





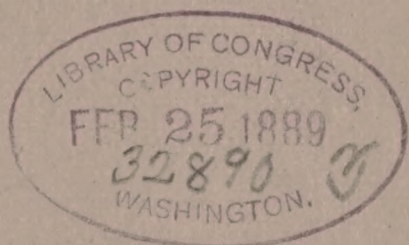




Miss Jane Roseboom.

THE
STARLESS CROWN.

A STORY.



BY

JANE ROSEBOOM,

AUTHOR OF

"Lawgiver and other Poems."

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TO THE MEMORY OF
MY LOVED PARENTS,
WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE ME TO THE WORLD OF LIGHT,
THIS BOOK IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

THE PRELUDE.

In offering these pages to the public, it is not done with a wish to become falsely represented as a character of genius, or to be regarded as one of superior talent; *far from it*. Whilst I do fully realize my own inability, to write has been to me the dearest pleasure my heart ever knew. To close the open doors, shut from my eyes the busy scenes of life, and allow my mind to follow a thought-lighted train over the hills and plains of imagination, shunning the pit-falls, and culling flowers by the wayside, has thrown a sunbeam over many a dark spell. It was in this way I gathered the particles, and have knit together this simple story. Should the readers be benefited by the reading as much as I have been writing it, we each are sharers, and the reward is with me.

JANE.

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CHAPTER I.

“Here I am, and have yet not one page written. This will not do. To succeed, I must perform; to accomplish, I must make a beginning,” said Sophia to herself one lovely morning, just as the sun had thrown his gorgeous rays of yellow light across her window sill; and with an air of speculation and perseverance, she adjusted her writing material, seated herself at the table, picked up her pen, and hastily began to write down the long lines of thought that ran through her mind simultaneously, and with so great a degree of readiness as to render the attempt very encouraging to her.

“It is but a simple thing to write,” she continued to reason, “as thought, the property of the mind, is ever current, and as free as the flowing tide.”

Onward, still onward her conceivable ideas ran with such extreme superfluity, that in a short time she had accomplished that which, agreeable to her own mind, merited great praise and admiration.

“Sophia, come, I want you,” said Aunt Sabrina.

“For what, mother?”

“To do an errand for me, right quick.”

“Dear me, where are the boys? I am writing, I have made my beginning to write that book I’ve been talking about. How can I stop. I am afraid I shall lose my place.”

“Well, never mind, then, if you have made a beginnin’ to do that writin’, it’s no ways likely you

feel willin' to be disturbed," and with a pleasing sensation at heart, she very readily excused her.

The thought of Sophia's writing a book was exceedingly animating to Aunt Sabrina, so much so, that she was forgetful of her own business, and made various and many mistakes, during the forenoon, such as dropping forks, losing her dish-cloth, leaving the kettles uncovered and blistering her fingers, all of which was very vexing to her.

"I'll warrant it," she said, "if there's any good comin' 'long, there'll always be bad enough with it, to make it even, for I never know'd it to fail when we're countin' on the better, that the worst don't come close 'long side of it."

In this troublesome way the hours glided by, and as soon as possible after dinner she made a short visit to Sophia's room, to get, as she said, "her mind righted, for she had too much thinkin' to set down to do sewin'."

"All right mother," said Sophia, as she entered; "I hope your coming will result in comfort and encouragement to both," meanwhile picking up the sheets of paper, and squaring the edges upon the table, continued by saying, "I have written almost as fast as a bird can fly."

"What, all that?" said Aunt Sabrina; "well I should say you had, now I want to know what that's all about."

"Why, in the first place, I spoke of Tom. Instead of alluding to him as a gardener, I have spoken of him as the toiling townsman. You see, I know exactly how he looks when dressed in his shoes, and blue, and of course I can describe him without trouble. What is correct cannot be incorrect, so there can be

no wrong in my writing it. I have told quite a lengthy story in regard to him and his elect.

“I have not referred strictly to myself, for, as you know, there is an interrogation between us; not that he knows, or even thinks, but I do, consequently I have but skimmed over a representation, that, to some degree only, resembles me.

“The next thing of importance is the tragic tale of the Cuckleberry’s. I have written out a full and complete statement in regard to their many troubles, and it makes an interesting story, too, you’d better bet.”

“Bless you, child, did you make it up?”

“Why no, mother; do you not remember old Jenkins, the tinner, and the awful times he and his wife used to have a few years ago. I have heard you tell about it, and how they would contend, and become so enraged, and how she, one windy day in autumn, influenced him to go with her hickory-nutting, and there stabbed him in the woods?”

