brother Gladys had intended they should, for Sister Scroggins dropped down on the old workbench with such force that the leather straps broke, and had it not been for her size, she would have gone through to the floor. Some one brought in a pine board and placed it across the bench, Brother Driskill exchanged seats with Sister Scroggins, and after a hearty laugh they all began to converse on the subject of baby. All except Bobby, who sat with his mouth wide open, as if he had never been anywhere before.

One can scarcely imagine a more quaint or peculiar picture than that crowd presented. The room was walled on the inside with the same logs that were on the outside. The house was seven logs high; the logs were large, hewn poplar logs. The partition between the big house and the shed room was made of rough edged lumber. The doorway into the shed room was closed by means of a quilt hung across from the top. The only window to the house was at the back and about halfway up the wall. The middle log had had two feet cut from it and the opening was closed by a board shutter on leather hinges, and fastened on the inside with a string. The only ceiling over-

head was a few stray planks scattered about on the top of the joists.

The landlord, who sat on the bedside, was a good-looking young fellow, about twenty-three years old. There was not the slightest intimation of a mustache or beard, and from his sky-blue eyes, which were by no means shaded by the thin, black suit of hair, a few strands of which projected over his broad forehead, there came a look of righteous anxiety and temporary bliss.

Mrs. Gladys was a sweet little woman. Her face, exquisite at all times, that evening, in the bright glow of the firelight, looked as lovely as the petals of a pale, pure lily. Her bluish-gray eyes sparkled with pride as she looked into the face of her first-born and realized the depths of a mother's love.

The "preacher's son," who lacked four hours of being three weeks old, was a plump little being with a round red face, with a nose that looked as if it had no bone or gristle to support it, and with watery little specks for eyes, which had not up to that time assumed any definite color.

Bobby Scroggins, who sat on the pile of wood in the corner, was a great, green, gawky youngster, with no describable feature except his mouth, which on that night hung lazily open as if assisting his ears.

Sister Scroggins was a dumpy, middle-aged woman, whose weight, including features, was about two hundred pounds. Mr. and Mrs. Dodson were a well-matched pair of quiet, inoffensive, unassuming beings. They had lived together "nigh onto forty year" and had never had a cross word.

Mr. Driskill was a long, lean, lank, jovial fellow,

with long gray beard, bald head, and very large feet. Mrs. Driskill was a nervous, wrinkled-faced, black-headed little woman, who was in the height of her glory when she had the opportunity of naming a baby, and she took special delight in naming preachers' children.

Reader, I have painted this pen portrait of the crowd who took part in the naming of our preacher's son, so that you may rejoice if the little creature got off with anything like a reasonably decent name.

"Let me take the baby awhile, Sister Gladys," said Mrs. Dodson, rising from her chair and extending her arms.

"Here he is," replied Mrs. Gladys, tucking a shawl around him and handing him to Mrs. Dodson, "but I fear he will weary you, for he feels like he would weigh twenty pounds."

"What a pretty baby!" exclaimed Mrs. Dodson as she took him in her arms.

"Yes, Sister Dodson," said Mrs. Driskill, smiling, "I think it is the sweetest baby I ever saw, not a-countin' my little Jane, who died, you know, before she was a month old."

The men had all the time been talking about some appointment which they wanted Brother Gladys to fill once a month, but the ladies made so much noise over the baby that the men hushed. Mr. Driskill turned around, and, looking at the little fellow, laughingly remarked: "There is one thing certain about that child: he is too good-looking to ever be a Methodist preacher; don't you think so, Brother Dodson?"

Mr. Dodson, for fear of offending the parents,

made some remark concerning a tolerably handsome preacher he saw once upon a time.

Old Sister Scroggins decided that it had come her turn to comment on the baby's appearance, so she squinted one eye and looked toward the top of the house as if trying to remember something, and remarked: "As well as I kin ermember, that ar baby looks jist like my Bobby thar did when he war a youngun."

A cold chill ran over Sister Gladys, but she quickly called to mind the fact that every mother thinks her child the prettiest in the world, so she appreciated Sister Scroggins's meaning, while the others bit their lips at the thought of her words.

Brother Gladys didn't feel like laughing or biting his lips, but he forced a smile, while to himself he thought: "What an old goose Sister Scroggins can be sometimes."

Bobby made no remark, but at the sound of his name started up, gathered his lips together after the fashion of a nut cracker, looked wise, and returned to his normal position.

"Have you named him yet?" asked Mrs. Dodson, opening her eyes very wide and looking at Sister Gladys.

"No, we have not fully decided what we shall call him, but we want to decide to-night."

"I'll tell you what let's all do," said old Sister Scroggins, as she gave her corpulent nose a significant sniff. "Let's all say a name, and when the baby smiles that will be the name for him, because it pleases him."

Sister Gladys, much amused at the idea, hid her

laughter and said: "Very well; that will be a good plan."

They all turned their attention to the baby's facial gymnastics and began to call over names. Mr. Dodson led off with "Andrew Jackson," but the baby continued to look crabbed.

Mr. Driskill followed with "James K. Polk," but there was no change in the baby's countenance.

Mrs. Dodson tried "George Washington," but at that the baby squirmed and grunted as if its little stomach were contorted with numerous diabolical cramps and pains. They all stopped a minute to laugh and to give Brother Gladys time to explain his son's ignorance of the greatness and worth of George Washington.

Sister Driskill almost punched the baby's throat as she put her tickling finger under his chin and said: "Capers Green McFerrin." At the sound of that combination the baby opened his eyes very wide and had the appearance of being exceedingly happy. His every feature assumed just such a position that one would have known he was, by instinct, a Methodist.

After much restlessness on the part of Sister Scroggins, and much deliberation on the part of the others, they decided that while the child was certainly pleased, there was room on his little face for a broader smile.

Brother Gladys took his turn. He looked into the very soul of his boy, and imagined that he could see much "bishop timber" already beginning to develop. He so much wanted to name his baby for some of the bishops, but the thought of continuing the family name caused him to say "John Enoch." Sister

Scroggins, without giving the baby time to smile or think, blurted out: "An whar do you git them names frum?"

"'John' is for my father, and 'Enoch' is for Louise's father."

"Air they both a-livin'?"

"Louise's father is living, but mine died ten years ago."

"Well, I wouldn't begin to think of namin' him arter any dead folks, fur hits the worst kind er luck. But the Enoch part will do very well, fur it'll be fur the Bible man and fur his maw's paw."

Sister Gladys could hardly suppress an outright laugh, but by some means she assumed that innocent look so common to a preacher's wife when she is amused and don't want anybody else to know it. At last her turn came. She sought to bewitch the baby with the same sweet, fascinating smile that had subdued the Rev. Gladys a couple of years before. In her sweetest tones she pronounced the names, "Isaac Fitzgerald." I verily believe that baby would have smiled then and there had it not been for old Sister Scroggins, who, realizing that her time had at last rolled around, poked her great, fleshy nose right against the baby's cheek and said: "B'ess him 'ittle bones, 'John Wesley Purinton Ezra Washington Jones.'"

Brother Gladys was determined that his baby should not smile at such a roll call as that. He threw several fresh splinters on the coals, and the flashing of the sudden blaze caused the baby to grunt and moan and whine.

Sister Scroggins, anxious that Bobby should try

his hand, said: "Bobby, sonny, you call a name, too, honey." But just as she mentioned Bobby's name that baby, only three weeks old, smiled a great, big, healthy smile that sent a thrill of horror to Sister Gladys's heart.

"There, there, b'ess him 'ittle bones, him wants to be named for my Bobby," said Bobby's mother; but Bobby only looked up and said: "He! he! he!"

Brother Gladys decided that enough of a thing was enough, so he said: "Brethren and sisters, let's quit this foolishness and decide on a name. As his grandfather Atkins is living, I think it would be a source of great pleasure to him to have us name the baby for him."

"Yes," replied Sister Gladys, "I know papa would be delighted, and, besides, I like the name 'Enoch' better than any of those long names that can be so grievously abbreviated. I further suggest that we add "McKendree."

Sister Scroggins looked morose, Bobby was nodding. All the others agreed that the name was both suitable and pretty.

"'I think," said Brother Gladys, "that 'Enoch McKendree Gladys' is the very name that the good Lord intended for this baby."

"And I think," sneeringly replied Sister Scroggins, "that that er youngun'll scratch a poor man's head as long as he lives, for I never knowed it to fail whar a man's unitials didn't spell nothin'."

Now, let's draw a long, easy breath, for our preacher's son, be he a pretty child or otherwise, has a good name, and one preëminently decent and euphonious.

May the life of Enoch McKendree Gladys, whose life's history is to fill these pages, be as full of grace as was that Enoch of old, who walked with God and was not, for God took him! and may his life be as full of good works as was that Moses of Methodism, the great McKendree!

CHAPTER VI.

HIS FIRST ILLNESS.

SINCE the events recorded in the last chapter, five light-winged weeks had flown.

Brother and Sister Gladys had never experienced so much sunshine in their lives before. The two months after their baby brought into their lives joy and hope and smiles of transport seemed to them as time spent entertaining an angel. Poor young creatures, they did not realize that trembling, fears, and sorrows must sit in the parent's heart, side by side with joy and hope. They did not realize that cheeks even when gay with smiles are sometimes dashed with tears.

After two months of remarkable health and growth the baby suddenly became quite ill. None but a parent's heart, which has been in the same fire, can sympathize with young parents or form any conception of their anxiety.

They feared the worst, but their fear was of the virtuous kind which leads to hope and relying on God.

The panting infant on its mother's breast rolled its little eyes backward and showed unmistakable signs of great agony. The poor heartbroken father—his anxiety could not have been greater than the mother's—but I seem to see him yet as he bends over the babe, his eyes reading every expression of the little face and gazing as the moon gazes on the water.

Reader, have you never watched the suffering of a little child, an infant, perhaps your own, and felt that pang that makes one sick?

"Mr. Gladys, what must we do? He seems to get worse and worse."

"I don't know, Louise. We have done all we know how to do. Let us offer another prayer to God." With these words Brother Gladys knelt by his wife's chair, placed one hand on his baby and the other on his wife's shoulder, and if ever two mortals pleaded before a throne of grace they did, then and there. They didn't ask the Lord to go contrary to his will and heal the child, but they prayed the will of God to be done. They had made up their minds to welcome any trial or disaster that would draw them nearer to God. They had God in their hearts.

Surely the throne of God with all it blest inhabitants was charmed with that sweet, simple prayer: "Father, thy will, not ours be done. 'O that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!'"

Those parents knew that God had blessed them, and they were beginning to realize that a thread of sorrow is woven into the life of every being.

Parents, have you not, at some time, when you were wrestling with God to restore your infant to health, stopped short a minute as something put it into your mind that possibly that child would grow up in sin? How reasonable and just and right for us to say: "Lord, teach us how to pray!"

After a few days of great suffering a marked improvement in the baby's condition was noticed. Unutterable joy filled the parent's hearts. Tears of

gratitude pronounced their feelings. Pleasures are more exquisite if they follow pain. Although they felt that God had heard their prayers, they believed that God helps those who help themselves; and for fear the child might grow worse, they sent for the old physician. They would have had him sooner, but when they sent for medicine he was off on a long trip to some patient who was dangerously ill, and besides, it was twenty miles from Brother Gladys's cottage door to the doctor's home.

When the doctor arrived, he found the baby still improving. After speaking to Brother and Sister Gladys he put his big, rough hand on the baby's head and said: "Hello, Bishop; don't you remember me?" Then turning to Brother Gladys he asked: "What have you done for him?"

"We did all we could for him; but if it hadn't been for our prayers and the kindness of our neighbors, I believe he would have been dead."

"I'm glad, my young brother," said the doctor, "that you have learned to administer the best dose that ever was given, and the chiefest thing that man can offer to God. I never measure a dose of medicine that I don't ask God's blessings upon it, and I always pray with and for my patients."

Would to God that every doctor could say as much!

In the course of two weeks from the time the baby was taken sick, he was quite himself again; but there was something in Brother Gladys's heart that he had not dared even to tell the companion of his bosom.

He had for three years been a local preacher, and all along, in his quiet moods, he felt it his duty to join the Conference and go regularly into the work

of the ministry. But somehow he had tried to keep out of the work and to dismiss the thought from his mind. Like thousands of his fellow-men, every wave of trouble carried his mind to the all-absorbing theme he had tried to forget. He felt that possibly the baby's illness was merely a warning sent from God, and that he had better quit his trade and follow his calling. Sunshine in his home again, he straightway forgot his sorrow, and tried to forget his warning. Like Pharaoh, his heart hardened when his troubles passed.

How many thousands have walked in the same path, convicted of duty but trying to shun its conduct! Yes, I dare say that many of the best preachers the world ever saw tried either to get out of the line of duty or else the devil tried to make them think they were mistaken in their calling. It seems strange that men will not understand that the soundest reason, the highest obligation for performing a duty is implied by the conviction of it. The trouble with them is: their conviction (if such a thing is possible without conduct) is worthless because it is not converted into conduct. If a man would be happy, he must consult duty, not events. He must reach the point where he can see everything perish that interferes with duty.

But let us turn our attention again to the baby and see how he is getting along.

Seven months old, the picture of health and hardihood. From the beginning of this chapter to the present record the child's health had been exceedingly good, with the exception of a spell of "thrushes," as Sister Scroggins called it. I must tell you the

antidotes proposed for that child. One afternoon Brother Gladys came from the shop and found Enoch exceedingly cross, and Sister Gladys quite worn out, for the little fellow had suffered half of the day.

"Mr. Gladys, there is something the matter with Enoch, and I can't do a thing for him. You run over to Sister Scroggins's and tell Bobby to go after Sister Phillips."

"Very well," replied Brother Gladys, trembling at the remembrance of his warning. Away he went as fast as his feet could carry him. Reaching the fence in front of Mrs. Scroggins's house, he called out: "Halloo!"

He heard a shuffling of chairs or boxes and at the same time a broom gliding over the floor and Sister Scroggins calling out: "You Bobby, git up from that ar table—don't kill yourself a-eaten—and go to the door, for somebody is jest hollerin' out thar. I guess hits somebody wantin' to stay all night, like as ef we kep' a inn."

Bobby obeyed the command, opened the door, and peering through the twilight, asked: "Who air ye?"

Sister Scroggins, although she had made Bobby open the door, stood just behind him and peeped over his shoulder. Without giving Brother Gladys time to tell Bobby his name, she blurted out: "Why, Bobby, hits Brother Gladys. Come in, Brother Gladys. Hit seems like I cain't teach Bobby how to talk; he is forever an' eternally a-puttin' hisself in the door, an' a-axin' "Who air ye?" afore I git time to say nothin'."

Brother Gladys thanked her, explained his mission, and told her he must hurry back.

Sister Scroggins sent Bobby over to Sister Phillips's at once, then covering the coals to keep fire till her return, she accompanied Brother Gladys to his home. Before they reached his yard they heard the baby crying. Sister Scroggins said: "Brother Gladys, that ar brat is got the thrushes, fur I can tell by how he cries."

On entering the room they found the child suffering intensely. Sister Scroggins looked in his mouth and said: "That's what's the matter; he's got the thrushes, but they hain't nothin' a tall to kyore." Then turning to Brother Gladys she said: "You go out in the yard a minute."

When Brother Gladys was fairly into the yard, Sister Scroggins put her mouth close to Sister Gladys's ear and whispered: "You git nine wood lice and wrap um up in a checkerdy cloth, an' tie um aroun' the chile's neck, an' he'll soon be soun' and well, providen you don't say nothin' about it; fur if you do, hit won't do no good a tall."

Brother Gladys was allowed to come into the house, and at the same time Bobby came with Mrs. Phillips, and along with them came Mrs. Dodson, who just happened to be over at Sister Phillips's.

Mrs. Dodson, whose remedy was not a secret one, spoke out, "If you will get Brother Driskill to blow his breath in that baby's mouth, he will get well sure;" and she earnestly continued, "for he has been known to cure a hundred children right around here."

While the others were talking Sister Phillips procured a few sage leaves, made a tea of it, and after sprinkling a little alum in it, washed the baby's mouth.

Bobby, for once in his life, got up enough courage to remark: "I hearn ole Squire Parsons say tother day that his chillun was allus kyored of them thar thrushes by a-gittin' of a Irish tater an' a-grittin' hit an' a-sprinklin' hit over the fire."

Sister Scroggins gave her boy a harsh, reproving look, and said: "That's jist like Bobby. He kin bleave the most outlandishest things in the world."

The alum and sage tea worked like a charm. A pleasant evening was spent. They told war stories, talked about ghosts, witches, haunted houses, and the like, and brought the pleasant evening to a close by listening to a tune on Brother Gladys's army fife, and bowing around the humble fireside for a word of prayer.

CHAPTER VII.

FATHER'S VICTORY AND GRANDDADDY'S BOY.

IT was not very long before Brother Gladys had another warning. The shop in which he was a laborer burned, and with it all his tools except a few he had carried home to repair. He had reached the point where he could do nothing but think, and with every meditation the sense of undone duty grew upon him.

The devil seemed to say to Brother Gladys: "Ha! if the Lord had wanted you to go to preaching, he would have allowed every one of your tools burned, my good, noble friend. Don't you think so?"

Now, isn't it a characteristic of the devil to make a gigantic hallucination out of nothing? I'm proud to tell you that this temptation only served to bring the remnant of doubt out of Brother Gladys's heart. He had already reasoned and prayed over the matter till the devil couldn't induce him to approach near enough to the forbidden fruit to even look at it. He saw the devil's trap, but refused his bait.

Brother Gladys went to a little shelf, got the Bible, and turning to St. Matthew, read: "Jesus saith unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Sister Gladys saw the brave tears stealing in large

silent drops to her husband's eyes; and feeling that she knew the cause, she half regretted to kiss them dry. Turning her eloquent face to him, she inquired: "Mr. Gladys, what is the matter?"

That inquiry was enough. Dropping upon his knees by the side of her chair, he said, half weeping and half laughing: "Louise, the conflict is ended. I have fought against it, but I am overcome."

Sister Gladys was happy to know that the great burden had been lifted from her dear husband's shoulders, but she could not speak. Her language was too big for words. There, with their hearts and their lives laid upon the altar, they seemed to catch a glimpse of heaven through their mingling, falling tears.

> And there for good, they raised the supplicated voice,
> But left to Heaven the measure and the choice.

Henceforth, dear reader, you will find Brother Gladys in the path of duty. He will, of course, have trials and temptations; but to all of these he will say: "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Up to that time Brother Gladys had been trying to excuse himself from the ministry on the ground of his ignorance. Poor man, for three years he had been obliged to study his hymns, as a schoolboy studies his speech, in order that he might be able to read them from the pulpit. Right then he said: "If the Lord wants me to preach, he will help me to get an education, even yet."

He went to work chopping cord wood by day, and studying by noon and night. He kept that up for some time, till Enoch was one year old. Then came the greatest trouble that had ever crossed the lives of

Brother and Sister Gladys. Little Enoch, fat and cheerful, began to lose flesh, and grew pale and thin and fretful. The downgrade in his health continued till, finally, physicians and friends advised them to move to some other place; not because they thought West Tennessee unhealthy, but because they thought the change would save the baby's life.

At once the time of moving and the place to which they would move was decided upon, and in two days they were ready to start on their journey. Just at daybreak a covered wagon with two mules hitched to it stood in front of the cabin. The bed and the trunk and the box of provisions were placed in the back of the wagon. In the front end two chairs were placed, one for Sister Gladys and one for the driver. It was not long till the careworn mother emerged from the cabin door. Following her was Sister Phillips, with Enoch, little more than a skeleton, wrapped snugly in a quilt.

Quite a number of the neighbors had collected to bid them farewell. Sister Gladys climbed into the wagon, Sister Phillips handed the baby to her, and they all said good-bye. The driver caught up the reins, clucked to the mules, and the wagon began to move off up the hill. Brother Gladys and Mr. Driskill were to take it turn about with Mr. Dodson, driving and walking.

Sister Gladys gave one long, lingering glance of sadness at the birthplace of her darling as they turned to descend the hill on the other side. Somehow she felt that she would never see that place again, and she was afraid that Enoch would die before they could possibly reach their journey's end.

The good people who had collected to see them off turned toward their homes, each one murmuring sadly: "Poor young people, how sad it will be for them to have to stop on a strange road and bury their only child."

The journey lasted twelve days. At night they camped near some little stream. Enoch and his mother slept in the wagon; the three men slept on quilts spread around the camp fire. Several times Brother Gladys was aroused from sleep by the cries of Sister Gladys, who would be calling him: "Come quick; I believe the baby is dying."

In the providence of God the little fellow lingered. A few months before this would have been considered a warning by Brother Gladys, but he said: "Father, thy will, not mine, be done. Henceforth we will serve thee, though it should cost us our lives."

I need not go into the details of the journey, but I must tell you that one dark night the travelers came to the bank of the Tennessee River. They had not put up to camp at the usual hour, because Enoch was worse and they wanted to reach the other side of the river, where they had been told a doctor lived. It was a very dark night, and the men hallooed themselves almost hoarse, but could get no reply from the boatman, and the boat was on the opposite side of the river from them. What was to be done?

Kind reader, that father did no more for his child than your father would have done for you. Looking across the angry, rolling, muddy billows, the young father parleyed not with fear nor danger, but plunged in, his heart full of prayer and hope.

Think of the terrible agony endured by that wife

and mother during those few minutes. She listened for the stroke of that arm she loved so well, then she would listen to see if her baby was yet breathing. She knew not but that a dying babe lay in her arms and a drowning husband before her blinded eyes. Brother Gladys secured the boat and very soon returned with it. They crossed over and in a few minutes reached the home of a kind old physician, who administered to the sick child. The dawning of the following morning found them resuming their tiresome journey.

In the course of a few days they reached a blacksmith shop and stopped to have the mules shod. There was nothing remarkable about the shop or about the travelers' stopping there; but it is remarkable that where that old shop stood, in that washed field, now stands the lovely city of Birmingham, Ala., the pride of the South, the goodly Queen of Dixie. And the sick baby that lay there in his mother's arms is not yet thirty years old. When the journey came to an end, the travelers found themselves in front of a cottage in the town of Gadsden, Ala. It was the residence of the Rev. Enoch Atkins.

The whole family rushed out to welcome their loved ones home again. The grandfather took poor little Enoch, his namesake, into his arms and looking into his sunken eyes, he said: "Never mind, my baby; you are granddaddy's boy now."

The change saved the child's life. In two months his grandfather said: "My boy is the fattest boy in Etowah County."

CHAPTER VIII.

CRYING TO JOIN THE CONFERENCE.

Thou little child,
Thy mother's joy, thy father's hope—thou bright,
Pure dwelling, where two fond hearts keep their gladness—
Thou little potentate of love. —*Dobell.*

TWO years from the close of the last chapter we find Enoch jabbering to a little sister. During those two years Brother Gladys worked and studied at the shoe shop, and worked and studied at home. Lying on a shelf at the side of his Bible were a number of homemade sermons in homemade books.

Toward the close of the year a Conference was organized in the town of Gadsden. Brother Gladys gave up his job in the shop and prepared to join the Conference. Enoch heard his parents talking about joining the Conference, but he couldn't quite understand what they meant. After listening attentively for some time, he asked: "Papa, what do vat mean?"