“I guess I know all about that, but I never heard him called by sich a name as that before.”

“Certainly not; that is fiction, mother. You know I must modify and fix things to suit my taste. That is as literary people do. All they say is not real, neither is it fancy trimmed guess-work. They set their eye on one thing and make something else of it, and that is as I shall do.

“I am having very bright anticipations and happy hopes. I do believe in a short time I shall have accomplished much; beside, will it not be joy to you, to know I have ascended the mount of fame?”

“I do hope, Sophia, you will. You have made a purty sharp beginnin’. What is that writin’ over there?”

“That, do you mean?”

“Right there where your finger is.”

“That is where I bring in Maria Starky. I have spoken of her just as I think. I have given a brief sketch of her figure, circumstances and position, and of her countenance as being sour enough to produce face-ache, but I proceed to describe her as one shadowed over with palm leaves of artificial purity.”

“That is about as good as anything you could say of her. It ’s purty near right, I think. Is that the last?”

“Mortal, no. I have been penning facts in regard to lots of others in town, but I hardly think they would know themselves were they to read it. I do not purpose having my pages as reflecting as a looking glass.”

“What are you going to call your book? You will have to have a name for it.”

“I hardly know. I will write awhile, and then calculate the title from what I get written. Of course it will be a variety. To be plain and truthful, everything.”

After some time had passed, perhaps an hour or more, and Sophia had turned the leaves, reading a little from here and there, just enough to give her mother an idea of her mode of writing, Aunt Sabrina’s mind became righted, and she was ready to return to her work again, feeling “comforted,” as she said, “for she was sure of one thing, that there was nothing ’long side of Sophia but good luck and happiness.” At which time also, Sophia was being left in a state of almost indescribable enjoyment, in consequence of the flood of imagination, as she termed it, grown out of the circumstantial events of every-day life,

which to her had in it a beauty to more than equal that of a flowery prairie.

In this frame of mind, so neatly gilded over with the most serene self esteem, she devised various plans for future eminence, which she considered attainable, doubting nothing, upon the grounds of her becoming a distinguished author, reaching, as she already had, a point where the flames of renown were burning vehemently upon the altar which her expectations had builded.

With this feeling of loftiness she unhesitatingly approached Saul, one whom she had previously dreaded, with a cheerful air, saying, "I have made my beginning."

"What beginning, what now," he asked.

"Why, the same you have heard me talk about."

"Yes, but you talk everything."

"I know it," she answered with glee; "but now I am writing it."

"Is it possible," he exclaimed; "writing every thing."

"Yes, and anything, in a simple hap-hazard way, just as it comes to mind. Do you not remember, I have told you that some bright sunny morning I should commence writing. I have purposed to write stories, many enough to fill one inch thickness between two bevel-edged backs, I assure you."

With a shrill laugh, Saul threw himself carelessly upon the sofa, locked his fingers for a pillow, and insisted upon hearing something of her story.

"Will you have this pillow," asked Sophia.

"No, madam, I thank you; my crown will need my hands whilst listening to your story. Come, I am impatient, out with it."

“Saul, you know well, there is enough right 'round here to keep me thinking, and of what we think we can write. For one thing you know my mind is exercised over Tom. Then here is Maria Starky, besides all the rest in the town. I should like to know if it was all written that could be and tell the truth too, if it would not make a book, and if artfully written might do much good.”

“I will tell you, Sophia,” said Saul, earnestly, “to adopt good language, cultivate an amiable disposition, a meek and quiet spirit. Deal truthfully, generously, kindly with Tom, as you call him. Give yourself less trouble about your next door neighbors, and in fact the entire community, and you will accomplish greater good than can be realized from your bound book, no matter how well or how artfully it may have been written.”

“You reason just about as I should have expected, but if wise in my eyes to write, and I can by the use of the pen relieve my mind of much that is vexing, it is right. It could not be wrong. It would certainly injure no one, and bless me.”

“Had you,” replied Saul, “the ability to write with aptness upon any subject that would lead to exalted celebrity, I should feel proud and happy to know you have made a beginning, but pray do not allow the surrounding blusters of every-day life, that so much trouble and vex you, to become your all alluring text book.”

“Saul, you are always in opposition to me. You make me dread you. There is no satisfaction in even trying to tell you a thing I think, say or do. Certainly I could not trust a secret of importance with you.”