Brother Gladys explained to his boy that he was going to give his life to the Lord.

Enoch, young as he was, had clearer conceptions of religion than of anything else. I don't mean to say that he understood the articles of faith; I mean he felt the workings of the Spirit in his little heart as did the beloved disciple in his infancy.

The little boy's earnest, joyous, sparkling eyes, full of hope and curiosity, met his father's, and, hesitating as if gathering force for his words, he asked: "Papa, may me doin de Tonference too?"

"After awhile, Enoch," said Brother Gladys, smiling. Then he thought to himself: "Would that I had possessed the faith of my child. No wonder the Master admonishes us to become as little children. I wonder if Enoch's childhood shows the man as morning shows the day?"

The session of Conference passed off pleasantly. Brother Gladys was assigned to the "Slab Rock Mission."

The morning came for the itinerant and his family to leave for their work. Enoch's little sister, Fannie, was unusually fretful that morning, and while she was crying Enoch toddled up to his mother's knee where the babe was lying, and, shaking his first in its face, he said: "Now, tister, you mus' hus' right up, for us belongs to de Tonference."

Of course grandfather Atkins and family came over to see them off. It is quite possible that in the confusion Enoch got his idea of heaven confounded with the itinerancy, for when he told his grandfather good-bye, he said: "Dranpa, us is a-doin to heaben; you mus' tum to see us." I suppose the little fellow remembered having heard his father say he was going to give himself to the Lord, and in his childish simplicity he did not see how that could be without going to heaven.

You know, kind reader, there are some people who think preachers are a miserable set of men, living on charity and wishing they had not been called to preach. What a mistake! There is no class of men on earth with more of heaven in their lives than meek, submissive ministers of the gospel. Pain, poverty, and sorrow may get hold upon them, but

there is a kind of halo about their lives which shouts in unmistakable words: "It is heaven upon earth to do my Master's will."

After two days of weary travel Rev. Gladys and family reached the home of Brother Roe, the leading steward on the "Slab Rock Mission." The people had promised to have a house ready for the preacher, but for some reason they had not kept their word. Rev. Gladys took his family to an old log house that had once been used for a dwelling, but for several years had served the purpose of cotton and fodder house. There they camped till Brother Gladys and a few of the brethren built a cottage. Brother Gladys himself put the last row of sticks and dirt on the chimney, on the morning of the twenty-fourth of December, and moved his family that afternoon.

Some years ago I remember hearing my mother read an article from the *Alabama Advocate*. It was a letter from some preacher who had just arrived at his new work. He said: "We have reached our home. We found the parsonage floor covered with, the table laden with, and the barn full of that blessed gift from God—pure air."

How different it was with Brother Gladys! He found nothing but pure air, no floor for it to cover, no table to support it, and no barn to contain it. The good brethren of the distant churches on the mission had not been able to assist in the building of the house, but they had collected a wagonload of good things to bring to the preacher on Christmas Day.

Enoch heard his father talking about Brother Roe, Brother Banks, Brother Dale, and other stew-

ards, so one day while his father was away from home he looked up from the pen he had been making of cobs, and asked: "Mamma, what is 'tewards?"

Sister Gladys explained to him that they are men appointed to administer to the wants of those who are devoting their whole time to the service of God. Now Brother Gladys was Enoch's ideal of God, and he had learned that angels are ever with God. When he saw the stewards drive up to the yard with the wagonload of provisions, he ran into the house exclaiming: "Mamma, de angels have tum."

Bless his little heart, although he was mistaken in the personages, there was much sound sense in his prattle. Angels might covet the pleasure of going on a zealous steward's errand. Stewards cannot know the joy they often leave in the hearts of suffering children and mothers. And yet how careless some of them are! "What will the recompense be?" Would to God that all the stewards of the universe could feel in their hearts what little Enoch felt when he called them angels! "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. iv. 2.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE PREACHER'S SON BEATS THE PRESIDING ELDER EATING CHICKEN.

IN due course of time the first quarterly meeting was at hand. Brother Marquette, the presiding elder, was to arrive at Brother Gladys' house on Friday evening and spend the night with him.

Sister Gladys went out in the yard to notice where the only frying chicken roosted. Enoch followed her. The awkward young cock tried to fly to a limb in a cedar tree, but each time it failed and struck the ground with a thump. Each time it would rise and crow.

Enoch, a close observer, noticed it and asked: "Mamma, when he trows, is he beggin' Dod to help him?"

Sister Gladys replied: "I reckon so."

Now that chicken belonged to Enoch, and he was much attached to it, and besides it was the only chicken on the place that could crow. For these reasons Sister Gladys didn't like to kill it. But the presiding elder was coming, and he couldn't eat a fried hen, so that settled it.

Sister Gladys saw the chicken safely perched where she could get it after dark, then turning to Enoch, she said: "Enoch, Brother Marquette will be here directly to stay all night, and I will have to kill your chicken for breakfast." At this intelligence the little fellow burst into tears, but his mother soon

quieted him by promising him old "domineck" and all her little ones in payment for his one chicken.

Brother Marquette arrived, and was introduced to the family. Brother Gladys went out to the barn to put the horse away, and Sister Gladys went to prepare supper. Enoch, proud to form acquaintances, and finding himself from under parental eyes and ears, stepped up to Brother Marquette, and leaning against his knee proceeded to propound unnumbered questions—such as, "What's ower name?"

"Has you dot a 'ittle boy 'bout as bid as me?"

"What is you doin' to do wiff my papa?"

"Who tole my mamma vat you loves ticken?"

Enoch heard his father coming, left off interrogating, and ran into the kitchen under pretense of helping his mamma take care of Fannie.

After supper they all seated themselves around the fire and talked over the late Conference and one thing and another. Soon Brother Gladys called out: "Enoch, come and stand by papa and say your catechism."

Enoch obeyed rather reluctantly, for he was very sleepy.

"Now, then, that's a little man; hold up your head and let your hands hang by your sides."

"Who made you?"

"Dod."

"Who was the first man?"

"Adam."

"Who was the first woman?"

"Eve."

"Who was the meekest man?"

"Mothes."

"Who was the wisest man?"

"Tholomon."

"Who was the oldest man?"

"Futhelam."

At the pronunciation of that name, Brother Marquette laughed outright. Enoch thought he had done something smart, and of course tried to be smarter when the next question was propounded.

"What did God do to Eve?"

"He washed her face and put a tlean dess on her."

"Come, Enoch, don't be naughty. What did God do to Eve?"

"He whipped her, and she went a wunnin' atross de tater patch dess a-flyin'."

"That will do, Enoch; you are a naughty boy tonight. Here, mother, put him to bed."

They had already had prayers and Brother Marquette, knowing that Brother Gladys had been a fifer in the war, asked him if he had a fife.

Brother Gladys got his fife, poured a dipper of water through it, played the scale, and struck off on "Homespun Dress."

"Well, well," said Brother Marquette, the piece finished, "that carries me back to Shiloh."

Brother Gladys was just in the act of striking off on another tune, when Enoch, who had recently showed off to such a disadvantage, began to cry at the top of his voice. His father called out: "What on earth is the matter with you, Enoch? That will do!" But it didn't do, for the child only cried the louder.

Sister Gladys went to the bed and inquired: 'Enoch, da rling, what is the matter?"

Between snubs and sobs Enoch managed to say: "You have tilled my 'ooster, and he tain't trow, and it will never det daylight any more."

Sister Gladys kissed him and assured him that daylight would come again, and told him to go to sleep and be a good boy.

I should guess there are very few boys in this world who have not been saved from a father's scolding by a mother's gentle words.

Enoch found his mother's words true, for morning came and found him the first at the table. He was evidently chicken hungry, for before the blessing was asked he whispered: "Mamma, div me tum ticken."

Sister Gladys whispered: "Hush, Enoch; be a pretty boy; mother will wait on you directly."

Brother Marquette asked the blessing, and almost before he said amen Enoch reached around the corner of the table and pulled his mamma's dress, and, with his eyes fixed on the chicken dish, he whispered: "Mamma, p'ease ma'am div me tum ticken."

Sister Gladys blushed and said: "Hush, honey; papa will help your plate directly."

But Enoch wanted directly to come at once. He anxiously surveyed the dish of chicken, and exclaimed: "Mamma, you ted if me would let you till my 'ooster I tould have all I wanted to eat and ole domineck betides."

Brother Marquette saw that poor Sister Gladys was humiliated, so he tried to smooth things by saying: "Pass your plate, little man. You may have all the chicken you want."

Brother Gladys gave his young hopeful a look of I-will-settle-with-you-after-a-while, and everything

moved along quietly till Enoch had devoured three pieces. It seems that he knew better than to ask for a fourth piece, so he inquired: "Mamma, may me sop de dravy bowl?"

Brother Marquette ended his stay, and went away with a good impression of the young preacher, his wife, and little Fannie. He was not especially unfavorably impressed with Enoch, but, speaking of him to his own family, he said: "I think he is a spoiled child."

Three weeks from the time Brother Marquette paid them the visit, Brother Gladys went to an appointment six miles away, and carried Sister Gladys and the children. Remembering Enoch's behavior when the presiding elder was with them, Sister Gladys decided on a plan to cure the young man. She cooked a whole chicken and put it before him and told him to help himself. As it was one of old "domineck's," it was not very large. Enoch ate all of it except the back, the neck, and one wing. Sister Gladys wiped the grease from his face and hands and said to herself: "O yes, young man, I won't hear chicken out of you on this trip."

They reached the church, and everything moved along nicely till the sermon was about half over, when Enoch, suddenly thinking of the chicken he had left, leaned over and whispered: "Mamma, is you dot de pieces of ticken in de tatchel?"

Sister Gladys shook her head at him, but he paid no attention to her. Pulling her dress again, he asked: "Mamma, mamma, O mamma! is you dot de pieces of ticken in de tatchel?"

Sister Gladys was so vexed that she gave his arm

a little pinch to make him hush, whereupon he screamed out: "Twit vat pinchin' me. Me des wants de neck."

Brother Gladys had a pleasant year on his work. Everybody was pleased with him and he with everybody. Enoch formed many acquaintances, and was always pleased when he had an opportunity of visiting. I think every little boy on "Slab Rock Mission" was accused of eating chicken like Enoch Gladys.

At the close of the second session of the Conference, Brother Gladys was pleased to find himself returned to the same work, which had been enlarged and named "Slab Rock Circuit" instead of "Slab Rock Mission."

For a week after Brother Gladys returned from Conference all his talk was about the brethren and especially about the bishop.

Enoch asked: "Papa, what is a bithop?"

"It is a man, my boy."

"Well, papa, is you a bithop?"

"No, no, son, papa is not a bishop."

"Well, papa, when you die will you be a bithop?"

Brother Gladys, as was his custom, explained the matter to Enoch's satisfaction. He was very patient with his boy, and took delight in gently and imperceptibly eliciting thought.

The close of that year found Enoch delighted with the presence of another little sister, who was named Statia, for her maternal grandmother. Enoch was also delighted with the idea of moving, for Brother Gladys had been assigned to the "Dover Creek Circuit."

Sister Gladys soon decided that her boy was large enough to wear trousers. She made him a pair and put them on him. He felt his importance, and would often kiss his mamma good-bye, then get on his stick horse and ride off to the cow lot, where he would use an oak leaf for a hymn book and a block for a Bible, and with the calf, pig, and chickens for an audience he would preach his biggest sermons, after which little Fannie would pretend to take up a collection.

One day one of the chickens tried to swallow a little snake. Afterward that chicken was made a subject of Enoch's special childish appeals. He got the story of Eve and the chicken mixed, and one day he asked his mamma if Eve swallowed one half of the snake and let Adam swallow the other half.

Brother Gladys, either deserving a change or being a man for whom there was a great demand, was not allowed to remain at "Dover Creek Circuit" but one year. The next year he was assigned to the "Gardnerville Circuit." Enoch was delighted with another move, but wept most bitterly when he parted with the familiar faces of the cat, calf, and chickens.

CHAPTER X.

BOYHOOD—HIS FIRST SCHOOL.

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
. . . . . .
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy! —*Whittier.*

"SAY, Bob," said Eugene Lindsay to Robert Muller, "that new preacher has a little boy named Enoch. I heard the parson tell Prof. Beard, the other day, that he was going to start the brat to school next Monday. Let's have some fun out of it."

"All right, Gene," said Robert, "you know I'm always ready for anything that has fun in it. What can we do?"

"I'll tell you what we can do. You know that he comes over to our house every evening for milk, and we can tell him that Prof. Beard always whips a boy the first thing after he starts to school."

"Won't that be jolly?" said Bob.

These two boys, older than Enoch and sons of prominent members of Brother Gladys's Church, carried out their mischievous scheme, and well-nigh frightened the little fellow out of his wits.

On the following Monday morning as Sister Gladys was fixing Enoch for school she noticed that he cried all the time. She thought it was because he hated to leave her. As soon as he was ready his father took him by the hand and said very sternly: "Hush

that crying, young man, and come on. I will go with you to the schoolhouse."

Enoch continued to cry, for he wanted to tell his papa what the boys had told him, but he was afraid to do so; they had threatened to whip him "on sight" if he ever said anything about it.

As father and son walked along hand in hand Enoch forgot what he was expecting to get on entering school. They found quite a number of children already assembled on the playground. Some were playing ball, others jumping the rope and chasing the fox. All the children stopped playing for a second to take a look at the new pupil. Robert and Eugene felt a little bit uneasy for fear that Enoch had told on them and that the preacher had come to report them to the teacher.

Fifteen minutes after time for school to open, Prof. Beard, almost out of breath, came in and explained to Brother Gladys why it was that he had been detained.

Brother Gladys left Enoch and went back home.

Prof. Beard rang the bell, and a score or more of restless children came running and jumping and tumbling into the schoolroom.

"Silence!" yelled the Professor, almost startling Enoch from his seat. Then he picked up a dusty Bible and after turning through it selected the fortieth chapter of Ezekiel and proceeded to read the whole of it. Occasionally he would stop to say: "Children, how can you hope to be edified by this holy reading unless you devote to me your individual attention." When the chapter was ended, the Professor said: "Let us pray." He and several girls

and a few boys closed ther eyes and really looked as if they were praying. Little Enoch closed his eyes too—much to the annoyance of several boys who always chose chapel time to do their mischief—while the teacher's eyes were closed. Eugene Lindsay waited till the prayer was about half finished (they all knew what the prayer would be and how long it would be), then he tiptoed to Enoch and whispered in his ear: "The teacher will fix you as soon as he gets through prayin'." Enoch was already excited nearly to death. The Professor said amen, and all the children looked as devout as if they had really been praying—earnestly wrestling in prayer.

Prof. Beard threw his great white eyes across the schoolroom, knit his eyebrows, and fixed a fiery glare on Enoch, while with a gruff tone he said to him: "Bring your book, young man, and come here." All eyes were turned toward Enoch, who, instead of obeying the teacher, began to cry and tremble. "There, there, young man, that's enough of that. Hush and come here, or I will send for a switch."

By that time Enoch was frightened half to death, and could not do anything but cry. The teacher sent his own son out after a switch, and actually whipped that poor, scared child the first thing after prayers. Poor Enoch, he was whipped not because he was a preacher's son, but because his schoolmates were inhuman and his teacher as bad. How, in the name of high Heaven, can human beings take delight in seeing others suffer? At recess Enoch heard Eugene tell some of the boys that the preacher's son was a little cry baby and couldn't stay away from his mammy. Enoch went off into a thicket and lay

down on the oak leaves and cried as if his little heart would break. Soon the bell rang; he rubbed the tears from his eyes and hurried to his place in the schoolroom.

His mother had taught him his A B C's from the *Nashville Christian Advocate*, hence he was able to begin in the "a-b ab, b-e be, b-i bi" part of Webster's blue back spelling book. Enoch was placed under the charge of the assistant, Mrs. Corley, who was a corpulent, good-natured soul. Under her tuition he learned very rapidly, at least Prof. Beard reported to Brother Gladys: "Your boy has just went to school two weeks, and he can say every one of his A B C's back'ards."

Very soon Enoch was advanced far enough for the First Reader. At the end of the first month Prof. Beard told him he must have a speech for the following Friday. Some of the large boys taught him one, and he said it bravely. It was as follows:

> If I had a scolding wife,
> I'd whip her shore's you're born,
> I'd take her down to New Orleans
> And trade her off for corn.

There was a boy in school, Tobe Brown, the son of an afflicted shoemaker. This boy had been receiving the kicks and cuffs of the school, and when they saw Enock get a whipping the first morning they ranked him along with Tobe. One morning at recess the larger boys got Tobe and Enoch off in the woods out of sight of the schoolhouse. As soon as they felt themselves secure from Prof. Beard's eyes one boy said: "Tobe, that little boy Enoch said your heels

were like jaybird's heels; and if I were you, I wouldn't take any such."

Enoch replied: "No, Tobe, I didn't say any such thing."

Whereupon the boys all shouted: "Just look at cry baby, ain't he a big coward!"

That taunt was too much for the little fellow; so he pulled up his sleeves and said: "I didn't say it, but I ain't afraid to say it." In a few minutes Enoch and Tobe were in a rough and tumble fight, while the other boys stood off, a part of them crying, "I'm bettin' on Tobe," the others saying, "I'm bettin' on Enoch." When the bell rang, the other boys ran to the schoolhouse and left the two little fellows to drag along behind, with their clothes torn and dusty, their faces and hands scratched and bleeding.

No sooner had they reached the schoolroom than the professor jerked up his switch, and taking Enoch by the hand, said: "This is a pretty example for a preacher's son to set. I'll make you remember who is to do the fighting in this school." Suiting his action to his words, he gave Enoch a severe thrashing; after which he gave it to Tobe quite lively.

In the school was a young man by the name of Sam Rayburn who suspected that Enoch was imposed upon. About a week from the time the boys had their first fight, Sam noticed the crowd hurrying off to fighting quarters, and he stole around through the bushes and found how everything was going. He knew that Enoch would soon be in for another fight and a subsequent flogging, so he hurried back to the schoolhouse and told Prof. Beard what he had seen and heard.

The professor put great store by Sam, so he went down to the edge of the thicket and hid behind a stump and saw and heard everything; then he went back to the house and rang the bell. The boys came running and jumping and laughing in their sleeves at the fun they had had out of Enoch and Tobe, and at the thought of the beating the two young pugilists would soon get.

Prof. Beard sent Enoch and Tobe for switches, with the instruction to get good, stout ones. Poor boys! they were frightened nearly to death; they thought the Professor was going to nearly kill them. Imagine their relief when the teacher gave every boy that encouraged the fight a severe thrashing, and never touched either of them. After that, Enoch's path in his first school was smooth and pleasant enough. Prof. Beard found out that Enoch was not such a bad boy after all, and Mrs. Corley and Sam Rayburn always had a kind word for him. By the close of school he had grown to be quite a favorite. Even Eugene and Robert acknowledged that they were ashamed of themselves, and found favor in Enoch's sight.

Brother Gladys was very anxious to remain on that work another year, as Enoch was doing so well in school, but when the appointments were read out he found that he was moved to "Camp Morris," a town two hundred miles away.

CHAPTER XI.

COALS OF FIRE ON TWO HEADS.

WITHIN three weeks from the time Enoch left Prof. Beard's school he found himself in a land of strangers and in a new school. His teacher, Miss Gertrude Looney, was a rather eccentric being, whose faded appearance gave evidence that in the long ago she had been a blithesome blonde.

Miss Looney's was a private school, in which there were about twenty-five children, none of them more than twelve years old. Among the number there were three Jew children, a brother and his two sisters. The boy, Jacob Fumblestein, was about three years older than Enoch, and his parents had forbid him having anything to do with Enoch because he was a "white-headed Gentile."

Enoch was assigned a seat just in front of Jacob. Everything moved along pleasantly enough for several weeks, but Enoch soon learned that the teacher was more careful to please Jacob and his sisters than any of the other pupils.

Enoch, childlike, would look at his own patched trousers and then at Jacob's neatly fitting ones, and wish his papa was rich, so that the teacher would like him too.

One day Jacob stuck a pin in Enoch, which, of course, made him jump and caused the little boys around him to laugh out. Calling Enoch to her, Miss Looney bent his fingers back as far as she

could, and dealt him a dozen heavy blows on the palm with a cedar paddle. Enoch tried to tell her that Jacob caused it by sticking him with a pin, but she raved out: "Hush your mouth! You are a pretty preacher's son, trying to get somebody else into trouble on your own account."

That night Enoch told his mother what had happened—Brother Gladys was away from home. Sister Gladys looked at the child's hand; it was blue and swollen. She put Enoch and his little sisters to bed; then she went out and sat on the front steps and took a big cry because her boy had been so foully abused. (I guess there are very few boys whose mothers' eyes have not been wet with tears for them when they were soundly sleeping.) The next morning Enoch had some fever and his hand was twice as thick as his other hand. Brother Gladys came home about noon that day, and found Enoch in bed, suffering intensely. Sister Gladys explained to him all that had happened. It almost broke his heart. Next morning he went over to see Miss Looney, and to inquire why she had treated his boy so savagely.

Miss Looney told him that his boy was very bad, or she never would have whipped him, and that she only gave him a few little taps.

Brother Gladys told her it was very strange that a few little taps should cause a boy's hand to rise and give him a fever.

All the school children had heard the conversation, and when Brother Gladys had replied to Miss Looney, a hand was raised.

The teacher looked up and inquired very softly: "What is it, Jacob, my dear?"

"Please ma'am," said Jacob, "I saw Enoch Gladys as he was going home yesterday afternoon, and he was striking his hand on the tops of the posts and pickets."

"Just as I expected," said the teacher. "We poor, downtrodden teachers are blamed with everything that is disagreeable."

"Good day, Miss Looney. I shall try not to have occasion to blame you for anything hereafter," said the preacher.

"Good-bye, Brother Gladys," said the teacher with a look of sorrow that was strongly hypocritical. Then, as Brother Gladys passed out of the door, she continued: "I am willing to put up with your boy if you desire to return him to my school. He is indeed a much better boy than he was when I took charge of him several weeks ago."

Brother Gladys made no reply, but walked out of the house wearing a look of determination that his boy should never go there again.

Enoch's hand rose and made a very painful wound. The physician feared for a time that the child would lose his arm.

That school horror was all the talk in the village for several days. A number of the sober-minded citizens, who knew Miss Looney's disposition as a woman and as a teacher, advised Brother Gladys to prosecute and have her punished for her meanness. Other people in the town took sides with the teacher, and said they didn't see how she could bear up under such vile accusations.

After Enoch had sufficiently recovered to walk about home with his hand in a sling, people passing

would remark to each other: "There is the little rascal of a preacher's son who is reaping the reward of his own wickedness." Poor boy, during his confinement he had plenty of time to meditate and wonder if preachers' sons are really meaner than other boys. He would often ask his mamma if he was as mean as Jacob, who told the lie, or Dan, who stole the apple.

His mother would reply: "Mamma thinks her little boy is trying to be good."

Brother Gladys was very sorry that such a thing should have happened, and he really thought Miss Looney needed severe correction. But, after thinking about it, he decided that it would not do for it to be carried to law, as it might have a bad effect on Enoch. Generally he supported the teacher's views in Enoch's presence, but this time he was very silent.

The teacher was not prosecuted *according to law*, but when her invalid mother was dying, Brother Gladys held the chilled hand and prayed that the family might be reunited in heaven. And at the grave, when Miss Looney, through her tears, saw little Enoch's scarred hand place a bouquet of white roses on the casket, her heart bled and she felt the coals of fire on her head. It did her more good than a thousand legal prosecutions would have done.

About a month after Mrs. Looney was buried, one afternoon Jacob was taking a ride on horseback. He was passing Brother Gladys's humble cottage, and, with the hope of galloping by unobserved, he struck his pony with a whip. But just at that time a piece of paper blew across the road and frightened the animal, whereupon she reared and threw Jacob just in front of Brother Gladys's gate.

The pony ran off down the road and left Jacob lying senseless on the ground. Enoch, who happened to be digging in the garden, saw it all, and calling his mother, they ran out and carried Jacob into the house.

His arm was broken. Sister Gladys bathed his face and did what she could for him, while Enoch ran for the doctor and Jacob's mother.

When Jacob regained consciousness he was in a crude little room which was not ceiled, the floors were bare and the windows had sleazy curtains instead of shades. His mother sat on the bed by his side; the doctor was sitting by the fireplace; Enoch was gathering the shavings which the doctor had cut from the splints with which to bind the broken arm; Mrs. Gladys sat on the other side of the bed and rubbed the boy's head.

As soon as Jacob opened his eyes, he looked into Sister Gladys's eyes and asked: "Are you Enoch's mother?"

Sister Gladys replied: "Yes, Jacob."

Great tears came into Jacob s eyes, and he said: "Please forgive me. I told a lie on your little boy, and I want everybody to know that I am sorry for it."

I need not add that this confession created quite a sensation and caused every one to look upon little Enoch with more compassion.

CHAPTER XII.

BIG UPS AND LITTLE DOWNS.

WHEN Enoch was a little over nine years old, his third sister was born. They gave her the peculiar name of "Fair." She was a sweet baby and the image of her father. Enoch, Fannie, and Statia were more like their mother.

For three years Enoch had been a regular attendant at Sabbath school. He was devoted to Mrs. Sherrod, his excellent teacher. His record for promptness, deportment, and recitation was among the best.

One Sunday Enoch noticed that all the boys in his class wore pretty little caps. Of course he wanted one. He made known his want to his mother, and she told Brother Gladys about it. He said he had no money to be throwing away for caps, and besides that, Enoch's hat was good enough.

Sister Gladys, sweet mother, told Enoch she would make a cap for him. He was satisfied with the promise, and had very little to say about it during the week. Poor Sister Gladys, I think she must have used all of one of Brother Gladys's old coats trying to cut out pieces that would fit together in a cap. Finally she gave up trying, and was about to decide that she would have to disappoint her boy, when an idea struck her. She would take one of Mr. Gladys's old hats and cut all the brim off except a little on one side; then she would bind it all around with some kind of black goods and Enoch would have a cap.

She made it and put it away till Sunday morning, when she thought to give Enoch a pleasant surprise. After he had dressed his mother brought him his cap, but instead of him being pleased as she had expected, he burst into tears and told her everybody would know that it was his papa's old hat.

Brother Gladys was sitting in an adjoining room. Enoch's cries reached his ears, and he went in to learn the cause. "Now, young man, you wanted a cap, and you have one; so wear it," said the father.

Enoch wore it because he was forced to do so. On entering the church he hid it under a bench at the back of the house; and after the service was over he waited till everybody else was out, then he slipped the ugly thing from beneath the seat and hurried home. One can scarcely imagine how that child felt. He wondered why he, a preacher's son, could not wear caps like other boys. In his own simple way he spent many hours miserably wondering. Enoch had just reached that age at which a boy's greatest pains are only pictures of the imagination.

A week after the occurrence just mentioned Enoch learned that one of his playmates was very ill. He went to see him and talked with him a long while.

The very next week Enoch and many other children of the neighborhood were sick. It was found out that they all had measles. Enoch was very sick for over a week. He thought one day that he was going to die. He turned his flushed face to the wall, and for the first time asked God to forgive his sins and spare his life. He soon recovered.

In a few days Brother Gladys and Brother Russell, a Presbyterian preacher, began a union pro-

tracted meeting. The meeting began on Friday evening, and Enoch begged so earnestly that his father took him along. The sermon was long and tedious, and Enoch could not understand it. Very soon he fell asleep, and knew nothing more till his father tapped him on the head with his umbrella and told him that was a pretty example for a preacher's son to set before other boys.

Next day Enoch attended the service. His father preached a plain sermon from the text: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Every sentence was simple enough for Enoch. He understood it and his heart was touched. When sinners were invited, Enoch went forward. He tried to pray, but he felt that everybody was looking at him. He knew he had often done wrong, and he had heard it said so often that "A preacher's son is the meanest boy in the world," that he really thought himself a worse boy than he was.

When the service closed, he went home; but it seemed to him that everybody was looking at him and thinking, "You are a pretty boy to go to sleep in church and then go to the mourner's bench." That afternoon his heart was heavy. He felt like he would have given the world just to be able to tell somebody how he felt. Somehow he was ashamed to tell his father or mother how he felt or what his thoughts were.

That night sister Gladys had to remain at home with the little girls. Enoch stayed with them for company. After talking awhile Sister Gladys picked up the Bible and read a Psalm, and then she, Enoch,

and little Fannie knelt for prayer. Among other requests the mother asked God to bless her little boy and to give him a pure heart. Ah! that mother's simple prayer gave the little "light seeker" more courage than anything that he had ever heard before. After prayer Sister Gladys called him to her side and explained everything that he was in doubt or ignorant about concerning conviction and conversion. She then told him about the time when she, at thirteen years of age, was converted at a settlement prayer-meeting.

Enoch went to bed with a lighter heart than had beat in his bosom for many a day, but he was not happy nor satisfied.

CHAPTER XIII.

HIS CONVERSION.

ON the following morning Enoch awoke just as the sun peeped over the mountain beyond his window. He looked out, and all the world, even nature herself, seemed ready for rest and worship. He lay there and thought of everything bad he had ever done. He wanted to be a better boy. He wondered if converted boys could ever enjoy play any more. He wondered if people shout at church because religion hurts them. He wondered if everybody would laugh at him and call him a "goody-goody boy." Finally, as if summoning all his strength of mind and body, he wheeled out of bed with a determination to continue seeking pardon, no matter what the world might say or think. That day he took his seat just one place from the altar. His father preached to the children from the text: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The sermon, though simple enough for any child, was very powerful, and had a wonderful effect on many of the people, old and young. After the sermon they sung: "Come, humble sinner." Enoch was one of the first to present himself. After the song they had a prayer, then Brother Russell led off on "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour." That song was Enoch's prayer. His father saw that he was deeply affected, so he went to him and placing his hands on his head, said: "My darling boy, raise your little hands to Jesus. He will pull you out of sin."

That was enough. Enoch rose, his face beaming with heavenly light, and throwing his arms around his father, he began singing with the others.

Brother Russell took Enoch in his arms and told him to never forget the dear Saviour who had done so much for him.

Enoch felt that he was a changed boy. He had never been so happy. Turning to his father, he said: "Papa, I want to join the Church."

"All right, my boy, in a minute," said the father.

Quite a number had been converted, and just before dismissing Brother Gladys said: "We will now sing 'Am I a soldier of the cross?' and while we sing, if there are those present who desire to join the Church, they may come forward. Those who wish to join the Methodist Church may be seated on the bench at the right, and those who wish to join the Presbyterian Church may be seated on the bench at the left. Eight took the seat on the right, and five on the left." Enoch, only nine years old, was the youngest on the Methodist bench. Taylor Tomlin, twelve years old, was the youngest on the Presbyterian bench. Brother Gladys, as all his had been baptized in infancy, proceeded to receive them into the Church. When he had finished, Brother Russell went forward to receive his members, but just then Taylor's mother reached across the bench and took him by the hand and told him he was too small to know what he was about. She was just in the act of leading him out, when little Enoch, with tears in his eyes, said: "O don't, Mrs. Tomlin, don't; he is older than I, and you don't know how happy it makes me feel to belong to the Church." His childish appeal was

enough. Taylor's mother withdrew her hand and wept at the thought of the mistake she had almost made.

Enoch was no more ashamed. After service he shook hands with a great many people, and his little heart was full of love for everything and everybody.

Sister Gladys was quite as happy as her little boy, for she felt that her prayer had been answered. But she knew that he would be tempted, and she resolved to watch over him carefully and help him to live as he should.

Enoch was quite young, but he knew what he was about. He knew that he had been blessed and that his chief desire was to do right and lead a Christian life.

There is no more critical time in the life of a Christian than just after conversion, and especially is this true of children. The child convert needs the prayers, the encouragement, and the direction of the older members of God's family.

We too often suspect that a child has not been converted because it can't tell just exactly how it felt when it was converted, or because it can't explain the difference between the way it felt before and after conversion. What a sad mistake we make! Such were the difficulties which Enoch encountered. The members of Brother Gladys's church, many of them, expected Enoch to be as grave as an old man. As it was, he loved fun and frolic as much as ever. I can see no reason why it should have been otherwise.

Religion was never intended to plow furrows in the cheeks of children. Sister Gladys was a very reasonable woman. She knew that a converted child is as

much a child as ever. She knew that her boy was all right and that all he needed was encouragement.

About a week after Enoch joined the Church his father was away from home overnight. Sister Gladys had Enoch to read a chapter, and then she prayed. Proceeding gradually, she soon induced him to read the chapter and say the prayer.

God bless the dear mothers! they are the ones best fitted for feeding the lambs.

CHAPTER XIV.

DID HE FALL FROM GRACE?

ENOCH'S first temptation came only a couple of weeks from the time of his conversion. It was on a Sunday when Brother Gladys was away from home and was not expected back till Monday.

Some of the neighbors were going to walk over to a little church about two miles away, to an all-day singing. Sister Gladys, with some reluctance, allowed Enoch to go with them; but told him to beware of the association of bad boys, and to return home early in the afternoon. He promised her that he would do everything she had requested.

They had dinner on the ground. After dinner a crowd of boys passed along by where Enoch was standing, and one of them said: "Come on, Enoch, let's take a walk."

Enoch accepted the invitation, and they all went down the road about half a mile, then turned off through the woods to the creek, where they came to a halt.

One of the boys said: "O boys, I hadn't thought about it; let's go in bathing."

Several in a chorus said, "All right," and began pulling off their clothes.

Enoch knew that his parents had forbid his going in swimming on Sunday, so he sat down on a log to watch the other boys.

The large boy who had proposed the swimming called out: "Hello, Enoch! Ain't you a-comin' in?"

"No," said the boy; "papa and mamma don't want me to go in swimming on Sunday."

"Ha! ha! ha!" yelled several boys, "what will they ever know about it?"

Enoch was very fond of swimming, and while he wished he was at home, he imagined he could hear something saying: "Go in, boy, there is no harm in it." But every time he would start to pull off his coat he imagined he could hear his mother calling him.

There were about a dozen boys in the water, splashing and diving and laughing. Enoch didn't know what to do. He ventured to pull off his coat, and immediately the large boy hallooed: "Hurrah for Enoch! I knew he couldn't miss the fun."

By that time the tempter had overcome Enoch, and he pulled off his clothes and plunged in.

The boys didn't notice how the time was passing till after awhile they heard the horses crossing the ford below, and by that they knew that the singing was over. They hurried out and began to dress. Some of the boys had slipped out and tied Enoch's shirt sleeves in several hard knots, and pretended to tie some of the others in the same manner.

Enoch came out a little behind the other boys, and just as he stooped over to pick up his clothes some boy threw a great handful of mud on his back and he was obliged to go back into the water to wash it off. The other boys hurried on with their clothes and started away. Enoch begged them to wait for him, but they told him he ought not to have stayed in so long. With that they all ran off and left him. He tried to put on his shirt, but his hands would not

go through the sleeves. Then he discovered the trick that had been played on him. He cried and pulled and tugged away for half an hour before he succeeded in untying the knots. When dressed, he turned away from the creek feeling as mean as a dog. He ran by the church to look for the crowd he had come with, but they had gone home a long time before. It was almost sundown, and he had over two miles to go. His heart beat like it would break out of his body. He ran and cried, then walked and cried. The sun went down before he was halfway home. He cried because he felt that he had done wrong, because he had deceived his mother, because he was afraid his father would hear about it and whip him, and because he was afraid to be out by himself after night.

In the meantime Brother Gladys had unexpectedly returned home, and had learned from some of the neighbors who had attended the singing that Enoch had gone off toward the creek with a crowd of boys. He knew that Enoch would soon return, so he went down the road about a hundred yards and stopped in a little clump of bushes to await his coming. It was a very dark night; Brother Gladys could not see his hand as he held it before his face. He listened. Soon he caught the sound of Enoch's rapid footsteps, and a minute later he heard him panting. Enoch had heard the owls hooting along the way, and like Ichabod Crane had sung to drown the sound. Occasionally the leaves had rattled, and for a defense the boy had picked up two very large rocks, which he carried, one in each hand. Just as he was darting by the dark clump of bushes his father caught him

and began to switch him quite lively. In his fright Enoch struck himself on the breast with one of the rocks; but he hardly noticed it, for the switch and the surprise and his conscience were about to finish him. Enoch went to the house a little in advance of his father, but he slipped in, for he was ashamed to meet his mother. After a supper which he scarcely tasted, he crept off to the little back room, said his prayer, and went to bed. Although he prayed earnestly for God to forgive him, he still felt mean.

After Sister Gladys had put away the supper dishes she went into Enoch's room and sat on the side of his bed. The poor boy was crying as if his heart would break. Sister Gladys put her hand on his burning forehead and pushed back his hair, then kissed him and told him that God would forgive him and that he must try to be a better boy.

"Well, mamma," sobbed the boy, "will God take my religion away from me because I got a whipping?"

"No, no, my boy," replied his mother; "God knows why your papa whipped you." So saying, she kissed him good night and left his room.

Enoch prayed again, and promised God that he would try harder than ever to be a good boy. Soon his exhausted mind and body were enjoying sweet repose.

Mark the father's reproof and the mother's. The father chastised in love and not in anger; and "the mother's reproving eye was moistened with a tear." They were Christian parents.

Somehow the neighbors learned of Enoch's behavior and punishment. In the neighborhood was a

family named Strange. Mr. Strange was not a member of any Church, but his wife was a Methodist. She had remarked several times since the meeting that she didn't believe that Gladys child knew what he was about, that he was too young, and every time she would add: "I'm a Methodist, it is true, but I believe everybody should stay out of the Church till they are old enough to decide for themselves."

Mr. Strange heard his wife talking about Enoch's behavior, and since he had done wrong and had a whipping about it Mrs. Strange was more emphatic in her assertion that the child was too young.

Mr. Strange listened awhile, and then turning to his wife, he asked: "Margaret, why are you a Methodist?"

"Why, because—a—of course it is because—a—ah! Mr. Strange, why do you ask me such a question as that? You know papa and mamma are Methodists, and it is perfectly natural that I should be a Methodist too."

"Ha! ha! You are in the same box with the preacher's son; and if I were you, I wouldn't say anything more. Margaret, find out why you are what you are." His words were wise and timely; they no doubt made Mrs. Strange a quieter and a better woman.

Near Brother Gradys's was a family named Stephens. On Sunday morning, just one week from the day of the singing, Mr. Stephens stood before the mirror shaving. When he had finished, he picked up the blacking and brush and went to work on his shoes. A thought struck him; he stopped his brush and, raising his head, said to his wife: "Sarah,

didn't little Gladys get into it last Sunday? The young rascal should be ashamed of himself for going in swimming on Sunday."

Mrs. Stephens stepped to her husband's side and said: "Yes, Charlie, he ought to be ashamed; he might as well have blacked his boots or shaved!"

Her words went home.

The Christian religion has no stronger supporter than the man or woman who defends and encourages the babes in Christ.

CHAPTER XV.

A CROWDED VEHICLE.

BROTHER GLADYS remained at the last appointment we mentioned for three years; then he was moved. Enoch's associates were given up, and he was again cast among strangers. But somehow, like most children, he liked the idea of moving.

They had to move that time about a hundred miles. There was a railroad on which they might have traveled, but Brother Gladys had in three years saved fifty dollars, with which to buy his wife a sewing machine, and he couldn't afford to spend it for tickets; besides, they had a buggy and horse.

They at once arranged to make the trip through the country. The buggy had but one seat, and in order to make sitting room for all a quilt was spread in the back of the buggy. Enoch, Fannie, Statia, Fair, and Quimby sat on it. Brother Gladys and his wife sat on the seat, and the baby, little Tempa, sat in her mother's lap. As may be observed, Quimby and Tempa are new members in the Gladys family. Both are girls.

The morning of their departure came, and a picture they were. Father, mother, and six children in a buggy scarcely large enough for half that number. The five little ones at the back were crowded and uncomfortable, but somehow they lived through four days of tiresome travel over rocks and hills and mountains.

On the last day of the journey Brother Gladys had to continue driving after dark in order to reach his destination, which was over three miles away when dark came on. It happened that the country was very sparsely settled, so that the last six miles of the way they had not a single house to pass.

They had had pleasant December weather all the way; but that night, when they were in greatest need of light and shelter, it began to rain in torrents. They had but one umbrella and it was a small one, and they had to use it over the least baby. Brother Gladys stopped his horse and took the quilt at the back of the buggy and spread it over the heads of the little ones. The four little girls were asleep, but Enoch helped his father to lift them off of the quilt. Just as they got everything fixed and started off, one of the fore wheels rolled over a large rock at the side of the road, and immediately every spoke in the other fore wheel broke off at the hub, and down they went with a crash. Mother, children, baby, and all, were thrown into the front end of the buggy.

What was to be done? There they were three miles from a house, the night was as dark as pitch, they were all wet, and it was still pouring down rain. The four little girls, having been so suddenly aroused, were all crying as loud as they could. And there they were!

"Mr. Gladys, what in the world are we to do?" said the good mother, nearly ready to cry herself.

"I don't know, Louise, but we can't stay here all night in this fix, for the children, every one of them, would die of croup."

It was at once agreed that the mother and children

should walk the rest of the way, and that Brother Gladys should put the hind wheels in the place of the fore ones, then put the remaining fore wheel on one end of the back axle and a pole under the other, so as to drag the buggy along. Sister Gladys led off with the baby in her arms, Enoch followed with Tempa, the three other girls came next, and Brother Gladys and the dragging buggy brought up the rear. The road was muddy and slippery, and it rained all the way. Brother Gladys, Sister Gladys, and Enoch prayed that the Lord would help them to reach shelter.

At ten o'clock they saw a light break through the darkness. When they had neared it, Brother Gladys hallooed. It happened to be the home of Dr. Miller, one of the leading stewards on Brother Gladys's new work. The doctor, who had just returned from a professional visit, had not retired. He came out and helped them into the house, then waked his wife and built a fire. Soon their clothes were dried and their supper prepared. It was nearly twelve o'clock before they were ready to retire. There was not much rest for any of them. Sister Gladys had sick headache, Enoch had leg ache, Fannie had earache, and two of the other little ones had croup.

The next day the wagons came with their household goods. The preacher and his family were given a most hearty welcome at the neat little parsonage, and it was only a few days till they were all well and happy in their new home.

CHAPTER XVI.

"BUDDIE, YOU ARE TOO GOOD FOR US."

SOON after they reached their new home Enoch was sent to town on an errand. There were a half dozen boys standing around the front of the store in which he stopped. When he came out, he hesitated a minute to look at a boy dragging a fox hide along the street, preparatory to a sham race with some hound puppies. While he was looking, a great, rough boy walked up to him and, slapping him on the shoulder, asked: "Young man, are you the new preacher's son?"

Enoch timidly answered: "Yes, sir."

"Well," said the rough boy, "I hope you are not as great a scamp as that last preacher's boy we had here; for he told lies, stole tobacco, and would cry like a baby if any one shook a fist at him."

Enoch was "dumfounded" at such a sudden and peculiar acquaintance making, but forgetting his timidity he replied: "Yes, sir, I am the preacher's son, and, although I am not as good as I would like to be, I do hope you will find me a better boy than the one you have just described. Surely he must have kept bad company or he would have been a better boy."

"Look ee here," said the ruffian, "do you mean to say that he was a scoundrel because he associated with us boys?" and as he said it his eyes flashed, and he clutched Enoch's shoulder.

"Well, sir," said Enoch with a brave voice, while

his body shook like a withered leaf, "I mean to leave no impression but the truest and the best."

At that remark the crowd of boys looked at each other and winked; then the big boy said: "Buddie, you are too good for common folks. Run along home to your mammy and say your catechism."

Enoch looked him straight in the eye, and said: "Yes, I will go home to mother, not because you tell me to do so, but because I know it is right that I should do so." So saying, he turned his back on the set of cowards and their spokesman and walked bravely toward his home.

When Enoch was fairly out of hearing, the large boy said to his companions: "Chums, that boy reminds me of the preacher's son that was here last year. He talks just like the other one did when he came. I'll bet he'll be a honey cooler when he leaves here; for these preachers' sons have the meanness in them, and its obliged to work out sometime and somewhere."

It is to be hoped that Enoch chose other associates; for if the preacher's son who had just moved away was the meanest boy in the world, Enoch knew where he got his meanness.

Soon the preacher's children started to school. The schoolhouse was a mile and a half from their home, over at the village where Enoch had gone on the errand a few days before. The parsonage stood where the town had once been, before a station was located on the new railroad, a mile and a half away. Dr. Millar, Col. Neuman, Judge Croker, and Mr. Robarts, all thrifty farmers, remained in the old town. Everybody else moved over to the new town on the

railroad. It seems that no one thought of moving the parsonage, and the four brethren who were Brother Gladys's neighbors were so kind that he was glad enough to live near them. The only trouble was the walk to school. But who ever heard of it hurting a preacher's son and his little sisters to wade through water and sleet and snow to school?

It is true that little Statia, though only eight years old, had suffered from nervous disease, but nobody outside of the family knew or thought about that.

Fortunately, the winter was mild, and the teacher was a good one, one whose motto was: "A hand of steel in a velvet glove." The children learned more in the few months before that school closed than any one might have expected. In June the school closed with a kind of concert. Enoch's teacher told him that he must have a speech. Enoch told his father about it, and Brother Gladys abbreviated a chapter on "Home," in the "Royal Path of Life." It was a very pretty and pathetic little speech, and Enoch learned to speak it well; but one night as he was rehearsing, he heard some of the large girls tittering about the preacher's son's little sermon for the concert. Enoch was very much hurt, and decided that his speech was not fit for a boy to say at a concert.

Syster Gladys assured him that the girls were not making fun of him, and that his speech was very pretty. He took fresh courage and spoke his piece well. The prize that the teacher had offered for the best speech was awarded Enoch. It was a beautiful little book, "Bible Stories," by the Rev. Daniel Stevenson, of the Kentucky Conference. Enoch was very proud of it, and read it through the very next day.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DEAD BOY.

THE first time Enoch was over at the village after the concert, the same big boy who had slapped him on the shoulder six months before said to him: "Guess you feel purty big now, don't ye? I wouldn't a-had that little old book nohow, and besides you wouldn't a-got it if the teacher hadn't a-been a preacher and one of the judges a preacher."