“No, no, in that you are wrong; I am indeed your most reliable friend, one in whom you can trust the deepest secret your heart can know. I shall consider it a privilege to be of service to you, and at any time when my advice or opinion can in any way benefit you, you can have them. Yes, it would be the joy of my heart,” he continued, “if you would indulge me in giving you my decided conviction in regard to the firmness, uprightness and purity of your admirer before it is too late. It is indeed plain to be seen, you are horribly staggered over something which to my mind is of but little importance.”

With a sudden start, Saul leaped from the sofa, and with an admiring glance towards Sophia, sang out—

“There is a beauty in each flower,
A sweet in every bush and bower.”

CHAPTER II.

The remainder of the afternoon passed slowly away. Saul had returned to his office, leaving Sophia to her own consideration. For awhile she mused over their conversation, and with a somewhat weakened disposition she immediately reviewed the already written pages of her intended book, half determined to destroy them, when suddenly a flash of perseverance crossed her mind, and she declared her determination to persist in her undertaking.

“It is my privilege,” she said to herself, “and I will do as I please. I am too independent not to act my own pleasure.” Up to a late hour that night Sophia could be seen from the front walk leading from the street to the house busily engaged writing, with now and then a stop to consider what to say next, as most writers do.

From appearance she was pleased with her work, as a smile had settled upon her face, whilst her fingers flew swiftly over the pages.

The town clock told the hour of twelve, one, two. “Two o’clock! bless me,” she said, “how time flies. This will never do. I have not purposed to write a volume in a day. No, not I,” and carefully slipped the sheets of paper under the table-spread, little thinking she was being watched by a pair of keen eyes from the bay window, which projected streetward, making a convenient place for Saul to notice the movements of Sophia when engaged about her table.

It was no common trait in the character of Saul to meddle with the pursuits of others, or wish to be a busy-body in things that did not belong to him; but under the circumstance of Sophia's peculiar turn of mind, and one too, for whom he had formed a true and devoted attachment, his desire to get an idea of her story became strongly intensified.

To ask permission to read, would, he was sure, end in a refusal. If he must necessarily trespass, he deemed it best to dare before being denied, and without hesitation made a firm resolve which he soon carried into effect.

Sophia had no sooner lost herself in sleep than Saul lightly tip-toed into her room, took possession of her manuscripts and left, feeling exceedingly happy.

It is very probable to suppose his happiness at this particular time was like that of an urchin to whom roguish tricks are as ecstatic as success to the skillful oarsman.

But Saul's chief object was to become acquainted with her aptness in writing odds and ends, or, to use her own language, "everything."

It was not long however before his mind became sorrowfully surprised. He found the substance of the composition to be of a distasteful nature.

"Is it possible," thought he, "that Sophia can engage in a work so void of calculation and ingenuity, and feel elated? Poor, foolish girl, certainly it will not be long before she will discover her injudicious attempt at writing. At all events it is to be hoped she may, and drop this lofty idea of becoming an author."

With these impressions permanently settled in his

mind, he tossed the papers aside, and prepared himself for the remainder of the night.

But Saul could not sleep. In his wakefulness he reasoned the absolute absurdity in which Sophia had referred to Maria Starky, a beautiful and accomplished lady; to Tom's coarse shoes, blue stockings, uncombed hair, woodsy appearance, which was so truly false and uncharitable. Also, the undue reflections cast upon different individuals, illegally set forth as they were, to Saul's clear, preconceivable mind were less than the refuse of a rag bag.

But fast the quickly coming day
Had chased the dreamless hours away.

It came, a lovely autumnal morning. Saul's engagements for the new day would not allow him to remain long in his room. Sophia was more indolent that morning than usual. "But these papers," said Saul to himself, as he gathered them up in his hands, "must be returned. They must not be missed from her table. They must not be found in my room." He therefore arrested her attention, after which he sent her to the kitchen on an needless errand, during which time he hastily returned the manuscripts to their proper place.

On her return he thanked her in his cheerful, good humored way, saying, "Obedience is like a culled flower, beautiful and much to be admired."

At the breakfast hour it was observed that Sophia carried herself with an air unusually dignified.

Soon after breakfast Aunt Sabrina, having an opportunity to talk with her husband, said, "Sophia is doin' well, I expect. She thinks she is, and I really hope it 's so."

“Yes,” said Mr. Brown, “so do I. It may be she’ll do a good thing. Can’t tell about it, till it comes out. If she gets a book goin’ once; it will set us all up; I know I’d be glad to see that time come, fur its purty hard gittin’ along.”

“She tells me, she thinks she will mitten Tom; have nothin’ more to say to him. I guess she means it.”

“No, wife, that won’t do. I think she had n’t best do that yet. Let her git a little further along with her book fust. You see it would be puttin’ a stop to all our dealin’s. Tom is wonderful clever always, you know. If I want his hosses they are ready for me, and you know too he is generally lib’ral with his garden products, they come good, are a great savin’, ain’t like havin’ them cost us lots. You’d better jist tap Sophie on the shoulder, and step one side, and tell her I say she had better hold on a little. It will do no harm if she has more than one iron in the fire. Be keerful that you don’t let Saul hear you; best let him not hear everything.”

“He isn’t here, he left on the first train this mornin’.”

“He did, eh? Well I was jist goin’ to say, he is a sprightly young lawyer, that is what every body calls him, but my opinion is, he is too much taken with the Starkys to be a genuine friend to Sophie, but it would n’t do to tell him so.”

“That is about as I think,” said Aunt Sabrina. “You see his havin’ a profession goes a great ways.”

“O, of course,” replied Mr. Brown. “No tellin’ but they’ll be after him good and strong. Seems like they’re making lots of him now. It’s every thing these days if a man can only have larnin’.”

“Father, that is jist what Sophie says. She thinks when a young lady settles in life, she should settle well, and not have the foot of pride kick at her. She believes in lookin’ up. “I do believe she would love Tom, if he was only professional.”

“I know she’s purty high minded; may be it’s as well, but you best tell her what I’ve been tellin’ you. Best to keep on the safe side, always have more than one thing to turn to. This is a hard world to git through, that I found out long ago.”

Aunt Sabrina obeyed the wishes of her husband, and after some urging succeeded in forcing the truth upon Sophia’s mind in such a way as to lead her to accept her father’s advice.

During the day she was so much entangled with the web of thought that she scarcely recognized her dearest friends.

“Sophia,” said Aunt Sabrina, “Aunt Trichie is wonderin’ what has come over you. She says you are so stiff. Shall I tell her what you are doing? will you see her?”

“The dear me, mother! Aunt Trichie is so talkative, I know not how I could endure her to-day, and I do not know as it would be best to have her learn too much of my business. It would be told all over the town, and I would be one to be gazed at by every body; besides I cannot bear the interruption. When I am in a study you know it will not do.” And sinking back in a large easy chair, she folded her hands with great grace, and quoted the well known lines from the gifted Mrs. Hemans:

“Thou hast a charmed cup, O, fame,
A draught that mantles high,
That seems to raise this earthly frame
Above mortality.”

Sophia's enlarged development so astonished the mind of her mother, that she turned and walked speechless to the kitchen, where she remained for some time apparently spell-bound, after which a change of feeling crept over her, and she wept aloud.

"What, what is the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Brown, as his ear was disturbed by the sound, and quickly turning upon his heel neared the doorway. "Anything new," he asked.

"Yes, I think every thing seems new nowadays. It's so surprisin'. How little we've been thinkin' about what our daughter was goin' to get to be. She is like some of them we read about, I tell you. She has jist been sayin' something (can't remember it all) about being above immortality."

"What a ways," sighed Mr. Brown. "I should like to hear more about that."

"Well, in a minute," responded Aunt Sabrina, then taking the wash-rag, and after dipping it in cool spring water, bathed her tear-scalded face, adjusted her hair, tied on a clean apron, and having prepared herself to assume as far as possible, her natural appearance, said, "Now we'll go. I guess I'm all right enough."

After reaching the apartment Aunt Sabrina said, "Darling will you repeat to me the same you did before to-day? Father wants to hear it."

"What was it about, mother?"

"Why, that something about bein' above immortality, you know."

"Mortality," replied Sophia, with a smile.

"Well, mortality, then."

Sophia immediately complied with their request,

after which a fresh burst of tears started from Aunt Sabrina's eyes, as she said: "O, my dear darlin' child, I do feel to bless God for helpin' you to know how to write such a verse as that."

"No, no, indeed, mother," said Sophia, swiftly. "Those lines were written many years ago. I simply quoted them."

With an irregular step, the father left for the kitchen, again ejaculating as he went, "S'pose it's some of Saul's tellin'. He's like a spring, always flowin' over."

"Sophia noticed the embarrassment of her parents and said "Mother, you know Saul has forced it upon my mind to cultivate knowledge. He speaks of it as a choice root productive of much. I can think of other lines that you might be pleased to hear. He had me learn them; he likes to have me do so. Shall I recite them?"