"Well," said Enoch slowly, "I am proud of the book, for it is a good one. I have read every word in it; and if you want to read it, I will bring it over and let you keep it awhile."

"What's it about?" inquired the large boy.

"It's about Samuel and David and Daniel and other Bible men."

"Pooh!" replied the big boy. "I ain't got no time for such stuff. I like to read 'Night Hawk Detective,' or 'Bully Boys on the Frontier,' and all such."

Enoch turned away, for he was afraid to talk longer to this boy, who seemed so anxious to raise a fuss. The big boy never said a word till Enoch was fifty yards away, then he yelled: "Go it, sugar pie; you are a duckie with a glass eye. Go home and pick up chips for your mammy all during vacation, and ride about with your daddy behind that old knock-kneed horse, and eat chicken pie while your daddy begs for money and old clothes."

Enoch never stopped nor looked around, but walked

away faster without making reply. He was very indignant, and felt that he had been grossly insulted because the boy had called his father a beggar. The nearer Enoch got to his home the worse he felt, and when he lifted the rope hoop that fastened the front gate at his home he began to cry. He walked into the house, but seeing no one, he hushed crying and walked out into the little hall at the back of the room to get a drink. From the hall he saw his mother digging among the cabbage in the garden. As he saw her the tears rushed to his eyes and he started to her. The nearer he got the louder he cried.

Sister Gladys had on a very large bonnet, which came down over her ears and kept her from hearing Enoch till he was right at her. Putting a hand on her hip, she looked up and inquired excitedly: "Why, Enoch, my boy, what on earth is the matter?"

Enoch told her all about what had happened. She listened quietly, but any one might have known from the flush on her cheek that she was vexed. When Enoch had finished, his heart felt lighter; and when his mother told him such talk was not worth listening to, Enoch took the hoe and finished the digging for his mother.

Sister Gladys went into the house, for her head was aching and her back felt as if it was about broken. She had not been in the house long when Brother Gladys rode up. He had been away several days at a distant part of the work. He hitched his horse and went into the house. After awhile Sister Gladys told him what the boy had said to Enoch. When she had finished speaking, he said: "Well, Louise, it doesn't amount to much, only I don't like for people

to talk to my boy like he was a dog. When I go to town to-morrow I will tell Brother Sterl how his son has behaved, but, remember, Enoch must never know that I have said a word about it."

The next morning Brother Gladys went over to town rather earlier than usual. He rode up to Mr. Sterl's store the first thing, for he wanted to get the unpleasant thing off of his mind. He hitched his horse and went in. After shaking hands with several who were in the store, he took the chair that was offered him and began to remark concerning the weather, the health of the people, and local affairs generally. While they were thus engaged, a young man stepped in and handed Mr. Sterl a telegram, which he opened leisurely, for he supposed it was the quotation of cotton prices. No sooner had he opened it than he staggered backward and moaned: "My God, my wayward boy!" Then, dropping the telegram on the floor, he ran toward the depot without saying a word, for the passenger train, going in the direction from whence the telegram came, had just arrived.

None of the men could imagine what was the matter. They stood in the store door and watched Mr. Sterl jump on the train just as it was leaving. Brother Gladys picked up the telegram and read it aloud:

"*R. L. Sterl:* Your son, who was supposed to have been stealing a ride on the freight train that passed through your town an hour ago, was instantly killed at this station five minutes ago. Come. Jo. F. Perth."

That afternoon Mr. Sterl came back with the remains of his son. Both legs were cut off above the knees and the head was entirely severed from the

body. The next morning they buried him. Brother Gladys preached the funeral; and Sister Gladys, Enoch, and the little girls attended.

That was a sad hour for every soul in the village, and especially was it sad for Enoch; he was grieved because he would never be able to tell the boy how freely he had forgiven him for the way he had talked to him. For a long time Enoch could not bear to look at the book the teacher had given him, for somehow he felt that if Sid Sterl had gotten it, and read it, maybe he would not have tried to run away and go to Texas. Several times at dead of night Enoch screamed out as he dreamed that a boy without feet or head was after him. Such fancies eventually wore away, and Enoch almost forgot the terrible affair.

During June, July, and August Enoch spent his time at chopping stove wood, hoeing in the garden, going for the calves, trapping for birds, fishing, and playing. About twice a week he was sent to the post office to mail and get a letter from his grandmother, and to get the *Nashville Christian Advocate.* He was alway delighted with the column headed "Miscellany," and the articles on "Natural History."

Brother Gladys promised Enoch that if he would read Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy during the summer he would take him to the third quarterly meeting in September.

Enoch tried to carry out his part of the agreement, but often he would pronounce the words in a whole chapter while he would be wondering what kind of boys were at Dean's Chapel, where the meeting was to be held. Sometimes as he was reading he would find himself wondering if the watermelons

would all be gone, and if Mr. Dean had any pretty little girls about his size, and if Mr. Dean's little girls would like him less or more because he was a preacher's son.

He always felt ashamed for having allowed his mind to wander from what he was reading; but as his time was limited, he didn't possibly see how he could go over it. The fact is, Enoch read his Bible like many older people read theirs, just so they can say that they have read it. I wonder if such a person shall ever read this?

CHAPTER XVIII.

GETTING READY FOR THE CAMP MEETING.

"LOUISE, I've a letter from Brother Lockhart, and he wants me to come and help him in their camp meeting at Spring Creek. I want to start to-morrow by daybreak, if I can," said Brother Gladys on Friday morning as he returned from the village, and he added: "I believe I will take Enoch with me now, instead of to the quarterly meeting. He would enjoy it better, and then he would be ready to start to school when it opens."

Sister Gladys looked up surprised, and said: "Why, Mr. Gladys, Enoch hasn't a decent coat to his name, and the last good pair of pants he has is full of holes. He has nothing but short woolen socks, which he can't bear to wear in the summer; and besides, he has a stone bruise on his heel that is just getting well, and I don't believe he can wear those shoes you have bought him, they are so large, and his hat is all out of shape. I don't see, to save my life, how he can get off. If I had the cloth, I could make him a coat and some pants this evening. I could get Miss Mat to help me." Then, after thinking a moment, she continued: "Can't you ride over to the village before dinner and get me some cloth? I can make a respectable suit out of most any kind of cheap cloth."

She received as a reply: "Louise, I have only fifty cents to my name, and I must save that to pay the

ferryman, and you know that I will not go in debt for anything."

"Well, Mr. Gladys, I hardly know what to do. I have used all your old clothes making them over for Enoch. I reckon he will have to stay at home and try to make some money with which to buy something to wear to the Quarterly Conference. But I know the little fellow would enjoy it so much; hear him how lively he swings the ax and how merrily he whistles. I'll tell you, Mr. Gladys, bring me that pair of brown jeans pants Sister Wilcox wove for you, I think you are about done with them, and I may be able to get a pair for Enoch out of them."

Brother Gladys went and brought the pants to his wife. They were threadbare on each knee.

Sister Gladys measured and meditated; then said: "Well, Enoch never wore a pair of knee pants in his life, but he will have it to do this time. Now what about a coat? Bring me that old broadcloth coat you sometimes wear a-fishing."

Brother Gladys went and got the coat for his wife. She soon decided that she could dodge the seams and make Enoch a coat. "Now, Mr. Gladys, tell Enoch to run over after Miss Mat to come and help me sew this evening. Tell him that we are going to sew for him, and he will go in a hurry."

Enoch hardly waited to be told, till he went crow-hopping on one toe and the other foot over to Miss Mat's.

Miss Mat went over immediately, and agreed to make the pants. Sister Gladys was to make the coat and wash out a couple of shirts. Enoch was to get up enough stove wood to last till they should return.

The little girls, Fannie and Statia, were to get a "snack of dinner." Fair was to mind Quimby and Tempa, and Brother Gladys was to fix Enoch's shoes and see about a hat for him.

They all went to work, and a busier, merrier crowd was never seen. Enoch's little heart was ready to overflow with joy. He cut wood like a grown up man might have done, and every time he was summoned to try on his suit he went with a whistle and a bound.

Miss Mat, in order to avoid the threadbare places, was obliged to make the pants about an inch too short, so they didn't quite reach to his knees. Sister Gladys had no pattern to cut the coat by except her own basque pattern, and in fixing the waist and bust she unintentionally made the coat so small that it would not button in front. She soon fixed that part all right by putting two little straps across the front, making them button at each end. The tail of the coat was the greatest trouble. The basque pattern caused the tail of the coat to come to a point behind, and when the two sides of the tail were sewed on they gaped open behind, and lapped over in front. Finally, after much ripping out and cutting off and sewing on, the coat was pronounced finished.

Brother Gladys, genius that he was, had resurrected an old derby hat that he had worn three or four years before when he was on a half station. The crown of the hat was very high, and in order to make it look boyish, he cut it off about two-thirds from the top, and then pushed the top down over the other part, after the manner of closing a snuffbox. Then, replacing the band and sewing it down carefully, no

one could have told without looking inside of the hat that it had ever been cut down. That hat was what boys of to-day would call "a stylish cut," but at that time it looked exceedingly crestfallen.

Enoch's shoes were what is known as brogans, made of thick cowhide. The tops at the back were very sharp on the inside edge. Brother Gladys at once removed that trouble by beveling the edge with his pocketknife.

Miss Mat spent the night with them. After supper Sister Gladys dressed Enoch from top to toe in his new suit, just to see how he would *appear*.

New and unthought of troubles arose; the socks were so short that there was an intermission of several inches between sock leg and trouser leg, and the shoes were so hard that he could not walk in them at all.

Sister Gladys, ever mindful of the happiness of her boy, soon fixed things by putting her own pair of snow-white, home-knit stockings on him, and then actually lending him her new, Sunday, side-laced, cloth shoes.

You, dear reader, may have it in your mind that this child looked more like a clown than like a preacher's son, but I assure you there was something about his appearance that would have attracted attention anywhere.

Little Statia, the only sickly child in the family, was always sorry to see the time come when her father was to go off from home. That night she was merry because all the others seemed so happy. She was very fond of music, and went to her papa's bookcase, got his army fife, brought it to him, and asked

him to please play. He played a number of war tunes, then some of the "New Life" and "Sacred Harp" pieces; then Sister Gladys sang something about "Swinging in the Lane," and Brother Gladys accompanied the song with fife music. Then he played and Sister Gladys, Miss Mat, Enoch, and Fannie sang "Home, Sweet Home." The other little ones had gone to sleep some time before. Poor little Statia had put her head against her papa's knee and, clasping her hands together, had gone to sleep too, doubtless dreaming that her papa's flute was talking to the angels. Mrs. Gladys put her to bed; then they had prayers. Brother Gladys read a lesson from the third chapter of St. Luke. Enoch didn't clearly understand what was meant by the "two coats," but he felt satisfied that he had one coat, and that the Bible injunction was at least halfway applicable to him.

There were only two bedrooms to the parsonage. Brother Gladys and Sister Gladys and Enoch occupied one, and Miss Mat and the little girls occupied the other. Long after the lights were extinguished Enoch's eyes were still wide open and his imagination was making pictures of the camp ground and of the people.

Finally he came to the conclusion that the night would seem shorter if he would sleep, so he tried Miss Mat's plan of counting, "One sheep, two sheep, three sheep," and before he got to "fifty sheep" he was sound asleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON THE WAY TO CAMP MEETING.

IT seemed to Enoch that he had hardly dozed when he heard from an adjoining room, "Enoch, son, get up; it's daylight," whereupon he bounded out of bed and began to prepare for the trip.

Breakfast was soon dispatched, and father and son seated themselves in the buggy and started toward Spring Creek. It was a bright, windy morning, and as the coat tails of father and son flapped behind the buggy Sister Gladys remarked to Miss Mat: "Enoch grows more like his papa every day." The most careful observer could not have found any resemblance, except between the coat tails, which were both "Prince Alberts." Rev. Gladys had the appearance that morning of an ordinary circuit rider, but despite his great work and small pay, his low body had become moderately corpulent. His beard and hair were black and his eyes were blue. Enoch's hair was nearly white, it was sandy; his eyes were steel gray, and his aquiline nose was not like his father's or his mother's. A few old people who remembered his great-grandfather Atkins said that Enoch was very much like him. But when Sister Gladys saw their clean-brushed coat tails flapping in the wind that morning, she imagined a striking resemblance between the man and the boy.

The road was dusty and soon the sunshine was warm. Brother Gladys had no umbrella with him,

for he had loaned his to Mrs. Pelham, the wife of the class leader at Grove Oak Church. The loan had been made three weeks before, on a rainy day when Mrs. Pelham was suffering with rheumatism; but the umbrella had not been returned, and in fact it was lost and never returned. Brother Gladys didn't have the money to spare for another, so he was compelled to do all his traveling that summer without an umbrella.

Enoch thought that day was the warmest he had ever felt, and no doubt it was to him, on account of the heavy coat he wore. He spent the time of the journey watching the wheels turn, admiring his (mother's) shoes, and perspiring. Occasionally he would forget and wonder why the horse's hind feet didn't step on his fore feet.

Brother Gladys drove along in a mechanical way while he studied his sermon. The only thing that relieved the monotony of the trip happened just before they reached the camp ground. An idea struck Brother Gladys: he would repeat one of his sermons and get Enoch's opinion of it. He communicated the idea to his son and began his sermon. His text was: "And after death the judgment." He became so much interested in his sermon that he failed to notice Enoch, who had leaned his head against the back of the buggy seat and had fallen sound asleep before his father was half through the sermon. The father preached on, and the son slept on. Finally the time came for the sermon to close, and Brother Gladys, in his description of the unfortunate soul, screamed: "Lost! lost! lost!"

The cry awoke Enoch, and frightened him so that

he jumped from the seat and yelled: "Where are we, papa? where are we?"

Strange to say, Brother Gladys didn't suspect that the boy had been asleep, but thought that the sermon had a most powerful effect upon him. He caught Enoch by the arm, and said: "Why, Enoch, my darling, sit down."

Enoch, not knowing how much favor he had gained in his father's sight, took his seat and began to reflect. After awhile it came to him that he went to sleep while listening to a sermon.

Brother Gladys said nothing for several minutes. He was wondering if his sermon would have the same effect on a congregation that it had on his boy. He asked: "Enoch, what made you jump so?"

Enoch was ashamed to look into his father's eyes. He looked down to the buggy track in the sand, and said: "Papa, I was asleep, and you scared me."

Brother Gladys frowned and said: "You little scamp! Ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

Not another word passed between them till the journey ended, but all along Brother Gladys chuckled to himself when he thought of the good joke his boy had unwittingly played on him. When the camp ground was reached, Brother Gladys drove up to Mr. Barclift's tent. It was just after dinner, and a great crowd of people had assembled around the tent door. There were men, women, and children in the crowd. Enoch noticed two pretty little girls, whom he supposed were the daughters of Mr. Barclift, the little girls he had heard his father speak of so often. That was Enoch's first experience at noticing girls from any other standpoint than that of

being partners in a playhouse. And even then as he looked at the little stranger, Lizzie Barclift, with her auburn ringlets glistening under the rays of sunlight that were stealing through the old oak by the tent, his heart fluttered, and a feeling, such as all boys have when the era of "noticing" first dawns upon them, crept over him.

Brother Gladys said: "Son, this is our stopping place; jump out."

Enoch, whose gaze had not been taken from the little stranger, heeded his father's words, but did not notice what he was doing. In consequence of his absent-mindedness his foot slipped from the wheel and he fell, but his long coat tail caught between the whip holder and the dashboard and left him dangling. What a picture! His coat tail higher than his head, his shirt pulled up till it looked like a blouse, and his pantaloons drawn so high that two or three inches of his little brown thighs were visible. The blue calico strings that his mother had substituted for garters were visible, and his quaint derby hat rolled to the bench where Lizzie Barclift was sitting. Brother Gladys quickly let him down to the ground. Two or three men who had run up to hold the horse inquired if the boy was hurt, while Lizzie picked up the hat, brushed it, and handed it to Enoch. He wanted to thank her, but he knew that if he uttered a word he would cry, so he never opened his mouth.

One of the Barclift boys took charge of the horse and buggy, and Brother Gladys and Enoch went to dinner. After dinner Brother Gladys left Enoch with the other children while he went off to talk to

the preachers. Enoch soon became acquainted and felt much at home; but somehow as the acquaintance grew he ceased to admire Lizzie more than the other girls. Such flights of fancy among boys is common, and leaves the "noticer" feeling none the worse.

CHAPTER XX.

AT THE CAMP MEETING.

THE next day, Sunday, was to be the big day of the occasion. A large number of preachers had already arrived, and a larger number were expected that afternoon. Among those who had arrived was a young circuit rider who had come from his work just over in Georgia. When it was announced that this young brother was to preach, an old member said it would never do; it would chill the meeting; that he talked too plain. However, he preached, and Enoch heard a great many comments on what Brother Jones said about some preachers and their wives quarreling about the time for holding family prayers. Enoch had, of course, always heard his father praised; and when he heard people saying naughty things about Brother Jones, a preacher, he wondered if Brother Jones's sons were not worse than other preachers' sons.

The morning Brother Jones left he gave Enoch a nickel to black his boots. Enoch did the work well; and when he had finished, Brother Jones took his hand and said: "God bless you, my boy! May you make a great and good man!" At that time Brother Gladys came up, and Brother Jones remarked to him: "Gladys, your boy has a fine head. Give him a chance, and he will make his mark."

Brother Gladys bowed, smiled, and said: "Thank you, my brother. I shall do all in my power for him."

Brother Jones went away, but Enoch never forgot

the parting "God bless you." It always made him love Brother Jones.

But to return to the Sabbath service. The presiding elder preached at eleven o'clock, and just before concluding his sermon he urged all the preachers to be diligent in searching out and encouraging those in their several works who had been called to preach. This thought at once lodged in Enoch's mind, and made him wonder if the Lord wanted him to be a preacher.

At the conclusion of the service it was announced that there would be grove meetings at four o'clock: one for the women over near the graveyard, and one for the men down by the spring. Enoch got the directions mixed, and about four o'clock started toward the graveyard to attend the grove meeting. In an absent-minded way he went within a few yards of fifty ladies who were engaged in worship. He would have gone still nearer, but was startled by three ladies who simultaneously began shouting. Seeing his mistake, he turned to go back to the camp ground, but within twenty steps of him were a number of ladies coming toward the grove. He didn't want to meet them; and, as the bushes were thick all along the wayside, he darted out of the path and ran away, parting the small bushes in front of him, and occasionally looking back. The first thing he knew he dashed right into the midst of nearly a hundred men kneeling in silent prayer.

One old man opened his eyes, and asked: "Buddie, what on the green earth ails you?"

Enoch, with much fear and trembling, replied, "Nothing," and took a seat on a log near by.

After the service closed the old man asked Enoch his name. Enoch told him, and the man said: "Look 'ere, young feller; you're a preacher's son, an' you musn't set the example of runnin' rabbits on Sunday."

Enoch's face flushed, but he made no reply.

On Sunday night the camp ground was crowded, and it was feared that there would not be bed room for all, but by crowding them soldier fashion all were soon accommodated. Brother Gladys slept at the "preachers' tent," as it was called, but it was the old church that was used in the winter when too cold to have preaching under the "bush arbor."

Enoch was left at Mr. Barclift's tent. Saturday night he had slept on a pallet with one of the Barclift boys in the family room; but on Sunday night there was such a crowd that bedclothes could not be spared for a pallet, and Enoch was sent into the big tent to sleep with the men. In this tent the bed consisted of four mattresses side by side, touching, placed on a temporary bedstead fifteen feet wide and six feet long. In this bed Enoch was to sleep with fourteen men. All the men were strangers, gay young fellows who had come to the camp meeting to flirt with silly girls, trade pocketknives, and eat roasted meats.

Enoch was so timid before the crowd that he pulled off only his hat, coat, and shoes, and crawled into the middle of the bed. They had all been in bed and the lights had been out only a few minutes, when some young man asked: "Say, who's that pulling the cover off of me?"

No one made answer.

Presently some one on the other side of Enoch asked the same question.

The boy next to Enoch said: "Hush, boys, and let's go to sleep; we don't need any cover."

After all had been quiet a few minutes, the same voice that had called out at first said: "Boys, the mosquitoes are after me, and I want that fellow, whoever he is, to quit pulling the cover."

When he had hushed, the boy next to Enoch on the left said: "It's this boy here in the middle."

Enoch trembled, but said nothing. He was afraid to speak, yet he knew it was impossible for him to pull a sheet that was four or more feet from him.

When the boy at Enoch's left had accused him, the one to whom he had spoken replied: "What! is it that little frock-tail-coat fellow who came in awhile ago."

"Yes, yes," resounded the two voices next to Enoch, on either side.

"Well," said the first speaker, "when I count three, let every fellow turn toward the middle of the bed, and we will mash that country tack as flat as a board."

He began to count: "One, two"—but before he got to three, Enoch bounded out of the bed and, snatching his hat, coat, and shoes, darted out of the door.

He sat down on the straw in the hall and put on his shoes, then he got up and put on his coat and hat. He listened, but all was quiet in the room he had just vacated, except now and then he thought he could hear a muffled laugh.

It was very dark. The stray clouds that had been

moving toward the south all the afternoon had collected into one great black mass.

Enoch felt his way to the tent door. A gust of wind brought big drops of rain into his face. He moved back a few steps and through his tears peered into the darkness, and wondered what to do. He wished so much that he was at home with mother and the little girls. He wondered if those boys had driven him out because he was a preacher's son. As he stood there crying, meditating, and wondering, a flash of lightning revealed the church, or "preachers' tent," a few paces away. He at once made up his mind to go over and steal into his father's bed. His idea of distance, aided by the lightning, enabled him to reach the tent. He crept noiselessly in through the half-open door and stood listening. There were half a dozen or more beds, all on the floor; and on each bed were two tired preachers, every one of them enjoying that sweet sleep that God gives so many of his noble Christian workers. Enoch's keen and anxious ear soon detected the corner of the room from which emanated a familiar snore. Another flash of lightning and he reached his father's bed. He only took time to pull off his hat. Quietly, almost breathlessly, he lay down by his father's side, and was soon sound asleep and as happy as the hunted fawn when it reaches its mother's side. Brother Gladys thought Enoch had come to him because there was not room for him elsewhere.

Enoch was really glad when the meeting closed and he reached home again.

CHAPTER XXI.

ATTEMPT AT SERMON WRITING.

IT is as natural for a boy to have his father's disposition as it is for him to have his father's features. No wonder then, that Enoch, a child of thirteen, was constantly thinking of what the preacher said at the camp meeting about people who feel it their duty to preach the gospel.

On Enoch's birthday, as he sat looking out of the schoolhouse window, watching the golden leaves rustle amid the late September winds, he suddenly decided that he would try to write a sermon; and if he succeeded, he would spend all his spare time, till he was grown, writing sermons, in order to have a large stock on hand ready to begin his life work at twenty-one. He had in his pocket one of Dr. Pierce's "Memorandum and Account Books," he took it out, sharpened a piece of lead—which he had molded in in a cane joint—as a substitute for a pencil, and began to wonder what to use for a text. He thought and thought and thought, and after awhile recalled a verse which the teacher had read that morning. It was the ninth verse of the sixth chapter of Galatians. This verse he took for a text; and as I am so fortunate as to be in possession of this old faded memorandum, I will quote the child's sermon, which is word for word as follows:

We take as a subject upon which we will try to talk, the ninth verse of the sixth chapter of Galatians: "And let us not

be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

Let us first consider what good we might do in the church or in Christ. And the thought uppermost in my mind just now, is, that we might all do vastly more good than we do. And every one knows that when we do good we are not made weary by it, but are encouraged to do better, especially is this true if we have persuaded some fellow creature to love the Lord. Such good deeds make us feel that we are the servants of God, and that our hearts are full of love for Christ and for all mankind.