"Yes, if they are comfortin'," was the reply.

"Oh, deem not they are blest alone
Whose lives a peaceful tenor keep;
The Power who pities man, hath shown
A blessing for the eyes that weep.
The light of smiles shall fill again
The lids that overflow with tears;
And weary hours of woe and pain
Are promises of happier years."

"That sounds exactly right," said Aunt Sabrina. "It is just as I believe, that there will come a better day some time. What we have to do is to keep up good courage and be hopeful."

CHAPTER III.

Before we enter too far upon the unfortunate events of Sophia's life, it will be well to give a brief history of the family.

At an early period in manhood, Mr. Brown married, and with his wife settled in the town of Copperville (as we will call it), a prosperous village town in his native county, where by industry and prudent economy he accumulated some property, but not sufficient to allow him that degree of independence as was needed for the maintenance of his family. It was therefore his doom to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.

He scarcely ever having been beyond the boundary of his native county, was almost universally recognized at once by most persons with whom he met, as Jeremiah Brown. He was a son of poor parents, and not having had the advantage of early education, was termed illiterate.

Whilst this could not unjustly be said of him, the rudiments of hospitality, self-possession and perseverance were readily observed.

The characteristics of Mrs. Brown were of a very different guise. She was proud, imperious, sarcastic. Her knowledge of books was some better, but not sufficiently so to fill any sphere of usefulness beyond the ordinary duties of home life, or bear supremacy over her husband.

The difference in their views, plans and judgment

were such as produced domestic troubles many times, and as might be supposed, Mrs. Brown's inflexible disposition seldom allowed her to yield to the wishes of her more charitable companion.

Her influence over her husband was such as often times resulted in petty troubles, and caused him to become estranged from those who were ever ready and willing to be his friends and fellow helpers.

To their children they were zealously attached, especially to Sophia, the eldest and only daughter. She was the sunshine of the house, their earthly pride and glory. Whatever she asked for, wished or exacted was had if possible, no matter how great the sacrifice. Indeed, no children exceeded their own. No ill they did was meaningly wrong. No story untrue they ever told, and with this surety of perfection it was not necessary that they should "think on Solomon and use the rod." With this delinquency on the part of the parents, it could not be otherwise expected than that the children would assume a reckless, shabby appearance, which was more noticeable in Sophia than either of the others. Those things which should have been most essential to her were insipid and useless, and it is indeed, sad to say, that if at any time she was influenced to an act of kindness, it was most frequently found to have been based upon some selfish motive. When prompted to attend church, it was sure to be the result of some object—either to show a new hat or dress, to see some newly married couple make their appearance, to put a word in some girl's ear, or guess out some one's business and understand it well enough to talk about it. It was not long, however, after Saul en-

tered the family, that it was observed that Sophia was becoming more tolerable than she had ever before been.

To describe historically the details of Saul's life and parentage is not particularly essential beyond the mention made of him in the outline of our story. But we cannot omit saying just here, that he was one of superior talent and noble deportment, that refined qualities and religious sentiments were indisputably his. The difference between him and Sophia, the cousin into whose society he had been so recently thrown, was to him a matter of great importance.

Her silly, erroneous thriftlessness was to Saul perfectly preposterous, and he looked upon her with marked feelings of sympathy and aversion.

A duty presented itself, and he resolved to enter upon it. His efforts were at first unsuccessful. "To mould the mind of a child," he said to Sophia one day, "is something to do; but to mould you over is more like educating one from among the tribes of Mohammed."

Those indifferent ways, arrogant, and frequently tempered with sarcasm, were to Saul so sad and unbecoming that he determined, if possible, to trace out some cause, to which she jokingly replied to him on one occasion "that he would have to dig to the marrow in the bone to find it."

"I will not," said Saul; "you have a heart, I will find it there."

"I suppose I have, but it's petrified."

"I know of circumstances under which you have evinced the deepest feeling, so your heart is not petrified."

Those words spoken were to Sophia like live coals, and brought a tear as quick.

She knew she had a heart, but a seemingly uncontrollable will, for the reason that she had not even tried to control it.

“My antipathies are so strong,” she said, “they face me like fiendish plagues.”

Saul’s kind words bordered her round like a wreath, until by his continuance he influenced her to relate to him some of those vexing circumstances which had so embittered her mind against Maria Starky to so great a degree, also the entire family.

He found them to be little incidents, mostly back in early girlhood, and such as are common in school days, and though simple as they were, we cannot fail to give place to at least two of them.

It was a common practice for the spelling classes, after having spelled their lesson, to have given them geographical names to spell, also names of persons and things, according to the age and capacity of the pupil.

Spoke the teacher to George Brown, “Let me hear you spell your name.”

The little fellow straightened himself up manfully and spelled it, “g-h-m, George.”

“You may take your seat, sir,” said the teacher with a stern look, meanwhile heavily striking his heel upon the floor to silence the laughter.

A few moments later the teacher said to George Starky, “Can you spell George for me?”

“Des, sir; d-e-o-r-d-e, Deorde.”

“Can you not pronounce g, giving the sound of the letter as distinctly as possible? Let me hear you try.”

“Des, sir; d.”

“That ’s a little man, he will learn to pronounce g some of these days,” and the class took their seats.

It was very vexing to Sophia to see her brother with a paper cap fitted to his head, and placed to sit off in one corner by himself with the name of George given him to learn before dismissal; whilst George Starky had received many compliments and his locks of chestnut colored hair smoothed by the teacher’s hand.

Not long after, when the first reading class was called to read, Sophia refused to sit by Maria, because she felt indignant and did not wish to touch a Starky.

The teacher arose with austerity and obliged her to take her place in the class where she belonged.

When it came her turn to read, in her verse a sentence read, “When he first began to be a manager in business,” and she through mistake read it “When he first began to be a nigger.”

In a moment every one in the room was testing his skill, siss, hiss, hissing until the siss hissing went the general round, and the teacher himself would not have dared to say he did not do the same, or something near like it.

He very soon, however, reassumed his dignity, and with the handle of his pen-knife gently tapped against the round of his chair, saying, “That will do; attend to your books.”

Then turning to Sophia, said, “That was a bad mistake. You may commence and read that verse over again, if you please.”

During these intervening moments, Maria, girl-like, had, after covering her mouth with her book,

touched Sophia with the tip of her elbow and with a sly wink, whispered, "Will you have my glasses?"

These, with other circumstances of a similar nature, planted in Sophia's heart that which took root and grew thorn-tree like, bearing its thousand spines.

Did Sophia ever overlook and make friend with Maria? We will see.

Saul very attentively listened and the truth was, he felt for her a deeper sympathy than at any time before. He believed to encourage and elevate her mind would be the surer way of overcoming those little ills, and destroying the growth of enmity, and it was as true as that light expels darkness, his endeavors to benefit her were artfully and faithfully performed. As is shown, so exalted became her ideas under his influence that she soon began to prepare for a higher life than to be wife to Tom, the honest gardener, to whom she had vowed faithfulness. She believed that, in a short time, she should succeed in the completion of a work that would lead to popularity. This was embarrassing to Saul, who not for one moment had introduced an insinuation of the kind; but simply to teach her penmanship, note, letter writing, etc. It is at this point in the history of events that our story begins.

With Sophia, Saul was open-hearted and frank. To use his own language as expressed, "She is horribly inefficient. Her effort at writing is merely a freak of fanaticism, for authorship can never grace the name of Sophia Brown."

CHAPTER IV.

Aunt Trichie's calls were frequent and critically made. She believed all was not quite right, and it was not wrong if she looked into matters. Sophia's lofty airs, and Aunt Sabrina's copious tears meant something, that was certain.

"I 'spose the weddin' day can't be fur off, or somethin' of that kind," she calmly said to Aunt Sabrina one day.

"I do not know what is in the future. It is not best to tell all we know, but Sophia has taken quite a turn, and I am surprised at it, too. I guess every body will be, some day. Don't suppose any body has any idee of her value. She is like some of them we read about, I tell you."

"What is it?" asked Aunt Trichie, "pray tell me; I feel anxious to know. It's nothin' bad, I hope."

"My, no, it's somethin' we'll all feel proud of some day, if nothin' happens."

With a stern look, and a strongly emphasized expression, Aunt Trichie spoke out. "I must know; do tell me right quick. She is not going to come a hard pull on Maria Starky, and get L. H. Benjamin, is she?"

"No, it is not that, we don't want to put out the Starkys's eyes by comin' any sich tricks as that. It's a good deal more, you'll find, when it comes out."

Aunt Trichie continued her inquisitiveness by

asking, "Is she becomin' christianized under Saul's influence? He's been leadin' her to church, and they've been tellin' me out round he has had her in Sabbath school."