We are blessed according to our works, very largely, and if we are faithful unto death we shall reap a big reward of all the good we have done during our lives, and just as the workman is paid after the work is done, so we, who are Christians, are to be rewarded when life has ended. How this thought cheers us along the walk of life and fits our minds for heaven!

As a dead man cannot inherit an estate, no more can a dead soul inherit eternal life.

What is meant in the text by "if we faint not" is: if we do not die in Christ, that is, if we do not turn away from the ways of Christ, seeking worldly pleasure rather than to work in Christ's holy vineyard; gathering the fruit into the fold.

Just at that time Prof. Clements called the arithmetic class, of which Enoch was a member, and disturbed the sermon writer. After failing in his recitation, he decided to study his lessons by day, and to write sermons by night. That afternoon Enoch hurried home and did up all his work before supper. After supper he seated himself in front of his father's bookcase—I could hardly call it a library, for it only consisted of three box tops nailed against the wall—and began to try to recall the thread of his sermon. He had seen his father read a great deal from a certain big book, and he believed it must be a preacher helper, so he took it down and began to turn the leaves.

Brother Gladys was very busily engaged reading over one of his sermons for the following Sunday, and failed to take any notice of the boy's work.

The book was "Foster's Prose Illustrations." Enoch did not know how to find an illustration to suit his subject, and he was afraid to bother his father with it. Presently an illustration met his eye that seemed to suit him, and he continued his sermon. He said:

Happiness is not the end of life; character is. This life is not a platform where you may hear Thalberg—Piano playing. It is a Piano manufactory, where are dust and shavings and boards, and saws and files and rasps and sand papers. The perfect instrument and the music will be hereafter, that is, in heaven, and none will be enabled to hear it except such as have held out faithful.

Death strikes the body unexpectedly, as a robber forces open the door of a house by night that he may obtain the treasure that lies therein. If the soul's life has been hid with Christ in God, before the last assault the spoiler will be disappointed of his prey, for the soul has been faithful. It did not faint, but was alive in God and hid from the lust of the world.

It is written: "For every man shall bear his own burden. And he that soweth of the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, and faith, and if we live in the Spirit let us walk in the Spirit."

If a tree is not growing it is sure in the long run to be dying. So it is with our souls: If they are not growing they are dying. If they are not getting better they are getting worse. This is the reason the Bible compares our souls to trees: not out of a mere pretty fancy of poety, but for a great, deep, awful, world-wide lesson that every tree in the field may be a pattern—a warning to thoughtless men and women. As the tree is meant to grow, so our souls are meant to grow, and as the tree dies unless it grows, so our souls must die unless they grow.

Let us ask ourselves, What is meant by the growth of the soul? It is its growth in Christ, and its love of Christ's cause. It is the tendency of the soul's complete willingness to labor in the Master's vineyard.

By the death of the soul is meant its decline from Godly things. Its returning to the beggardly element of the world. Its embracing the sin that turns it from the Saviour's breast. What an awful Judgment it will be to those who are not finally faithful. I verily believe that the lowest hell is kept in reserve for back-sliders.

I cannot see how a right-minded man could once taste of the love of God and then turn away from it. Our religion is something that will last through life and make us happy all the time. It will do more for us than a million worlds like this could do.

Every man should do all the good in his power. If one is not a professed Christian he may become so by well doing.

A good rule of right living is embraced in the following: Read the Bible, go to church, feed the hungry, help the poor, and be continually on the lookout for something good to do. Let us not grow weary if we fail in some undertaking; let us be patient—for patience is a greater virtue than energy.

Constant well doing makes the faith grow brighter and reveals in our hearts the glory and beauty of the heaven we hope to attain. Continued we shall reap the great reward that heaven alone can give. As the racer has to run to the end to gain the prize, so the Christian must run to the end of life—to the end of the Christian race—before he can enter the gate or gain the crown.

That we may not be weary in well doing, but keep on working for the Lord and faint not, but reap an exceeding great reward, is my prayer.

This little sermon I have quoted as I find it, and the remembrance of the child's age and environment make me quite overlook his logical and rhetorical inaccuracies.

The little memorandum contains several scraps of writing beside the sermon, and they reveal the child mind so perfectly that I quote them:

No. of lbs. of cotton picked by Enoch Gladys for Mr. Weaver 56–60–58–70–63.

On the following page is an unfinished letter:

Miss Lizzie,—
I fear you will think me bold for a youth but I must confess to that I—

On another page:

It is my time to stay all night with Austin, and Reeves' time to stay all night with me.

And at the foot of the page:

Swapped knives three times to-day (Tuesday) got cheated once.

On the last page are fragments of two songs, one:

Say, darkies has you seed ole massy,
Wid a mustache on his face,
He lef' his home some time dis mornin'
Like he gwine to quit de place.

The other:

I had a little cousin once,
His name was Harry Lee,
And every night he said his prayer
Beside his mother's knee.

On the front side of the book is written in a child's irregular hand:

Mr. Enoch Gladys, his book.

On the margin of one of the sermon pages is:

Mamma baked me a cake and Statia gave me a handkerchief on my birthday.

On another margin is a list of things that were to be gotten for Christmas gifts for the various members of the family. I put the memorandum aside

thinking as you doubtless think: God bless Enoch and all the little boys. Their minds, pockets, and memoranda are full of a little of everything and not much of anything. Yet they are dear little boys—men in miniature. Their nails and strings to them are what bank notes are to men.

Enoch was glad when he had finished his sermon, for he found it a tougher task than he had anticipated. As time passed he quite forgot his resolution to write sermons during all his spare time.

CHAPTER XXII.

A CHRISTMAS EGGNOG

DURING the few weeks that remained until Christmas, Enoch's time was spent just as other boys would have spent their time. But Christmas morning came, and with it a never to be forgotten experience.

Tom Darter, a grown young man who was living with one of Brother Gladys's neighbors, spent the night with Enoch; and when he started home to breakfast next morning, he asked if Enoch might be allowed to take breakfast with him.

Now Brother Gladys had heard that the foiks where Tom lived were accustomed to have something to drink on Christmas morning, so he told Tom that Enoch had better breakfast at home. But Tom, anxious to have Enoch go along with him, made excuse that he wanted Enoch to help him eat sausage and spareribs.

Brother Gladys said: "Now, Enoch, if I let you go, you must promise me that you will not touch a drop of eggnog."

"Well, sir, I won't," was Enoch's reply.

When the boys reached Tom's home, breakfast was ready and so was the eggnog. A large glassful was by the side of each plate when they sat down to breakfeast. The father, mother, daughters, and Tom took their spoons and began to sup the eggnog the first thing. Enoch was confused, but sat silently watching the others.

Presently the lady of the house asked: "Enoch, why don't you drink your 'nog?"

Although the child had never seen any before, and really did not know the smell of whisky, he answered: "Because I do not love it."

Tom explained matters by saying: "Mr. Gladys does not allow his children to drink eggnog."

The mother turned to one of her daughters and said: "Jennie, take Enoch's glass and get him some that has no whisky in it."

Jennie took the glass, and as she passed out of the dining room her mother gave her a mischievous wink. She went into the kitchen and busied herself as though preparing an "unspiked glass." Soon she returned with the same glass and the same contents, and placed it beside Enoch's plate.

Enoch asked Tom if he thought his father would object to his taking a little without whisky.

Tom, not knowing of the secret between mother and daughter, said that his father would not object.

Enoch slowly lifted the glass to his mouth, tasted the contents, and soon drank it down. He liked it so well that when the others had their glasses filled he consented to a half glass more. When he had finished the half glass, a strange sensation came over him. The house top seemed falling in, the knives and forks were hopping around in his plate, the cup and saucer was dodging when he undertook to pick them up. When he tried to drink coffee, he put the spoon to his nose instead of his mouth. Tipsy as he was, he had sense enough to know that he was in a bad plight, and that the lady and her daughter had played an ugly joke on him.

He could not eat, for his plate would not be still. Finally he quit trying, and took hold of both sides of his chair to support himself. His head nodded slightly, and he trembled so much that he shook the entire table. By that time all eyes were turned on him, and he began crying. "Boo—hoo—hoo! You—have—made—me—drunk—and—papa—will—whip—me—and—mamma—will--not—love—me—any—more—'cause—she—never—loves—those—who—drink."

The mother was very much amused and the girls were tittering behind their napkins. Tom was alarmed, for he felt that he would be held accountable because he had asked and begged for Enoch to breakfast with him.

The father, who sat in silence, was recalling the scenes of other days, when his only son died from a cold contracted while on a drunken spree. He pushed aside his second glass, which was not more than half full, and for perhaps the twentieth time resolved never to touch whisky again.

Tom, in his excitement, took Enoch in his arms and carried him out in the back yard.

Fortunately, the boy had not taken very much whisky, and soon after he reached the cold, crisp morning breeze his head quit jerking, and before long he could stand on his feet. But his breath! What would father say? What would mother do?

Uncle Dan, an old negro who lived in a cabin in the back yard, saw Tom carrying Enoch out of the house, and hobbled out to ascertain the cause, inquiring: "Lorzy massy, Mars Tom, what's ailin' de preacher's leetle son?"

Tom knew that Uncle Dan could be trusted with a secret, so he replied: "O, nothing, Uncle Dan, except a little Christmas fun."

"Yas, yas, yas, I un'erstan's," said Uncle Dan. "Ole Miss ha' been 'noggin him a leetle, but 'pears to me she orter got a lesson f'om de way Massa Willie tuck en died."

"Uncle Dan," asked Tom anxiously, "what can I do to keep Enoch's breath from smelling?"

"Wy, wy, wy, ezy ez dirt; jes take 'im out in de apple orchid an' let 'm run tell he gits peart an' warm, den you clum ober de fents an' git sum buds outen de pine bush an' let de chile chaw um an' spit um out an' swaller de juice; an' ef dat doan fetch 'im 'roun', den let 'im blow he breff on he hat nine times, an' den gin 'im two glasses of sweet milk, an' I betcher he'll be ready fur gwine to he maw."

When Uncle Tom had finished prescribing, he turned around and limped toward his cabin door, saying to himself: "Po' ole Miss; her is so inconsistable, her mout know dat 'cordin' to de new disconspensation, no drunka'd can git frew de beautifer gol'n gate ob de city ob Jerryusellem; her mout know dat dar warn't no salivation for po' Massa Willie. Hit war only yisteddy dat I heerd her pittyin' Miss Gladys 'bout her bad boy, an' now here her is a-makin' de po' chile wusser 'an he ever war." Then, rolling his big white eyes toward the sky, he continued: "Lor' bless 'an pitty all sich az iz egnerint 'bout speritalness."

Tom had Enoch adhere strictly to Uncle Dan's directions. First, he ran through the orchard, backward and forward, till he nearly had no breath at all;

then he chewed half a hatful of pine buds and gulped down the juice; after which he inhaled a lot of dust from his old hat, and finished the dose by drinking two glasses of "blue John." The sweet milk had all been strained into the churning while Enoch was eating pine tops.

As Tom and Enoch, an hour afterward, started back over to Brother Gladys's, Uncle Dan stuck his gray, woolly head out at the cabin door, and said: "Honey, I tole ye dat would fetch 'im roun'."

For a great wonder Enoch's parents detected nothing wrong, and for a greater wonder no one let the secret out. Hence Enoch was spared the thrashing he would have no doubt received.

I expect the reader agrees with me that somebody older than Enoch deserved punishment.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN UGLY FIGHT.

CHRISTMAS week and New Year's Day were soon in the past. As the springtime came on Enoch's parents and teacher saw that he was afflicted somewhat with laziness, but they thought none the less of him on that account. He had just reached the age at which boys' voices begin to thicken, and girls stump their toes and eat green plums. Notwithstanding Enoch's laziness, Prof. Clements had kept him moving along in his classes.

The craze for marble playing had caused all the boys to lay aside their balls and bats. The boy who was fortunate enough to own a middle man and two taws found it an easy matter to get a partner to furnish the ring men and get up a game. Enoch, being a shrewd trader, soon owned a dozen taws, two dozen ring men, and eight "middlers."

There was one marble that every boy in school wanted. It was a very large glass "middler." Enoch, by making a combination trade, came into possession of the coveted "middler." The trade consisted of an exchange of shoe strings, hat linings, and handkerchiefs, besides Enoch gave a dozen marbles to boot. After school Enoch was passing the tanyard on his way home. He had his hat full of marbles and was rattling them as he walked along. Alf Thompson, a young man working at the yard, hailed Enoch, saying: "Hold on, boy; let's see your marbles."

As Enoch was showing them to him, Alf snatched the large one—Enoch's pride—and put it in his pocket. Enoch begged and begged him for it, but he would not give it up. He only replied: "A preacher's son should not cheat all the little boys out of their marbles, and for that reason I will keep this one." Enoch begged, and even cried, but Alf would not give it up. Enoch said nothing about it at home that night, but secretly devised a plan whereby he hoped to get even with Alf. The next morning as Enoch passed the yard on his way to school, he stopped and picked up Alf's knife from the grindstone where it lay, and ran away with it. Soon Alf missed the knife and decided who had taken it. He told some of the boys to tell Enoch that the knife belonged to Mr. Sykes, the owner of the yard. Just as soon as Enoch was told this he sent the knife back by a boy who was going to the spring after a bucket of water.

That afternoon as Enoch passed the yard on his way home he stopped at the office, which Alf used as a bedroom. The men were all out at work. Enoch very leisurely looked about the room for something to take possession of till Alf should return his marble. Presently he noticed Alf's sweetheart's picture on a little shelf. He knew that it didn't belong to Mr. Sykes. He put it in his book and went away whistling.

That night when Alf went to his room he missed the picture immediately, but knew well enough what had become of it. Next morning he told some of the town boys that as soon as that "mossback" preacher's son came in he intended thrashing him.

Brother Gladys happened to bring the children to school in the buggy that morning, and of course Alf didn't trouble him. At school that day the boys told Enoch that grown man, Alf Thompson, was going to use him up. Enoch was terribly frightened, and well he might have been, for he, a frail lad of thirteen, could not by himself be a match for a six-footer over twenty-one years of age.

After school Enoch had to go by the post office for the mail, and as he returned he went quite a distance around the yard to avoid Alf. But Alf was watching for him, and as Enoch started through a little clump of bushes Alf leaped toward him, but Enoch jumped out of his reach and started off in the lead at a swift run; but Alf gained on him, and just as Enoch caught up with his sisters Alf overtook him, and seized hold of his coat collar with such force that the child fell to the ground. Then, tightening his grasp on the boy's collar, he began jerking him up and down, while he was saying to him: "O yes, you young ape, you devilish preacher's son, I'll teach you how to steal! Hand out that picture, or I'll maul the life out of you, you little rogue!"

Enoch, through sobs and tears, managed to say: "I—will—give—you — your—picture—if—you—will —give—me—my—marble."

"No, you little scamp," retorted Alf, his anger at the highest pitch. "You've got to give up that picture, marble or no marble, or I'll stick that sandy head of yours in that mudhole." Then without giving Enoch time to do or say anything, he began dragging him toward an ugly hole of mud and water.

Enoch began crying at the top of his voice. Poor

little Statia, who could not bear the least excitement, dropped to the ground almost senseless. Fannie cried for help, and Fair, only seven years old, picked up a stick and ran along beating Alf on the back with all her might. As Alf held both of his hands, Enoch could only kick and yell. When they reached the edge of the pond, Alf turned loose of Enoch's hands and caught him around the waist and by the back of the neck, and, turning his head downward, was in the very act of sousing his head under, when Enoch, trying to keep out, seized Alf's watch chain with such force that the links flew all over the little pond. This served to increase Alf's already uncontrollable temper, and in his rage he gave Enoch a slap that sent the trembling child flat on the ground. Then taking him up again, he was pushing his head to the water, but just as Enoch's face was within a foot of the mud he seized two hands full and threw it in Alf's face. A large portion of it landed in his eyes and completely blinded him, so that he had to release his hold on Enoch and sit down with a groan.

While this last struggle was going on, little Fair had put her hand in Alf's pocket and got the marble out.

When Enoch saw his marble, and how Alf was suffering, he took the picture from his pocket and timidly approaching Alf, he said: "Mr. Thompson, here is your picture; I didn't mean to make you suffer so."

But Alf was too mad to listen to gentle words. He put up his hand as though he meant to receive the picture, but instead of taking it he pulled Enoch across his lap and began scratching him in the face

most savagely. After a great effort Enoch got away from him. Alf was so blinded that he could not run after him. Poor Enoch looked more like he needed a physician to follow him. His face was bleeding all over, and the mingling tears and blood were falling in great drops on the bosom of his shirt. The little girls thought that their brother was nearly killed. All four of the children cried all the way home. Little Statia was so weak that Fannie had to support her most of the way. When they reached home it was nearly dark.

CHAPTER XXIV.

COMMENTS ON THE FIGHT.

BROTHER and Sister Gladys had grown uneasy on account of the continued absence of the children, and both were standing at the front gate when they arrived at home. With the wildest anxiety and excitement they inquired into the trouble and what the cause had been.

Enoch was suffering so much that he could not talk, and Statia was too weak. Fannie, prompted by little Fair, related what they had seen and heard.

Brother Gladys was so enraged that he would have ridden over to town that night and given Tompson a sound beating, but Sister Gladys persuaded him out of the notion by telling him it would only make bad matters worse, and that the next morning would be a better time for it.

After the children left Alf he washed the mud out of his eyes and went back to the village. He had found the picture on the ground by his side at the pond, and felt that he had gained a great victory on the one hand, but he resolved that Enoch's father should pay for the chain, even if it required the law. That night Alf called on Mr. Miles, the village lawyer, to ascertain what steps should be taken in order to secure an indemnity for his loss.

Mr. Miles listened attentively; and when Alf had finished his story, he said: "Mr. Thompson, did you strike the child or hurt him in any way?"

Alf at once acknowledged that he had slapped Enoch and scratched his face, but made excuse for it by telling how Enoch had filled his face with mud.

Mr. Miles said: "Well, Mr. Thompson, the child had as much right to take your knife or picture as you had to take the marble, and instead of recovering damages for your chain, I fear it will cost you a considerable sum to get out of it. You are over twenty-one, and have provoked a fuss with a minor, then hurt him. And besides, I should not be surprised if Mr. Gladys comes over to-night, or in the morning, and settles with you; and you know when you get one of these Methodist preachers stirred up he generally knows just how to proceed.

After Mr. Miles's eye-opening remarks, Alf remained only a few minutes. When he reached his room, he packed his effects in a valise, wrote a note and laid it on the table, then closed the door behind him and wended his way to parts unknown. The note he left was as follows:

Dear Mr. Sykes: I have been involved in a little difficulty which makes it necessary for me to leave you. You have been kind to me, and I thank you for it. Pay the balance of my wages to my uncle, and tell him to use it in putting a fence around mother's grave.

Tell the young lady whose picture you saw on the table in the office that I will write to her soon.

I don't know where I will go. You know my father ran away, for killing a man, just the year after he and mother married, and two months before I was born. I may meet up with him somewhere—I think I would know him by his picture—and no doubt he would recognize his old self in my temper.

You will hear all about my trouble soon. It was the preacher's son that caused it. If I hurt him very much, I didn't mean to do it. I did it in a passion, but he had no business to pro-

voke me. I have come to believe what I have so often heard you say: "A preacher's son is the meanest boy in the world." If there is any truth in that saying, I feel to-night like when I find my father he will be a preacher too.

But I must be off. If old man Gladys comes snorting around you, tell him to quit preaching honesty till he gets the rogue out of his family.

Please don't neglect mother's grave. That one little spot of earth has more influence over me than everything else in the world. I hope some day to be a good man, and able to curb my temper; then I will come back home and kneel by that little neglected mound, and thank God for the influence her memory had over me.

Good-bye, perhaps forever.

Yours truly, ALFRED THOMPSON.

The next morning as Brother Gladys was riding over to the village he was praying instead of cutting sticks. The evening before he wanted to fight it out, but when the morning came, although Enoch's face was in a bad plight and little Statia was so ill as to need the attention of the physician, he felt that the Lord would help him to settle the matter. Hence he prayed for grace sufficient unto the trial. When Brother Gladys rode up to the door of the tanyard office, he heard Mr. Sykes out at the bark mill back of the office talking to some of the hands and cursing about the preacher's son causing the best boy that ever lived to run away from his home and a good job. Brother Gladys could tell from Sykes's tone that he was drinking, so he turned and rode away unobserved. He was thankful to hear that Alf had gone, for he felt sure that would end it and save trouble. He rode up town and learned, for a fact, that Alf had left. He went home immediately and related the news to his family. Sister Gladys was

thankful that she had not let her husband go to town the evening before; but like a good, modest woman that she was, she never said a word about what good she had accomplished or what trouble she had prevented.

For some time after, this trouble was the talk of the neighborhood. Some people sympathized with Enoch and hoped that his face would not be scarred; others said that it was a pity and a shame that the preacher's son should be the cause of a poor orphan boy leaving his home and wandering out into the wicked world. Mrs. Sykes even went so far as to declare: "All my life—and I have lived thirty-eight years—I have never known of any meanness or trouble but that a preacher's son was at the bottom of it all. They are the meanest boys in the world. But that is the way it goes. The carpenter's children live out of doors, the shoemaker's children go barefooted, and the preacher's children, especially the boys, are as mean as old Nick wants them to be."

CHAPTER XXV.

ENOCH FORCED TO ACT AS STEWARD.

ONE night after Sister Gladys had put all the children to bed, she went into the little front room where her husband was studying, and taking a seat began to gaze at the fire and rub her hands together hurriedly, as was her custom when she was in trouble, or when she had to interrupt Brother Gladys. Presently he said: "Louise, you look troubled about something. What has happened, dear?"

She continued to gaze into the fire for fully a minute before she made reply; then, throwing her head back and smiling as though she had just recalled some old pleasantry, she replied: "O, it is not much of anything; I guess I might not have troubled you. I know the Lord will provide, but I believe we are to do our part."

"Why, Louise, I thought something was the matter; but I dare say the trouble is that something is lacking in the pantry. Am I right?"

"That is it, Mr. Gladys. The meat, meal, and flour are out; I have borrowed flour for breakfast."

"O, well, don't fret about that, Louise; Brother Davis will be here in the morning with a load of provisions; and if he don't come, I will go after something myself."

The next morning they waited till ten o'clock, but Brother Davis did not arrive.

Enoch was dispatched to hitch up the horse; but

just as Brother Gladys was ready to start, a poor, ragged boy walked up and asked him if he was the preacher. He answered in the affirmative, and the boy said: "Well, gran'pap air mighty po'ly, an' he saunt we atter you to come and say prayers with him."