"No, Trichie, you hain't guessed it yet, and it is 'nt likely you would if you kept on guessin' a whole day. I tell you it's a thing so surprisin'."

"Please, now, Sabrina, do tell a body. I spent a sleepless night, last night, thinkin' about you, and wonderin' what was going to happen. It almost seemed as though I could breathe something unnatural in the air ever since I was here the last time afore, my mind has been so harrassed."

"I would be willing on my part, but don't suppose Sophia would be. She thinks it's best to live under a nom de plume."

"Nom de plume," repeated Aunt Trichie, whose curiosity reached a higher point than at any time before. "You do not mean to advance the idee that Sophia is going to be a book writer, do you?" quickly stretching her neck to elevate her head in token of highness.

"For mercy sake, Aunt Trichie, I do wish you would not bother me any more, my mind is so exercised I hardly know myself, and as I have said before, it is not best to tell all we know."

"Yes, but when folks begin to put on airs, like Sophia, it tells somethin'; besides your looks was no way blindin'. When I am keeping secrets, I always try to look nateral."

At this moment Aunt Sabrina was called to another apartment, during which time Aunt Trichie tripped out round to an outside window, where by holding her hands snugly around her face, she

caught sight of Sophia in close proximity with Tom.

"The dear me," she exclaimed, "I do wonder if that's what she calls *nom de plume*. If it is, then I don't know."

The view was unsatisfactory. Sophia had too soon caught sight of her, as she stood with her nose tightly pressed against the window pane, and hastily drew towards her.

Without expostulation, Aunt Trichie turned with an august air, and walked away, but doubly perplexed with anxiety. The intrusion disturbed the tranquillity of the parties to so great a degree, that in a short time Tom left; leaving Sophia to her own skill in finding out the desired information.

"Oh, mother, mother," said Sophia, "I never saw such an impudent old piece in my life, as Aunt Trichie is. Believe me, she went round to the parlor window to peek. I suppose it was to see that which she could not otherwise find out. She stood with her nose so tightly pressed against the window pane, that at first I thought she had fastened to it a piece of white paper. Had she been in talking with you?"

"O, yes, you know exactly how she is."

"But, mother, I hope you did not lead her into my business; did you?"

"I don't think I did."

"You do not think you did. Do you not know?"

"Now, Sophia, I did the best I could, talkin' with her. Can't you trust to me, and my judgment? Of course you know she is awful inquisitive."

"I know all that perfectly well, but you should have guarded against any expression that would lead to exposure. Do you think you did?"

"I say I did the best I could. I don't think I did

quite,—blessed thing I was called out, otherwise there is no tellin' what might have been said."

"What was it you did say? Tell me, I am anxious to know."

"I kept putting her off sidewise, you know."

"But, mother, I want to know, did you talk about me and my business?"

"Now, Sophia, don't bother me any more; you are nearly as bad as Aunt Trichie, when you once get goin'."

"I want to know sure, was there anything said that would lead to suspicion?"

"The dear me, child! I do wish you would stop. I almost forget about it. I think our conversation struck a hint or th' like. I believe I told her some-thin' like this, I would be willin' on my part, but I didn't suppose you would be. You wanted to live under nom de plume. It was in some such way as that I said it."

"Yes, I have no doubt of it. It is as I believed, something would spill out. Just one word too much," said Sophia, with wild excitement. "Aunt Trichie will take pleasure in using the word nom de plume all over this town. She will go to Starky's with it, and mother, you know perfectly well, if they get hold of what I am doing, they will buzz at me like so many mad bees. They would most wofully hate to have me to get ahead of Maria, that they would! They swell mightily over her saintly poetry. I don't believe she writes it without help, but if she does it don't amount to anything. I wish our editors wouldn't publish for her. It only helps elate her. You know they think themselves aristocracy, and can run over every one they please, and do, except the L. H.

Benjamin family, or some such. Well," she continued, "let them interfere with me, and they will find me their match. Tom and I are going to attend the Castle Hill singing school this winter, and that will give me a good chance to sow poor seed for them, especially for Miss Maria, and I will do it too."

Saul opened the door leading into the room just in time to catch the last sentence as it fell from her lips, to which he hastily replied, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

A long pause ensued. Sophia then broke the silence by saying, "Saul, you do not know Maria as well as I do."

"Certainly not," he replied.

"It is because you do not watch," with which a corresponding sentence from Aunt Sabrina followed.