Brother Gladys had never seen the boy before, so he asked: "Who is your grandfather?"

The boy replied: "Why, he air ole Uncle Jemes Simmern. He axed me to say to you how as he don't b'long to your flock o' Methodys, but he's mighty 'fraid he's gona die right off, 'fore his elder could be saunt for, an' he lowed that, bein' as death's a-comin', you'd do as well as Elder Huckleberry."

Brother Gladys replied: "O, yes, he's that old man who lives out on the mountain near Hopkins's Cross Roads."

The boy gave an assenting nod, and Brother Gladys inquired: "How far is it?"

"Well, it's nigh onto five mile, the near way. I'm a-walkin'; Uncle Hamp is in the grass, an' couldn't stop the plow."

Brother Gladys called his wife and asked her what she thought he had better do. After consultation it was agreed that he should walk with the boy to his home, and that Enoch should go in the opposite direction after quarterage.

The little girls were very much distressed for fear that "buddie" would not get the provisions, and that maybe they would have to starve.

Enoch was directed to go first to Brother Davis's, the steward at Sardinia Church, and bring home what he had collected. He drove away from home heavy-hearted, for he felt sure that somebody would

call him a beggar. He knew that his father worked hard enough to earn twice as much as he received, but he felt that it was not his place to go after it. It was a long, warm drive, and high noon by the time he reached Mr. Davis's. Mrs. Davis and the girls were washing, but they soon fixed Enoch a "snack o' cold victuals." Enoch fed his horse and ate his dinner. After dinner he sat or fidgeted for about half an hour before he could make up his mind to tell his business. Finally he asked: "Where is Brother Davis? Papa sent me after some things."

Mrs. Davis explained that he and a crowd of men and boys had gone over to Willoughby's Bend to hunt for some "bee trees." She also stated that they would not return till dark or after. Then she said: "I sposen you've come after some quarterlage, hain't ye?"

Enoch told her that he had, and she continued: "I hearn Mr. Davis say yisteddy that he had promised your pa that he would fetch him some things the first of this week, but that he'd had such fine luck a-bee huntin' he would have to take the whole week fur it; and besides he said he saw Monk Spriggins give your pa two dollars fur a-marryin' uv him, and he 'lowed as how that'd keep you all a-kickin' till one day nex' week."

Enoch wanted to tell her that his father had spent the two dollars for some dresses for the little girls, but his pride kept back the words.

Mrs. Davis said: "Fetch me here that bucket you have out there in your buggy, an' I'll put somethin' nice in it for you."

Enoch went and got the bucket, which he had

brought for lard, and handed it to Mrs. Davis. She carried it to the smokehouse, and soon returned and handed it to Enoch, saying: "Now, don't you look at it till you git at home."

Enoch replied, "Well'm." He took his hat to go, but he had nothing but the bucket and its secret contents to carry home, and he knew very well that, no matter what the bucket had in it, it could not last long, or make up for meat and bread. He picked up the bucket, and, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, asked: "And what must I tell papa?"

The old lady replied: "Why, tell him that Mr. Davis wasn't to home, an' that he'll be down one day nex' week."

A Miss Davis, seeing the tears steal into Enoch's eyes, said: "Maw, I heard Squire Dogby tell paw a-Sunday that he had a bushel of wheat for Brother Gladys, and Dave Naman said that he had some corn for him, and Uncle Dolly Crumpler said that he had a middlin' of meat for him."

Mrs. Davis said: "Well, Lindy, I guess they won't spile afore nex' week, an' then yer pap'll take 'em down."

While Miss Lindy was talking Enoch's heart grew light, but the words of the old lady put cold water on his feelings. However, he put on a brave face, and said: "Well, I'd hate to go home with an empty buggy; so if you will tell me where those people live, I will go by on my way home and get some of the things."

The old lady said: "Well, Buddie, if you think you can squeeze blood outen a turnip, I'll tell you whar to go. You remember that signboard at the forks

of the road just this side of Jones's Creek ford. Well, there you take the left hand fork, an' the first white house you come to is Squire Dogby's. If he recognizes yer paw's horse an' buggy, he may give you a little wheat; but if he don't recognize them, there ain't no tellin' what he'll do. He's the tightest-fisted man that ever lived in a house that had white paint smeared on it. He's been a-promisin' Lindy's pap a bushel o' wheat for your pap ever since the last quarterly meetin'. Davis hain't been atter it yit, fur he says there ain't no use a-goin'; he wouldn't git it."

Enoch bade them a good-bye and started toward home, by the way of Squire Dogby's. As he drove along he wondered what was in the bucket and what the Squire would say to him. Soon he came in front of an elegant mansion sitting back from the road on a little rise. He drove up to the gate, but before he had time to call, the barking of the yard dog brought a tall, gray-bearded man out of the house. The old man put his chin against his neck, and peering over his glasses, gave Enoch such a look that the boy imagined his bones crumbling. In the twinkling of an eye his thoughts changed, for the old man said: "Why, good morning, my little man. You are Brother Gladys's boy, are you not?"

Enoch, struck by the kind words, replied in a very mellow tone, "Yes, sir." He began wondering how to make known his errand, when the Squire said: "I'm very glad you came by. I have some wheat for your father. I meant to send it the first of the week, but Brother Davis did not come for it."

Enoch replied at once: "I have a sack here that you can put it in."

The Squire had Enoch to drive to the lot. There he took the boy's sack into the barn and filled it with oats. Enoch looked on and wondered if the man had mistaken oats for wheat. When the sack was ready, the Squire told Enoch to take it to the buggy. He obeyed, but he could hardly keep back the tears. He thought to himself: "Papa and I can make out, but it will be too bad for mamma and little sisters to have to do without biscuits."

The Squire came out of the barn and went to a granary in another part of the lot. When he told Enoch to drive over there, the boy's heart at once grew lighter. Imagine the pleasant surprise when the man put two brand new sacks, each containing two bushels of wheat, in the buggy, saying as he did so: "Tell your father these sacks are a present, and so are the oats; only the wheat is to go on my quarterage. And tell him that wheat is now selling for $1.75 a bushel; but as this should have been paid the second quarter, when the price was $1.25, I will only charge him $1.25 a bushel."

Enoch thanked him as heartily as he could; and after getting directions to Dave Naman's, drove away from the Squire's, wondering how in the world Mrs. Davis could have said such hard things about such a good man.

The drive to Naman's led him back by the Cross Roads, and halfway home on the same road he had traveled in the morning. As he was driving along he was hailed at one place by an old crippled man who had a dozen bundles of fodder tied and ready for him; and at another place by a little girl who had a pet pig in a box for "Brother Gladys's little blackhead-

ed girl." Both the old man and the little girl told him they had seen him pass that morning and had been on the lookout for him all day.

When he reached Dave Naman's, Mrs. Naman came out and said: "Dave has gone over to Mr. Davis's a-bee huntin', but I'll get the corn for you; he told me he shelled it last Saturday when it was a-rainin'." Enoch followed her to the barn. There in a corner sat a sack with about half a bushel of corn in it and by the sack was a half-bushel measure not quite full of corn, for there on top laid a hame with which Mr. Naman had struck off the corn, with the bowed side of the hame turned down. Mrs. Naman blushed and said something about Dave not getting through with the shelling. Then they put the corn in a sack which Enoch had brought along for that purpose. And besides Mrs. Naman had Enoch to put two or three dozen good ears in his buggy to shell, on his way, to make up a good bushel.

Enoch drove on to Uncle Dolly Crumpler's, where he added a nice middling and a ham to his already loaded buggy.

He stopped at the mill and had one sack of the wheat and the one of corn ground. He reached home just after sundown. His father had returned from his trip. Brother and Sister Gladys were sitting on the front steps and the little girls were playing in the front yard. They all ran out to the gate to meet him, and to see what he had piled on the buggy. Little Fair and her sisters were jubilant over the pet pig, and the older members of the family were proud of the other things as well.

When they had taken nearly all the things out,

Enoch picked up the bucket, which he had not thought of since he left Squire Dogby's. He told his mother what Mrs. Davis had said about it. Sister Gladys opened the bucket and found about a pint of wild honey and comb in the bottom of it.

That night after Enoch had retired he heard his father say to his mother: "Louise, Enoch beats all the stewards, don't he?"

Sister Gladys replied: "Yes, when my prayers are following him."

Enoch went to sleep as happy as a preacher's son or anybody else's son ever was or ever will be.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"HERE'S ONE THE OLD MAN GAVE ME."

SINCE the events recorded in the last chapter a great many things have happened. Enoch has picked cotton and pulled fodder and earned enough money to buy his first suit of "ready-made" clothes. He would have had enough to have bought him a hat and a pair of shoes too, but one of the men for whom he picked cotton for two weeks invited and urged him to take dinner with him every day; and when they came to settle, the man charged him twenty-five cents for each dinner; and as the boy only earned forty cents a day, he had very little left to show for that two weeks' labor.

Six months have passed since Brother Gladys moved to his new home, and Enoch has another sister. Porter they named her, and she and Enoch, the oldest and youngest, were more alike than any of the others. Porter was the baby child of the family, and Enoch was indeed the preacher's son.

At his new home Enoch soon found friends, and fell into the bad habit of occasionally staying down town after school till sundown. One evening when he had thus dissipated till nearly dark he saw his father pass going toward home on horseback. He knew his father would get there first and that he would be in for it. He quickly decided to try his old plan: he prevailed on one of his companions to go and spend the night with him. But his old trick

was a failure that time, for his father left his company to be entertained by Sister Gladys while he took the young gentleman out behind the chicken house and entertained him. That was the last whipping Enoch received; but it was a needed one, and was given in the right spirit, and did lasting good.

Among Enoch's new acquaintances was a doctor who seemed to take quite a fancy to the boy. At one time he had Enoch to cut a cord of stove wood for him, and in payment gave him a Waterbury watch and a silver-washed chain. Enoch was proud of them, and they made him feel larger than he really was.

On more than one occasion he and some of his companions went off to the creek fishing and carried a package of cigarettes with them. These they would smoke, their thumbs in their vest holes, and Enoch consulting his watch about every ten minutes, while they constructed plans for their future career.

By chopping wood and running errands Enoch soon had several dollars. His father thought it would encourage him to take care of his money if he had a purse, so he gave him a pocketbook which he had made out of the red top of a boot while he was in the war. Enoch was proud of the pocketbook, even though it was old and worn. He put his money in the book and the book in his hip pocket, and walked about feeling very large.

One evening as he was going home from school he stopped in at his favorite drug store to look at the new goods. The doctor was putting some cologne in the show case. He pointed to one very pretty bottle, the price of which was a dollar, and told Enoch he

expected to save it for him, and that if he would come after it on Christmas Eve he should have it to put on the Christmas tree for his sweetheart. Enoch thanked him and assured him that he would call for it at the appointed time. Then he picked up the doctor's bucket and ran for some water. When he returned with the water, the doctor was unpacking the prettiest lot of purses Enoch had ever seen. The doctor watched Enoch's eye to see which one he admired most. When he was satisfied which one it was, he picked it up and asked: "Enoch, have you a pocketbook?"

Enoch's eyes fairly danced as he put his hand in his pocket and brought out his old purse, replying as he did so: "Here's one, or a sort of a one, the old man gave me."

The doctor gave Enoch a piercing look and asked: "What 'old man?'"

Enoch answered: "I mean papa." Then he hung his head for shame, for he never before in all his life had called his father the "old man."

The doctor looked at Enoch a minute and then at the book, which he finally put back in its place in the show case, saying as he did so: "I am surprised. I make it a rule never to give a boy anything if he calls his father the 'old man,' but I would not have thought it of you, Enoch."

Enoch told him he had never done so before, and assured him he would never do so again. But the doctor went on with his work, saying as he did so: "A boy that will call his father the 'old man' will break a promise."

Enoch was very much humiliated, and soon went

home feeling blue. He said nothing about what had happened; but he was troubled, and so earnest was his sorrow that he often cried about it.

For a long while Enoch was ashamed to meet the doctor; but when December came, he thought of the promised bottle of cologne and began to devise means by which to remind the doctor of his promise. He first presented him with a peck of walnuts, saying: "Doctor, here are some walnuts I have hulled for you. I did intend selling them, but papa has promised to give me fifty cents for spending money Christmas, and I shall not need to sell them." He put special stress on the word "papa;" but the busy doctor failed to notice it, and accepted the gift with a very dry "Thank you," said as though it was not meant. Enoch was not to be daunted by small matters. He tried another experiment: he carried the doctor a lot of nice pop corn, for which he received the same dry "Thank you."

At last the day before Christmas came. Early in the morning Enoch passed the drug store, and to his great delight noticed the pretty cologne bottle still in the case. As the day grew he became restless. He had studied for some three months before he could decide which girl to give the cologne to, and it was just the Sunday before that he had decided. He had even told Luella Moss that he was going to put it on the tree for her, and she smiled coquettishly and thanked him.

About three o'clock in the afternoon Enoch went to the drug store and proposed to wrap bundles or do whatever he could by way of help; but the doctor told him that he had already engaged other boys, and

would not need him. Enoch went away, but soon came back. The long-watched bottle of cologne was gone. Enoch tried to imagine that the doctor had put it away for him. After hanging around till sundown Enoch approached the doctor and said: "Doctor, I have done all the work that my papa told me to do to-day, and now I have come for that bottle of cologne you promised me."

The doctor looked at Enoch as one stranger would look at another, and said: "Look here, young man, don't try to play any trick on me. I never promised you any cologne."

Without another word Enoch stepped out of the door and went home. On arriving at home he went immediately to the barn and lay down on a pile of cotton seed and cried bitterly. He knew that he had never called his father the "old man" but once, and that he would never do so again. He also knew that he had done all in his power to make the doctor forgive and forget his rudeness. And now, just to think, the doctor himself had broken his promise and told a falsehood. O how bitterly the child wept over his sin and the doctor's! Which was the greater? Children never forget promises nor value the integrity of those who break them.

Strangely enough, Luella Moss got the bottle of cologne. One of Enoch's playmates, who was too timid to tell that he did it, bought it and placed it on the tree for her. It was a number of years before Luella ever learned that Enoch was not the donor, but it was not Enoch's fault, for he said or heard nothing more of the cologne.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CALLED ON TO PRAY IN PUBLIC.

TWO months after Enoch celebrated his seventeenth birthday his father was assigned to a station. A preacher's son, seventeen years old, knows what it is for his father to be put on a station for the first time.

Enoch, being in the transitory period of youth, found very little difficulty in admiring the young ladies of his father's new congregation. There was one especially on whom he felt that he could lavish his affection with all ease. It is true he promised Luella before he moved that he would never forget her, and that he would love her always. He even wrote her one or two letters, but for some reason they were never answered, and he decided to love somebody else. That somebody was the erect figure and pretty face of the widow Demon's daughter.

When Enoch started to school, the teacher engaged him to act as janitor, and in payment for his services allowed him and one of his sisters to take music lessons.

The teacher never allowed the boys and girls to talk to each other or associate with each other at noon or at recess, but Enoch's music lesson came immediately after Miss Regie Demon's. As he went to the music room, and she came from it, they met in the hall, and before Enoch had been going to school a week they were passing notes. Soon the notes grew into great four-page epistles of nonsense.

Miss Regie was two or three years older than Enoch, and bore the reputation of being a great flirt. She even told some of her schoolmates that she was going to wind Enoch Gladys around her thumb a few times and then let him fall.

Enoch's love for her waxed madly warmer. One Wednesday night, when he had not known her over a month, he was going home with her from prayer meeting. They had to pass down a long narrow lane, which was shaded on either side by spreading chestnut trees. Just as they reached the darkest part of the lane Miss Regie asked: "Enoch, do you love me better than anybody else in the world?"

Enoch blushed, even in the dark, and told her he loved her next to his kinsfolk. "Then," she said, "if you will never tell a living soul, I will let you kiss me."

Enoch had never kissed a sweetheart before in all his life, but he seemed by instinct to know just how it was done. He gave her a full, round, sugar-coated kiss right on her red lips. When they reached the gate at Miss Demon's home they took another kiss, and when Enoch told her good-bye they took another. As Enoch went out at the gate Miss Demon called him to tell him something she had forgotten, and at last kissed him good-bye over the gate.

Enoch went home feeling like he had done something wrong, but he tried to reason with himself that Miss Demon loved him better than she did her mother, and why should it be wrong for them to kiss?

A few evenings afterward as Enoch was sweeping out the schoolhouse he heard a crowd of boys laughing and talking just outside the door. They were

sitting on the steps. Enoch stopped his broom and listened.

One said: "Well, boys, that preacher's son is dead in love, ain't he?"

Several in a chorus said: "It looks that a-way."

Then another said: "I wonder if Reg has kissed him yet."

Enoch shuddered, for he felt sure that some one had seen him kiss her.

A third boy said: "Boys, we all know her; she has a good mother and her father was a good man, and she is not a very bad girl herself, but I don't like that way she has of kissing so promiscuously."

The boy who had spoken first said: "Boys, we can keep it to ourselves. Let's every one that has kissed her take his books and go home."

So saying he picked up his books and started, and in less than three seconds every boy in that crowd of six was making toward home, whooping and laughing. Enoch stood as still as a post, and felt like a fool. He could not believe his ears. He said to himself: "What! my sweet Regie kiss all that crowd of ugly boys! it's impossible. They just said it because they thought I'd hear."

That night Sister Gladys asked Fannie and Statia who a certain young lady was that she had seen at the post office just after school hours. She said: "She was a real pretty girl, only she seemed to be trying to flirt with everybody."

Enoch went on studying his lesson, but he knew from the description his mother had given that the girl was Miss Demon. He didn't like to hear even his mother say anything unpleasant about his sweet-

heart. He tried to console himself with the thought that "even mother will love her when she comes to know her."

As school went on this couple loved on. Three months from the time Enoch started to the school, he went to prayer meeting with Miss Demon, and sat by her in the church. He had often accompanied her and Luella and other girls from church, but never before had he gone to church with a sweetheart.

It happened that night that Brother Gladys hadn't a single member present that would pray in public. He decided that it was a good time for Enoch to make a beginning. After singing two songs, reading a chapter, and praying himself, he said: "Let us pray. Son, please lead the prayer."

Enoch, trembling in every nerve, knelt very humbly and, burying his face in his hands, began to pray the best he could. When about half through with the prayer he suddenly found himself without anything to say. He stammered, hesitated, stammered again, then wound up with the Lord's Prayer. Miss Demon sat rigidly erect during the prayer, and when Enoch stammered and hesitated she put her handkerchief over her mouth and tittered. Enoch's keen ear was not easily deceived; he heard it, and it stuck in his heart like a dagger. He felt miserable.

Prayer meeting soon closed and the couple started home. Enoch was not as talkative as usual, and when they reached the shady place in the lane he never hesitated. Presently Miss Demon said: "Enoch, aren't you going to kiss me?"

Enoch in a low and sad tone replied: "No! no! no!"

"Why, Enoch, my boy," she said, "what's the matter?"

He replied: "Well, Miss Regie, I did love you wildly, madly, but never better than my dear mother who taught me to pray, or the God who forgives my sins and makes me so happy when I do what is right. Hereafter I shall respect you as a lady, but I've no more love for you; besides, I have been feeling mean about kissing you. If we had been engaged, and had expected to marry at once, it might have been a different thing."

By that time they had reached Miss Demon's gate. Enoch said good night, and had turned to go, when Miss Demon said: "Wait a minute, Enoch; let me tell you. When I first kissed you I was only flirting with you, but I have learned to love you better than I ever loved anybody. I didn't mean to laugh when you forgot your prayer, but it was just too funny for anything."

Enoch was a boy of strong determination, and when convinced of a thing he stuck to it. He said: "Well, if you were flirting when you kissed me that first night and told me how well you loved me, you can easily forget me now. And another thing: my religion is dearer to me than your love. May God bless you, and make us both good people! Good night."

I say: Hurrah for the preacher's son! What do you say? Boys, always remember, "The devil gives the serpent the voice of a friend, and lays the young head on a silken lap before he sends for the Philistines."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SWEETHEARTS AND SWEET MOTHERS.

See thou lovest what is lovely. —*William Penn.*

So loving to my mother,
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. —*Shakespeare.*

READER, if you are a boy, let me ask you: What do you think about boys and their sweethearts anyway?

Generally a boy blushes and feels shy when an older person says anything to him about his sweetheart, but you needn't blush now. I'm not going to tease you. I am just going to talk to you seriously and earnestly.

Possibly you are Enoch's age and have a sweetheart yourself. Yes, you have for a long time known and felt the joy of having some nice little girl for a "good friend." But now you begin to have a different feeling for the girl, and you needn't be ashamed of it, for it is perfectly natural and right. God, who cannot mistake, planted it in your heart.

Longfellow very aptly remarks: "O, there is nothing holier in this life of ours than the first consciousness of love, the first fluttering of its silken wings, the first rising sound and breath of that wind which is so soon to sweep through the soul, to purify or to destroy."

"Or to destroy." See, boys, there are two sides to the picture. There are some girls with whom you

may associate, and their refined influence will make noble-minded men of you. There are others whose thoughtless behavior may injure you forever.

Now, boys, I do not mean to criticise the girls harshly; but you and they both have to pass a critical period of life, perchance you are passing it now. I do not claim that you are necessarily foolish, but most boys and girls of Enoch's age are. I wouldn't have you mention it, but at that age I myself was not only foolish, but very foolish.

But, boys, I don't think any less of you or of Enoch because you are foolish, nor of myself because I was foolish. Possibly your error is the same that mine was. We need to ask our parents about this new feeling we have for some little girl. This something called love we don't understand. We need to be taught and restrained.

Boys, let me inquire: Is your sweetheart a girl who is too modest to seek attention in public places, or has she a jostling gait and a loud, boisterous laugh which commands attention? Is she a girl who talks all the time about boys, and who is not very particular whether her beau is a good boy or a bad boy, just so it is a boy? or is she a girl who can enjoy her own brother's company as well as if he were some other girl's brother, and who prefers staying at home to being escorted by a "fast young man?" Is she a girl who tries to win you with a pretty face, a saucy tongue, and a becoming costume? or does she delight in womanly acts such as reveal the true beauty of her character? If you were several years older, I would ask: Does she ever boast of the number of offers of marriage she has had? Ah, my boy, I need

not tell you which girl you should like or love, but in the language of William Penn, I would say: "See thou lovest what is lovely."

Boys, shun the company of such girls as Regie Demon. Seek the company of girls who do not move their chair away from you when they hear mother coming.

I do not object to beauty—I love beauty—but, boys, you had better love a good homely girl than a pretty bad or a bad pretty girl. Ever bear in mind that "handsome is that handsome does."

Supposing that you have the love or friendship of some noble girl, I would say: Be proud of it, for it speaks well for you. Set great store by it, for, in the language of Miss Ryder: "You need the keener perception of right and wrong, the forbearance, the refinement of feeling, the encouragement, the sympathy, the patience and endurance, the tact, the gentleness and grace of pure, true-hearted girls."

Lucy A. Scott says: "I always trust the boy that has girl friends more than the one who snubs his sister or some other boy's sister, and gives her no share of his pleasure."

Boys may have many sweethearts or girl friends. Especially is this true of preacher's sons, and other boys who move about a great deal.

Some of your girl friends may be young, inexperienced, and even foolish; but, boys, I beg you, I pray you, be too manly to take advantage of their folly. Make it a rule to treat every girl as you would have some other boy treat your sister or the girl who is some day to be your own—your wife.

Boys, be honorable. Do not speak evil of any girl,

and positively refuse to listen to anything that has a tendency to injure a girl's name. Remember that there are boys, considered good boys, who have done things that would have sent a girl's good name forever from the shining page of virtue.

"Disrespect toward women is the trade-mark of innate depravity;" so, boys, if you would do your duty as boys, "accustom yourselves to protect every girl's good name."

Harry Henderson, in Mrs. Stowe's "My Wife and I," claims that he, even in his boyhood, always kept the image of his future wife before him. He says: "My shadow wife grew up by my side, under my mother's creative touch. It was for her I studied, for her I shouldered toil. The thought of providing for her took the sordid element out of economy, and made it unselfish. She was to be to me adviser, friend, inspirer, charmer. She was to be my companion, not alone in one faculty, but through all the range of my being: there should be nothing wherein she and I could not, by appreciative sympathy, commune together. As I thought of her she seemed higher than I. I must love up, not down, I said. She must stand on a height, and I must climb to her; she must be a princess, worthy of many toils and labors. The thought of what she would think closed for me many a book that I felt she and I could not read together; her fair image barred the way to many a door and avenue which if a young man enters he must leave his good angel behind; for her sake I abjured intimacies that I felt she could not approve; and it was my ambition to keep the inner temple of my heart and thoughts so pure that it

might be a worthy resting place for her at last." Suppose, boys, you try Harry Henderson's plan.

But, boys, no matter how sweet your sweethearts are, there are other hearts that are sweeter. Yes, I mean your mother, of course. Sweet mother, if on earth; sweet angel mother, if in heaven. She is the one who has borne all the pain and a large share of the anxiety and sacrifice for you; she is the one whose love will never wane. A mother loves her boy from the time he begins to live till he lays down his life, whether the end of his journey be the gate of glory or the mouth of hell.

> "There is in all this cold and hollow world, no fount
> Of deep, strong, deathless love, save that within
> A mother's heart."

You have your mother's love. Do you bear any of her cares? do you heed her advice? do you listen to her warnings? or do you think as Enoch did, "Mother will love my Regie when she comes to know her?"

I would tremble if I were to see a boy who does not love his mother or heed her advice escorting one of my sisters or one of my good friends, or any other good person.

"The best and broadest and grandest foundation for true chivalry is respect and filial love for your mother." I was made to feel very sad once, when I saw a young man hand his widowed mother a lantern as they came out of the church, and say: "I guess you will not be afraid to go by yourself, as you have a light; I'm going to take Miss Jamie home." The mother's lip trembled as she took the lantern, but she never said a word. I could see from those dear

old eyes that she felt slighted. Yes, boys, mother can feel, even if she is old and faded and gray. I was a small boy then, but I remember hearing some one say: "If Miss Jamie was a good girl, she would not go with that man after seeing him slight his mother."

Boys, let us remember Longfellow's sweet words: "Even He that died for us upon the cross, in the last hour, in the unutterable agony of death, was mindful of his mother, as if to teach us that this holy love should be our last worldly thought—the last point of earth from which the soul should take its flight to heaven."

CHAPTER XXIX.

COALS OF FIRE IN HIS MOUTH.

AFTER that little love affair came to an end, Enoch began to know his lessons better, and by the close of school he was one of the first in honor and deportment.

The day after school closed one of the merchants in the town told Brother Gladys that he would like to employ Enoch to clerk for him during the summer, and possibly all through the winter. Brother and Sister Gladys talked the matter over, and decided that as the merchant was a Christian gentleman they would let their son work for him. The merchant agreed to pay Enoch twelve dollars the first month, fifteen the second, and eighteen the third; after that time twenty-five dollars a month if he needed him.

Enoch went to his new post of duty greatly pleased, for he had always had a desire to stand behind a counter and serve customers. The first morning, while he was busying himself arranging the scattered goods and brushing the shelves, the merchant said: "Enoch, we have any amount of canned goods and fruits and candies. I make it a rule never to charge my clerks for anything they want to eat the first week."

Enoch thanked him, and then thought to himself: "Now won't I have a big time?" About ten o'clock he got hungry, and feeling free to eat what

he pleased, he opened a can of salmon, a can of oysters, and a box of sardines. Of course he didn't eat all of that, but he took a bite out of first one and then the other until about half of each was gone. Then he fancied that he would like to try potted ham. He took a box and opened it; it was small and he liked it, so he emptied it. When he went to dinner he was not a bit hungry. His mother insisted that he eat something, and said that if clerking took his appetite that way he would not be able to stay in the store very long. He did not feel like eating anything that afternoon, and next morning when he awoke he felt sick enough to die. It was two days before he was able to go to the store again. And never for years did he like to hear of oysters, salmon, sardines, and potted ham, all at one time.

It seems that the merchant was an old hand at initiating clerks, but his next step was a very great mistake. He said: "Well, Enoch, you seem not to want anything to eat; you may help yourself to tobacco and cigars, free of charge, for one week."

Enoch thanked him, and told him that he didn't care for any. But that afternoon one of his friends came in and wanted Enoch to smoke a fine cigar with him. He at first refused, but finally yielded to the temptation. The cigar was mild and didn't make him very sick. He really thought that he looked more manly with a cigar in his mouth. Next day he tried another, next day another, and another. Soon, almost before he knew it, he had acquired the habit of using tobacco. But he didn't want his mother to know about it. He really felt like he was doing wrong.

After two or three months Enoch was required to

keep the store open awhile at night. Some nights there were a very few customers; but a crowd of men and boys always came there and sat till late hours, telling yarns. At first he did not like it, for some of the boys would swear, and even drink right there in the store. After awhile, however, he became more accustomed to it, and would sit and smoke his cigar and take it turn about telling yarns. On more than one occasion he went to the store on Sunday and got a pocketful of cigars, which he and some of his friends went off into the woods and smoked while Sunday school was going on.

All that time his mother was ignorant of his habits and associations. Finally she came to the conclusion that something was wrong. As Enoch came around the corner on the way home to dinner every day his mother noticed that he threw something down. One day after he had gone back to the store she went out there and looked. Imagine her surprise and grief when she beheld over a dozen cigar stubs lying there in the ditch where her boy had thrown them! She was greatly troubled, and didn't know what to do. She knew that Enoch was off to the store of mornings as soon as he was up, and not back long enough for a word of advice till after eleven o'clock at night. She prayed earnestly over the matter, and decided on a plan. She wrote her boy a letter as follows:

Enoch, My Dear Boy: If I only knew that these requests would always be observed—now and forever—I would be a happy mother to-night. Now, Enoch, remember it is with a prayerful heart that I make these requests, and I shall ever do as I have been doing: pray for you that you may overcome all temptation, and make a good, noble Christian man.

1. Never, never taste anything that will intoxicate.
2. Please do quit smoking!
3. Go to Sunday school every Sunday, if possible.
4. Keep away from the store on Sunday.
5. Try to get home early at night.
6. Never swear or use slang.
7. Never go to bed without saying your prayers.
8. Read your Bible and try in every way to be a good boy. Good boys make good men.
9. Be good to your sisters.
10. Always, and under all circumstances, behave nicely in the house of God.

These are the requests of the best friend you have on earth, and one that often—yes, daily—prays in secret for you, and who will continue to do so as long as life lasts. And when I am cold and laid in my coffin, if my children think of me, I want them to feel that I am in heaven, and that they are on the road, making a safe journey.

May God bless you!

Your loving MOTHER.

When she had finished the note she carried it into Enoch's room, and after she had made his bed placed it on his pillow.

It was nearly twelve o'clock when Enoch came home. He was tired and sleepy and was hurrying off to bed when he found the note. He had already put out the light, and was for the first time getting into bed without saying his prayers. When he felt the note he knew it was something meant for him, for his mother would not carelessly have left a paper on the bed. He lighted the lamp and read on the back of the note, "Mother's Boy." At first he thought: "Well, I can read it in the morning; it will be Sunday, and I will be too tired to leave my room." But he looked over by the foot of his bed, and there on a chair were his clothes all prepared for Sunday

morning. His shirt had the buttons in it, his suspenders were buttoned to his pants, and his neatly darned socks were laid across the tops of his Sunday shoes. On a table near the mirror lay his cuffs, collar, and cravat, and his well-brushed Sunday hat. From the breast pocket of his coat dangled a clean, bright, linen handkerchief. Enoch looked at them a minute and said: "No, dear mother, I will not sleep till I read your note." He opened it and read it, and as he read he commented as follows:

"1. Thank the Lord, I have not yet touched whisky. How I shudder to think I came near taking a taste with Bill last night.

"2. How can I quit smoking? It took nine cigars and four cigarettes for me to-day. It would nearly kill me to quit. But mother asks it, and by the help of God I'll quit. If it kills me, I would not suffer much more for her sake than she has for mine.

"3. I have missed Sunday school three times. I'll try not to miss again.

"4. I will not go to the store on Sunday.

"5. I will close up earlier at night.

"6. I never did swear, but I will quit saying so many little bywords.

"7. My! I started to bed to-night without saying my prayer, but I'll say it yet.

"8. I will read my Bible more, for I do want to be a good man.

"9. Have I been unkind to my sisters? Yes, I remember I spoke crustily to Fannie yesterday. And I undertook to quarrel with Statia last week, but she kissed me and ran away from me. I will be better to my sisters. Yes I will.

"10. I wonder if mother saw me spit on the church floor last Sunday? I had a little piece of tobacco in my mouth.

"O, I must be a better boy!" he said; and falling on his knees by the side of his bed, he begged God to forgive all his sins. He prayed earnestly for himself, and then for his associates. When his tired head pressed its pillow, his conscience felt better than for many days.

Boys, if there is a ghost in the chamber of your conscience, you need to pray.

"A clear, sweet song in the bosom is worth vastly more to its possessor than a ton of clear, jingling gold in the bank."

CHAPTER XXX.

PREACHERS' SONS AND OTHER SONS.

Youth is a breeze, 'mid blossoms straying;
Where hope clings feeding, like a bee.
—*Coleridge.*

AWHILE ago I talked to you about your girl friends; now, as our "preacher's son" was going astray, let us talk about the cause.

Boys will have companions. I dare say, if you are a boy, if you were to put this book aside and go out in the yard and give two or three shrill whistles, some boy would answer you. Or, perchance, your signal is a "Whoop-hoo-hoo-hee-hoo." It is possible that to every signal you would have several replies. Possibly you are nearly grown and do not hollo or whistle. However, I guess you have some sign: a wink or a motion or a word. It may be that you clear up your throat twice, then hesitate and clear it up again. There are at least three things that boy's don't know how to get along without. They are: sweethearts, boy friends, and signals. It is nothing but right that you should have boy friends—companions we will call them. The friends of your youth will be your truest and tenderest friends through all succeeding years. But this is also a two-sided thing. There are some boys or young men with whom we may associate, and get good out of the association. There are others who are as great a curse to us publicly as they are to themselves privately. Actually some

boys have serpents' tongues. Let us shun such boys as we would shun snakes, for "wicked companions invite us to hell."

Boys, let me ask you about your companions. Are they members of the busybody class which is always piddling at something that never amounts to anything? or are they very busy all the time meddling with other people's affairs, while their own are neglected? or are they of the downright lazy class, almost like the man mother told me about when I was a small boy? He was too lazy to make a living, and his neighbors had started to bury him alive. As they passed a good man's house the man came out and proposed to give a bushel of corn toward the support of the lazy fellow. He raised himself up on one elbow, and inquired: "Is the corn shelled?" When he was told that it was not, he replied: "Well drive on, boys."

Are your companions always ready for fun and frolic, or anything else that will make them laugh and enjoy themselves at the expense of others? or are they boys who go to town at morning and stay all day, doing nothing and earning nothing; just talking? or are they boys who want to cheat their playmates out of all their earnings—speculate but never work? Are they boys who drink or swear, or brag about the number of girls they have kissed, or who keep late hours, or call their father the "old man?"

Boys, the devil is shrewd. When he wants to catch a boy, he tries first one bait and then another. Often he baits his hook with another boy. And he never fails to put beautiful flowers all over his bait and all around it. That new boy you met the other day may

be a very bad boy, but he has money, or a gun, or a nice horse and buggy, or a yacht, or a pretty sister. Rest assured that the devil will use some means to make you believe that the boy is as tender as a girl and as pure as an Easter lily.

Boys, listen to me. Be careful about your associates. As a garment resembles the pattern by which it was cut, so the boy's life will resemble that of his associates. Did you ever hear of a man being hanged who did not date the beginning of his downward career at the time when he got among bad boys?

Don't imagine that you are better than everybody else. The devil is in us all to some extent. We must struggle and look out; "must watch and pray."

In view of the fact that a boy's companions determine his future career, I propose telling you how to like the boys, and what boys to like, and how to let them like you.

It is a good idea if you have a true and tried friend to stick to him, and not be in any great rush to form new acquaintances. Be civil, of course, but don't grow intimate with a boy till you know something about him. Boys can't love half-heartedly; it's whole heart or none. Then let us be cautious how we form or break acquaintances.

If you give a baby a bitter weed, it will put it in its mouth; if you give a boy an ugly thought, he will put it away in his brain. As such is the case, let us seek associates who have pure thoughts, and who express those thoughts in pure language.

Beware of the boy or man who is too much given to flattery, for nine times out of ten he has an ax to grind, or he likes you for your money or for your

standing. He is a "trencher friend." If you were to lose your money or were to be of no more service to him, he would cease to fan you with his devil's wing of flattery.

Don't be too friendly with the boy who is your friend only when you and he are alone or in the country. If he can't acknowledge your friendship in public or in the city, you had better not allow his in private. Depend on it, he wants you for a servant, and as such he would use you.

Don't try to make companions of those who are too low or too high for you. If they are too low, they will pull you down; if they are too high, you may try to keep up, and you will fall anyway, financially or otherwise. If you are poor, don't be ashamed of it. Don't be ashamed to let your companions know that you are not able to make such heavy accounts; it will make you richer in the long run.

Never suffer yourself to be the companion of the boy who behaves in such a manner as to make you think that he considers himself above you. Think well of the boy who is willing to meet your friendship on halfway ground.

I would not have you misunderstand me: I advise you not to have companions too much below you; yet, if a dog shows true-hearted care or love or sympathy for you, cherish it. If you have a companion whom you find to be not strictly upright, you had better let him alone. His friendship will not help you as much as it will injure you.

If you have a companion who is always questioning you about your secrets, but is never willing to tell you about his, you had better let him alone too,

for his behavior already indicates that he mistrusts you. For true friendship there must be free and easy mutual confidence.

Have nothing to do with infidels, skeptics, or any who make light of religion, or who make sport of the conscientious scruples of their fellow-men. Beware of the so-called "good, honest, sober, upright" man or boy who says: "There is no God." The Bible says such a one is a fool, and I believe what the Bible says about it. There is some mistake about it; a man cannot be good unless he acknowledges the Giver of all goodness. He cannot be honest and deny that his conscience tells him that there is a supreme Being. He cannot be sober with his thoughts intoxicated with evil. He cannot be upright when he is a downright sinner.

I have studied this matter for years, and I have decided that the model companion for a boy is one whose character is formed by religion, who has faith in God and reverence for him, who loves God and his fellow-men, and who is wise enough to believe that religion is the foundation of all intelligence. In short, if he is a meek and humble follower of the lowly Nazarene, he will do for your companion. You can trust him; nothing will be lost.

Finally, I would advise you to be careful, even if you have good companions. Don't venture to do wrong, and don't talk too much. Remember what Enoch got into by venturing and countenancing evil.

Please commit these four lines to memory:

Vice is a monster of so hideous mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen.
When seen too oft, familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TWO ANGELS.

ONE cloudy Friday afternoon when the mail came to the village where the Gladys family then resided, it brought a postal card to Sister Gladys with the hurried words: "Sister, come at once; father is very low."

Immediate preparations were made for Sister Gladys, Porter, and Enoch to go. Brother Gladys and the little girls were to remain at home.

They started Saturday morning at four o'clock. Their journey was a long and tiresome one. It was forty miles by private conveyance, a hundred by railroad, and five more by private conveyance.

When they reached the home of Rev. Enoch Atkins, they found the good old man yet alive, but growing weaker by the hour. He had been ill only a few days, but his malady would not yield.

New light came into the old man's eyes when he beheld his daughter and her two children. After an affectionate welcome from each member of the family, the grandfather called Enoch to his bedside and, placing his hand on the boy's head, said: "My child, my grandson, my own and only namesake, God bless you! I knew you would come to see grandfather once more. Poor old grandfather is so soon to die. These twenty years I have been working to get out of debt, and now just as it seems that I am prepared for quiet living I am to die. But, my boy, I do not

dread it. The contemplation of death makes me feel young again. In the other world I will not be so sick and old. I will be fresh and vigorous. When I think on the evening of my life, my eyes grow bright, and young, happy sunshine comes again, as it does at the close of the natural day when storm clouds have dispersed."

Sister Gladys and her children remained at her father's house only three days, when a letter from Brother Gladys brought the word: "Come as soon as you can. Statia is not at all well."

Sister Gladys knew that her husband's prudence had prevented his telling her that her sickly child was dangerously ill. She decided at once that her presence was more needed at home than at her father's. Her mother and her sisters were with her father, and only little girls at home to nurse her child. When the grandfather found out what they were discussing, he called his daughter to him and advised her to go to her child at once. She went. It was a sad parting. The frail woman was between two fires. "Trouble never comes singly," I have heard it said. It often seems the truth.

The woman knelt by her father's side. His lips murmured only one word, and that her name: "Louise." Then he pointed to her children and to the skies. She understood him. She poured her whole heart out in one kiss on his thin lips and turned away. Porter was kissed, and Enoch stood crying by the bedside.

The old man said: "Come, my boy, take with you a parting blessing. Kneel, son, let's pray. 'Dear Lord, bless this boy, so soon to be a man. Make

him a man indeed. And when his race is run, and we two Enochs meet in glory, where all is youth, may our twin souls adore thee throughout eternity. Amen.' Enoch, put my hand on your head. There, that will do. Son, be a man! Be a man of God! Love your father and your mother and all your precious sisters. Enoch, will you meet your old grandfather in heaven? O, I knew you would say yes. Since the day you came from Tennessee, a sick baby, I have taken you to my bosom. Enoch, look up. There, boy, don't cry so; look up! God take my boy. Now, Enoch, put my arms around your neck; that's right. God bless you! Kiss me! Meet me! Good-bye!"

Such a parting! They left the dear old man with loving hands and God, while they retraced their steps.

At four o'clock the same day they left the Atkins home they reached the station forty miles from the village where they lived. They started at once. Night came on before they were one-fourth of the way home. But the driver knew the road and put great confidence in his team. It was a cloudy night. Occasionally, where the cloud was thin, the moon shone through.

It was long after midnight when Sister Gladys dropped off to sleep. Ordinarily she could not sleep sitting, but tired nature takes repose as it can. While she slept she dreamed. A host of angels seemed to be ascending and descending the heavens. With them was one that seemed to hover especially near her.

The driver had noticed a strange light in the dis-

tance. It seemed to be drifting over the marsh which lay to their right. Suddenly it came toward them and frightened the horses till they gave the wagon a jerk and woke Enoch and his mother. A large white light about four feet in diameter was traveling just above their heads. Having suddenly awakened out of sleep, and from such a vivid dream, Sister Gladys was struck with awe. Enoch and the driver were terrified.

It was learned afterward that such lights were of ordinary occurrence along that river swamp. But that one, appearing just when it did, made a strong impression on the minds of those who saw it, especially on Sister Gladys.

She learned two days after she reached home that her father had died that night just at the hour when she had dreamed and when the light had appeared. The note said: "Father passed away quietly last night at three o'clock." Those who knew how the man had lived could easily describe his death. It was a Christian death. The mysteries of his weary life grew clear when the virtues of his death were apparent. Such a sweet death! His soul, fresh and bright, quit a tired body and gently blew away on the breath of some wild spring flowers.

They were met some distance from the house by a neighbor, who told them to go very quietly, as Statia was too ill to stand much excitement. The mother was not much surprised. She had expected as much. Brother Gladys met them at the gate. It was just daybreak. He said Statia had been sleeping two hours. Enoch was told to go in and lie down. He crept quietly to the door of the room where his sister

lay. He looked at her flushed cheek and quickly guessed the trouble: her hemorrhage had returned. Sister Gladys was told how, a few hours after she had left, her child was taken sick, and how she had grown first better then worse, and how she had asked that mother be sent for.

When Statia awoke, she kissed her mother and said faintly: "Dear mamma didn't come too soon." Next day she was decidedly better, and her faithful physician said that he believed there was a chance for her recovery. Soon, however, she grew weaker, and hope for her recovery seemed failing. When Enoch heard them say, "The poor child cannot get well," a strange feeling crept coldly over him. The first opportunity he had he lay down on the bed by his sister and begged her to forgive him for all the cross words he had ever spoken. She kissed him and smiled forgiveness.

On Saturday night after supper Statia seemed more cheerful than for some time. She had Enoch to play a tune on his harp, and then she had her father play one of her favorite pieces on his flute. When he had ended, she said, "That was so sweet and low," and then turned and sank into a deep sleep. About an hour afterward she was noticed moving, and her father recognized a gurgling in her throat. He quickly raised her up, and told Enoch to hurry for the doctor. Enoch sprang out of the door with the word, and ran with all his might. It was some little distance, and he somehow felt that possibly that very hour would waft his sister's spirit to a brighter home. He was right in his supposition. A few minutes later, as he returned with the doctor, he heard his

heartbroken father cry out: "Too late, doctor, too late!"

The child, once so robust and blooming, had become fragile, and her panting spirit had sought its freedom.

She was a child, a girl just approaching womanhood. She had known no hatred, no hypocrisy, no suspicion; the past had never troubled her, and she had never had a care for the future. Even childish sorrow was almost a stranger to her bosom. Her death was sublime and beautiful. She fell asleep as the morning dew of life was being exhaled.

The father said he had put his arms around her helpless, almost lifeless form, and the mother had pressed her hand. They said it seemed to help the sweet child to pass through the deep water. Many a child has been comforted by a father's kiss or a mother's soothing hand when the swift river has reached the great ocean.

The hearts of that family were smitten and were drooping like willows. And the world did not seem to contain so much after that loss.

Enoch ever remembered the angelic smile which death preserved upon those features, and never on living face was he able to find such sacred sweetness. A grave was made in the village churchyard, and the absence of the form of its inmate from the home of Brother Gladys wrought a great change in the life of Enoch. He continued to clerk up town, and his path led him by the graveyard. At morning and at night, on his way to and from the store, he stopped by the fence at the foot of his sister's grave, and asked God to help him live aright.

Full many a man has stopped beside some grave to pray, and it may be that God permits some graves to exist that he may turn and keep men's hearts to prayer.

When Enoch felt tempted to do wrong, he seemed to hear his two angels saying: "Meet me there."

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOW SHALL I SPEND SO MUCH MONEY?

A FEW weeks after Statia's death, Enoch's place in the store was filled by a young man just from college, a brother of the proprietor.

When they came to settle, it was found that Enoch had held his position twelve months. At the end of the first six, he came out a well-dressed tobacco worm, twelve dollars in debt. At the end of the second six, he had quit tobacco, and was still well dressed, but had sixty-five dollars to his credit. Sixty-five dollars! What a vast sum of money in the possession of even an eighteen-year-old boy who had never owned over thirteen dollars at a time before!

Enoch received his money in six ten-dollar bills and one five. At the store on the corner he changed the six tens for twelve fives. At the drug store he changed two of the greenback fives for two fives in gold. At the post office he changed three fives for fifteen silver dollars. At the market he changed three silver dollars for sixty nickels. Then with money in every pocket to rattle, he walked about the village and priced every commodity on which his eyes chanced to fall. He priced a dozen pocket-books, costing from ten cents to two dollars, but finally decided he would not buy one. He then priced hats, shoes, clothing, trunks, knives, books, stationery, etc., but at last determined that he would not break his sixty-five dollars. He reasoned thus: "If I

buy a lot of little things, I will soon spend all my money and have nothing of great value to show for it. I will go to the livery stable and price a horse."

He was surprised to find the cheapest horse offered him was for ninety dollars. All at once he took a notion he would go home without spending a cent. He proceeded as far as the church; there he took a seat on the step, put all his money in his hat, and counted it. He found that he had sixty-five dollars and twenty cents. He had twenty cents when he was paid off.

He decided that as he had twenty cents over and above the sixty-five dollars, he would return to town and spend the twenty cents. He would spend it for something all the family could enjoy. He really felt it his duty to do something in a financial way for his father, as he had cared for him so long. Accordingly, he purchased a pound of cheese and went home feeling that he was a great benefactor. Just before he reached home he stopped and priced a choice residence lot. The price was three hundred dollars. He did not buy.

On arriving at home he gave the money to his parents to keep for him, all but five dollars which he kept to jingle in his pocket. He gave his mother and father thirty dollars each, and charged them not to be careless with it or lose it. That night after supper Enoch asked his father how much money he ever had at one time. His parents were very much amused at his restlessness about his money. During the week following he consulted all his friends, young and old, as to the best use to which a young man could put his first money. Some advised him

to save it and earn more to put with it. Others told him to make the first payment on some piece of property, and then to go to work and meet the payments as they came due, so that by the time he reached twenty-one years of age he would own something. One old friend told him to loan it out at interest, and that at the end of a year he would have seventy dollars instead of sixty-five. Enoch thought that it would be worth twenty dollars to do without his money so long.

Before very long he decided to spend it as his parents had advised him: in going to school. His father promised to supplement it. He at once made his arrangements to spend the spring term of four and a half months in a leading university in Southern Alabama. There tuition is free to preachers' sons, and board at the boys' dormitory was seven dollars and a half per month. He went there and entered school.

I think the parents gave good advice, and that the boy could not have put his money to a better use.

When it became known in the village that Enoch was going off to college, all the mothers said to their sons: "Now see how Enoch is going to use his money. That's the way you must do."

Young ladies who had hitherto considered themselves above the attention of an ordinary preacher's son began to smile at Enoch as he tipped his hat to them on the street. His sweetheart suddenly became more tender toward him, and declared to one of her girl friends that he would be such a fine fellow when he finished college.

One skeptical young lawyer remarked: "It is a

great pity to see so fine a boy go off to a *Church* school, and maybe come home a preacher, when he could have equal advantages elsewhere and make a brilliant professional man."

Finally the day came for his going. He was merry till the very minute when he told his mother goodbye, and then he only shed a small tear. Young hearts are light.

Sister Gladys was glad that her boy could go off to school, but was anxious and uneasy about him. She was afraid that he might get into bad company and come home with more text-book knowledge, but less integrity.

The time for leaving home for school is a critical period in the life of any boy, and parents cannot be too careful in selecting the school. Boys on leaving home feel sorry for the family. They say: "I will be missed so much." Really, they are more missed than they have any idea, but after they have been away for three or four weeks they find that the home folks are missed too.

Enoch arrived at the college boarding house just before breakfast. When he entered the dining room the boys all looked at him searchingly. Several leaned over to the one sitting next and whispered something. Some of them smiled, some looked at him sneeringly, others seriously. One wooden-headed chap sniggered out, and Enoch blushed as all eyes were turned upon him.

The meal was not relished. After breakfast several young men introduced themselves to Enoch and offered their services if they were needed. One splendid young fellow (at this writing a prominent

member of the North Alabama Conference) went with him to the college building and introduced him to the kind old President and the friendly professors.

The first day was spent in finding out lessons and classes, and in making acquaintances. That night some of the boys invited Enoch to go "snipe hunting" with them, but a friend had posted him before leaving home, and he declined the invitation with thanks.

Fortunately, Enoch "fell in" with the better class of boys, joined the Y. M. C. A., the weekly college prayer meeting, and the semiweekly boarding house prayer meeting. Some of the bad boys (there were very few of them in that school) turned the cold shoulder to Enoch because he joined the "preacher gang."

Enoch's first term of college life was a great blessing to him. Boys in college can help newcomers very materially if they will. Many boys who enter college are green and inexperienced, and naturally feel dependent on those who have learned college ways. A boy who will impose on a newcomer must be either mean or unthoughtful.

Enoch's letters home were long and loving, and the tender letters from home were always anxiously looked for, and when they came were eagerly devoured and often cried over.

When Enoch opened his trunk, he found a new Bible on top of his clothes. A note in the book said:

Enoch, My Darling Boy: Read this and study it every day. Pray often, and remember that mother prays for her boy day and night. Be honest in your examinations, and do right in all things. YOUR LOVING MOTHER.

God bless the good, thoughtful mothers, and the boys who are mindful of them! Many a boy has allowed the Bible that his mother placed in his trunk to lie untouched throughout the college year, unless it was some day when he was sick, or when he had received a letter stating that some member of the family was sick at home. Light affliction often works great glory.

I offer a few suggestions to young men who are attending college or who expect to attend:

1. Write home often.
2. Keep an itemized statement of your expenses.
3. When you feel your need of advice, dont hesitate to ask it.
4. Don't try to correspond with every girl you left in your home town.
5. Don't be in a hurry to find a chum.
6. Identify yourself with the Church of your choice where you attend school.
7. Don't boast of your fine home.
8. Be a gentleman. Treat new boys kindly.
9. Be strictly honest in word and deed.
10. Remember that it is possible for a boy to graduate in vice long before he has received a degree in learning.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

COLLEGE LIFE.

AT the end of Enoch's first term in college he returned home and taught a summer school of three months. This school paid him more than a hundred dollars, but he had no trouble in deciding what to do with the money. He had fully concluded to educate himself. During the summer, while he was teaching, he had the good fortune to receive a scholarship in a college in the leading educational city of the South. This scholarship was large enough to defray his expenses at school, and with the money he made teaching and bookselling during vacation he found it an easy matter to remain in school till he had finished.

Enoch's new experience in college was quite different from that in the small Alabama city. His new school was in a great city, and he had to begin college life anew.

I cannot use the space in this chapter to better advantage than in quoting letters Enoch received from his uncle—an uncle who loved the boy dearly and who wrote just such letters as every boy would like to receive. The first letter I will use was written before Enoch left home, as its reading will show:

My Dear Nephew Enoch: I learn that you are to be off in a few days for college, and I write to give you some advice upon this momentous step in your life. You are going to a great city. Advice is cheap, Enoch, but what I say springs up in my

heart spontaneously, and must be sincerely genuine if not valuable.

First, I am glad you have done yourself the honor to complete the studies of the high school, and to get along so well in the college you have attended since. Considering your opportunities, you have done well, and I naturally reason that your career in the future will be correspondingly brilliant. But college is a hard life, boy!

I shouldn't go out in the city at night. There will be attractions, I know; but as you value your time and your character, forego that dangerous illusion. Hundreds of boys have gone from their parents and friends into cities, to attend college, and gone almost straight to the devil through this very practice.

Now, I am not preaching to you, but I am giving you a warning which, if heeded, will enter largely into your future success, and most especially into your moral character as a dominant safeguard.

Dear Enoch, listen to me, don't ever, under any circumstance, suffer yourself pulled into taking a drink of liquor. Some bad boys will tempt you, allure you, perhaps sneer at you, but hold fast to your integrity and don't let it go!

Keep good company. But I know you will do that without my asking it. I hereby mail you a book, a most excellent work, which you may carry along with you and read at your leisure. This reminds me—take your Bible along, and do not forget to read it every day. The Bible is a grander essay on man than Pope's—the book I have sent you.

Be economical in your expenditures. I shouldn't pose as a mendicant, nor refuse to do the royal part in the comrade episodes that may arise between you and your generous, good companions, but avoid wastefulness. If you ever get into a "tight" (don't let your father see this), let me know and I will help you. Remember, boy, I don't mean a whisky "tight."

In haste.

Your uncle, J. SIMPSON.

Of course Enoch was proud of this good, cordial letter from his dear uncle. He read it often and tried to follow its advice. He answered it immediately, and received the following reply:

Dear Enoch: Your welcome letter of the twelfth is before me. I am glad that you passed your entrance examination so satisfactorily to yourself and the Faculty. Somehow I view your successive victories and promotions as my own, and feel almost the same elation that I should experience were I a Wellington and my field a Waterloo. Pardon this extravagance, but, boy, I love you.

Don't visit the theater. You know I have dissipated largely on this line, and to-night I would not have you put aside your lessons to hear Joe Jefferson, my favorite.

Be as regular in your attendance at church and Sunday school as you were at home.

Guess what book I have just finished reading? "Uncle Tom's Cabin." I should have read it years ago, but I didn't feel inclined to do so. Mrs. Stowe is pathetic, graphic, and imaginative. The characterization of poor, ill-fated Tom, murdered by his brutal owner down upon the swamps of Red River, is genuinely pathetic, and not so farfetched as some ultra Southerners claim. I have no objection to your reading the book if you have the time. It will soften your race prejudice with a power as subtle as the melting of a snowball before the fire.

Who is this Frank Wynn of whom you speak? Is he a good boy? I somehow have a premonition that he will involve you somehow or some way. It may be all a whim; but if he is akin to the old Judge Wynn I once knew, he is a sharper and will turn out bad. Perhaps he is not a relative and I do him an injustice. You are old and sensible enough to be careful in your alliances, and I must trust to your good sense to interpret the volumes my heart prompts me to write.

I went with some friends fox hunting on old Chocolocco Mountain the other night, and had a fine time of it. It was a red fox, and we never caught him till sunup next morning.

Remember to call upon me for any favor in my power to grant, and always regard me as an undying friend and more.

Your uncle, J. SIMPSON.

Enoch's years at college passed off quickly and pleasantly. His father and family moved twice while he was at school, hence when he returned home for

vacation he found himself among strangers. The last letter he had from his uncle before graduation was in answer to a letter in which he had told about the young lady he met when he first went to college, and who had been his devoted, or to whom he had been the devoted, all the while. His uncle replied:

Dear Enoch: I am glad your graduation in the Bachelor's Course is near at hand. This has always been an honor much sought by men of letters. Wesley and Whitefield were men of high standing in their chosen work ere they reached this distinction, but that was at Oxford in the days when honors were sparingly bestowed, and won only by the most earnest and persistent work.

May I choose your calling? or have you and God settled it? I should think the profession of teaching would suit you, and I feel that should you enter the field of education for your life work you might become a factor in working out the reforms now being vigorously urged by the best thinkers of our time. Besides there would be laurels rich and valuable, plucked by you, that others have coveted in vain. You see, my boy, I have unbounded confidence in you.

You spoke of marriage, or rather hinted in such terms ("Quis amorem fallere posit?"—Virgil) that I could not fail to reach forward and gather in my arms your full-fledged thought.

I should not marry unless I found an angel—actually transparent with celestial whiteness and as unused to this world's sins as a flake of snow, and possessing a large quantity of common sense, a great fortune, a godly mother, a Democratic father, not too many back-number sweethearts, able to cook, parse Ovid, translate Sallust, walk ten miles a day, sing common meter songs (like "Amazing Grace"), and curb a temper. The fact is, Enoch, I want you to be careful. Five years in the future would suit you as well as now, or better. Unless you have before you (and in your heart) a specimen of human perfection, and feel that your destiny for two or three worlds hangs upon her life, I'd postpone that event until a more convenient season.

I always feared that young man Frank Wynn would not come

to any great good. His expulsion and consequent distress and dishonor, which is the same, were justly meted, if I hear the report correctly. Did your acquaintance with him ever ripen into friendship? You will remember that several years ago, when you first entered college, I warned you against him. It seems there is something in name or relationship.

I shall try to have a programme of pastime arranged for your return, which will be in June.

Inclosed find twenty dollars, which you may use as you like. Don't ever mention it especially to me. I know boys get into these little straits. I've been a boy. Etc., etc.

Your uncle, J. SIMPSON.

The Commencement came. Enoch graduated by the side of his sweetheart, who took the same degree. He thought his uncle's description of the kind of a woman to marry exactly suited his girl. He was perfectly satisfied.

Rev. Gladys went to see his son graduate, and possibly with a view to getting acquainted with the "sweet girl" Enoch had spoken of in every letter for two years. It was fortunate for Enoch that his father was there, for the young man had spent all his money, and on the day of graduation had to ask his father for money with which to pay his and his girl's street car fare to the city and back.

It happened, possibly accidentally, that Brother Gladys, Enoch, and his sweetheart took the same train. At Decatur Enoch and his father took a steamer, the "Wyeth City," on the Tennessee River; and the fleet L. and N. carried the love-sick boy's treasure toward her home west of the Mississippi.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ASKING FOR THE GIRL.

DURING the first school Enoch taught he was licensed to preach, and made his first effort in his father's church.

His sweetheart said that all her life she had declared she would never marry a preacher or a teacher. Enoch was a little of both, but on that rainy afternoon in February as the two sat in the parlors of the Hermitage, whither they, with a party, had gone picnicking, when Enoch got up courage to "pop the question," his sweetheart forgot her old declaration and got up courage to answer "Yes," and moreover to assure him that for his sake she would not dance any more.

For a month after Enoch finished school he did little more than write letters. He was hunting for a school to teach the coming winter, and was corresponding with his girl, especially the latter, I presume, for in one of her letters she said: "The mail boat did not come up this week till Wednesday, but it brought me your sweet letters of the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th." To that letter she added: "P. S.—There was a big ball in town last night. Many thought it very strange that I did not attend, but you understand, don't you, dear?"

The poor boy was growing desperate. They had set the day to be married, and it was only three months off, and he had not asked for the girl or se-

cured a position. He had never fully made up his mind to enter the itinerancy, but he had obligated himself to teach two years, if the opportunity was offered.

One night, after he had written a long, loving letter to his sweetheart, and an application to the Board of Trustees of a school in a neighboring town, he took up a blank envelope and wrote on it:

To-morrow I'll be twenty-one. God knows that my dear father and my darling mother have done all they could for me. If I ever make a man, I owe it to them. May God help me while I try to "paddle my own canoe!" ENOCH GLADYS.

He looked at his watch. It was eleven o'clock, but he could not think of sleep. He said to himself aloud: "Here I am, a man of my own, engaged to a girl that I have not asked for, the day set, the girl six hundred miles from here, and I without a position, and borrowing money from father to buy stamps. Something must be done! If I can't get work, I can ask for the girl; so here goes. I will write her mother a letter."

Mrs. Alethea Everett.

Dear Madam: I have been thinking for some time that I would write to you, to tell you that I have been thinking that I would ask you if you have any objection to my writing you to ask—

He stopped, read it, and tore it up, and tried it again. Next time he said:

Mrs. Alethea Everett.

Dear Madam: No doubt your daughter has long since informed you that—

He stopped again, tore his second effort to pieces, and remarked: "No, she hasn't told her." He sat and thought and scratched his head, then turned

through a book which taught letter writing, but he could find no model of a letter asking for a girl. Finally he decided that he would write her a good, long, pathetic letter, just such as he imagined would please an old lady. He went at it determined to succeed. "The third time is a charm," he said, and he wrote:

Mrs. Alethea Everett.

Dear Madam: If I should ever have the fortune to converse with you, and that act were to scare me as much as writing to you does, I fear that I would have to engage a spokesman. However, I will attempt to state the object of this letter. I trust that at some time during the vacation you were informed that your daughter Emily and I have a serious intention of some day becoming man and wife, and that this letter will not be as great a surprise as it otherwise would have been.

Loving Miss Emily as I do, I know how her mother could not bear the idea of giving her daughter to another. Therefore I will put this sacred question in another form: Will you take me to be your son? I imagine that I can see you frown, and hear you say: "Well, I think the boy might have waited at least till my child spends a vacation at home." But, Mrs. Everett, I can't wait; I have tried hard enough.

Miss Emily has begged me to be patient, and wait till next summer to speak to you on this subject, but I am two years older than she, and observation has taught me that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

If nothing but wealth could win your daughter, I could not at present be successful. All that I have been able to offer her is a spotless name, which I thank God she, for her part, has agreed to accept.

I desire no greater happiness than that of spending my life in making your daughter happy. Will you grant me the privilege of trying? I fully appreciate your position; I know it will be painful for you to grant another the privilege of claiming your child. Furthermore, I know it will be unpleasant to refuse an honest suitor.

Mrs. Everett, please do not refuse me simply because you

are not personally acquainted with me. Please be as charitable as my own precious mother was when I spoke to her on the same subject. She said: "My boy, I believe you are able to select for yourself."

May our kind Heavenly Father guide you in your decision! and if I am the fortunate one, I pray that I may be worthy of Miss Emily, whom I consider the noblest woman living except my mother. Do not be afraid that I do not love your child, for my faith in Christ is the only thing that is stronger than my love for her.

I await your decision with very great anxiety.

Praying that God may give you the inclination to answer me favorably, I am, with love and best wishes,

Your most obedient servant, ENOCH GLADYS.

He read the letter over, put it in the envelope, and went to bed. The last thing that he remembered thinking of that night was: "Surely that letter will bring the reply I want." Eagerly he watched for a reply. He met every incoming mail. Three weeks passed. He grew despondent and pale. Finally in one of his sweetheart's letters he found this consoling sentence:

Mamma says that she had a love letter from you the other day, and that as she has never met you, she will leave the matter entirely with me. I am glad to tell you the same thing that I did that day at the Hermitage. We will agree on the same date set over two years ago—the 19th of September.

In his great happiness he forgot his poverty, and pictured a brilliant wedding in the near future. On awaking next day he began more than ever to realize his poverty and his need of a position. He knew that his uncle would loan him money enough to defray his wedding expenses, but he wanted some work in view beforehand. He looked for work, he wrote for work, he actually prayed for work. In one letter

his betrothed ventured the question: "How are you going to make a living for us?"

He answered: "You love me; trust me."

On the evening of the 3d of July he received a letter from the President of the School Board in an adjoining county, saying:

You have been elected Principal of the Chestnut Grove High School for the coming year. Your assistant is Prof. Winchester, a graduate of the State Normal at Florence. Your school is to open July 15, and continue ten months. Your salary is seventy-five dollars a month, payable at the end of each month.

By the same mail he received a copy of the *Chestnut Grove News*. In the local column was this item:

Prof. Enoch Gladys, son of Rev. Isaac Gladys, of Sand Hill, and a recent graduate of the leading professional teachers' school of the South, was last night elected Principal of Chestnut Grove High School. This young man must have our coöperation if he succeeds in building our school to what it should be. If any of the parents desire to correspond with the Principal before the opening of school, they may address him "Prof. or Rev. Enoch Gladys, A.B., Sand Hill, Ala."

Enoch read the letter and then the paper. The letter was interesting, but the paper was doubly so. The paper contained a printed notice concerning him, and actually called him "Professor!" He showed the paper to his friends in town, and then carried it home and showed it to his parents and sisters. Then he encircled the notice with a big blue mark and sent the paper to his sweetheart. He soon received the best letter that he ever had from her. In it she said:

Mamma says that you must be a smart young man to get such a prominent position so soon after graduation.

His happiness knew no bounds. All on earth he

wanted was in view. He spent the ten days before his school opened in reviewing his studies and fishing. His father was his best companion on a fishing expedition. Many an afternoon they spent on the banks of a neighboring creek, enticing trout and perch from their crystal home. And as they fished Brother Gladys would give his son such advice as every father should give a son who is contemplating marriage.

Time flew.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MARRIAGE.

And there is not a heart on earth
That loves, but shall be loved again.
Some other heart hath kindred birth,
And aches with all the same sweet pain.

—*Massey.*

ON the fourteenth day of July Prof. Enoch Gladys took passage from Sand Hill to Chestnut Grove on the mail cart. He wore a black Prince Albert suit and a cashmere plug hat. His baggage consisted of a valise, a bundle of books, a box of crayon, and a hand school bell. At the end of his mountainous journey of thirty-five miles he was very tired, but a good night's rest refreshed him and the next morning he made a fine impression on the patrons who brought their children to enter school. The school was full from the very beginning, and the only complaint that was heard in the village was: "The young man ain't married." More than once this objection reached Enoch's ears, but he never allowed it to trouble him. The only thing that ever annoyed him was that he didn't always remember exactly how to work some of the examples in algebra. Just a few days before the nineteenth of September the young professor announced that, as he had business in a distant State, he would give vacation a week. He had collected his monthly salary twice, and had saved enough to defray expenses on the trip. Somehow it got out before he left that he was going off to get married. On the morning of his departure an

old friend took off his slipper and threw it after him, assuring him that it would render his trip safe, profitable, and pleasant.

Two days from the time the young man left Chestnut Grove he landed at Vicksburg, Miss., and found himself waiting for a boat to take him up the river. The boat was a day late, and the boy couldn't wait. He took rail up the valley to Rolling Fork, and then took mule-back passage across the Mississippi River Bottoms. His traveling companion and guide, "Uncle Crockett," had to tell him several times: "Da ain't no use a-spurrin' de critter so much; we will git dar atter awhile."

Sure enough, toward the close of the day, they reached the great river, and Enoch was carried across in a boat by two negro men. They rowed him around the wrecked "Natchez" and between two sand bars, then away to a point of willows and the village where his sweetheart had her home. As he crossed the river he hummed broken strains of:

Waiting for me,
Waiting for me,
My sweetheart is waiting for me.

After stopping at the hotel and refreshing himself, he proceeded to a little cottage, half hidden by China trees, and there in a snug little parlor found his loved one actually waiting for him.

On the following Thursday evening he led her to the altar of the village Methodist Church, and the pastor pronounced them "man and wife."

The first boat down the river bore the happy young couple toward their home in the hilltops of North Alabama.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THREE LATER EVENTS.

THE first night after they reached home Enoch said: "Dear, we must start off right. Hand me the Bible, and let us erect a family altar." His young wife cheerfully consented, and clasped her arms around his neck while he prayed the Lord to direct them through life.

. . . . . .

Three months later, as they were going to church one Sunday morning, Mrs. Gladys said to her husband: "Enoch, I want to join the Church to-day." She was assured that she could not please him better. He told her he had been praying for it ever since he had been loving her.

. . . . . .

A year later they decided to name their little boy, then a week old, for his grandfather, Isaac Gladys; to have his grandfather baptize him; and to do all in their power, by the help of God, to make the life of another preacher's son pleasant and profitable.

THE END.