"To watch is not my profession," responded Saul.

"One would suppose you could see without watching."

"Will you please be so kind as to tell me what it is you see so utterly wrong. It may benefit me to know."

"That is about what I think," said Aunt Sabrina, "for you seem to be gettin' altogether too thick with them."

"Saul," said Sophia, "to be truthfully honest in this matter, I don't believe there is one good trait about Maria. She is both impudent and indolent. I do not believe she would pare a potato, if she never ate one. Of course she puts on style, and sometimes she will appear very modest, but it is perfect mockery, nothing more. I do not feel afraid to speak as I do,

for I, having lived here close by her always, have learned her to a letter."

"Well, Sophia, if you are correct in your representation, she is certainly in a very sad plight. For all such we should have the deeper sympathy. I am not sufficiently acquainted with Miss Maria to decide the matter positively at present, but time will tell, as the one reliable proof we have is that every flower unfolds its own leaves."

CHAPTER V.

“Sophia, what does ail you, you seem to be in a wonderful whine about somethin’. Is there anything that I can do for you,” said Aunt Sabrina.

“How I do wish father would ever manage as he should,” responded Sophia, with a dissatisfied air, “He is forever on the background. I suppose he will think it terrible if I ask for a new dress. But mother, what do you suppose I am to appear out in next Tuesday evening. There is to be a grand social at Mr. Starky’s and believe me, I have had a special invitation. I have nothing suitable to wear, but I’m going.”

“Well,” said Aunt Sabrina, “you may just as well go, and see all you can over there. I don’t suppose they want you at all, but they thought they must invite you to show off, that’s what it’s for,—starchy Christianity, you know.”

“Of course that is it, and I will go all the more to provoke them. I have been thinking supposing I should meet L. H. Benjamin there. He will be there, I have no doubt. You see Maria is after him, no mistake. It is enough to make any one laugh to see her pin neat little bouquets on that old gentleman’s coat, and fill his hands with choice flowers when he is taking his leave after having been with her, I say her, it is more especially her. I see such things oftentimes from my room window.”

Aunt Sabrina, after laughing heartily, said, “Well

rally, I'm glad to see you throw off that sad look; it may be," she continued, "if you are trimmed up nicely, you can cut Maria out and get him yourself."

"Mother, I have been thinking of that very thing. Would you be willing?"

"Yes, of course I would be. The one who gets L. H. Benjamin gets a man, and more."

"And throw Tom away?"

"If Tom loves you truly well, as a man should love his intended, he would not turn round and marry another, but keep you in his heart. It would n't be long, only a few short years at the most, and he could have a second opportunity with competency. There is no tellin' but he would have an eye to that."

Said Sophia, "If he is as sharp as Saul thinks he is, he would. Shall I talk round him to see if I can get his opinion on it."

"O no, I don't believe I would. He is so conscientious, he would be sure to see a something in it not quite right, no matter how bright the side you held up. You see he holds to this Church doctrine and believes every one should keep lookin' on either side of them, so they will be sure to keep in the narrow path that leads jist so straight. If we were to have him boss in everything there would be no gittin' along at all, that would be it. I guess we shall exercise a little independence of our own. I do not want to say anything to hurt his feelin's, his meanin' is well enough I expect, but I think a good many times that he is a little bit too lordly. If he was to know what we have jist been sayin' he would be for puttin' somethin' in the way of your goin'."

"He will not bridle me on every hand, I thank you. He could not keep me from there next Tues-

day evening, for I am going. The only question is, what shall I wear."

"Why, clothin', child; you have several dresses, any one of them would do I am sure. There is your striped silk, won't that answer?"

"That is so tattered it shows the lining in several places. I have over-hauled every piece I have, and there is something the matter with every single one. I do wish father would get me a new dress. I should have one rich and stylish for the occasion, and you know I can't make a grand appearance without one."

At this moment the bell rang and Sophia left to return soon, but was kept much longer than she expected. During his absence Mr. Brown happened around to the back door where Aunt Sabrina met him, and introduced the necessity of having Sophia tastefully dressed for the occasion.

For a few moments Mr. Brown thoughtfully rested his tired hands on one knee, with his foot upon the threshold, then explained with an emotion of tenderness the impossibility of a thing of the kind. Said he, "Tell Sophie, father would be more than glad to satisfy all her requirements, but it is impossible for me to meet the engagements for the comin' winter that are already made. Try, wife, and fix her up the best you can with such as you have, and may fortune smile on her with that."

With his eyes flooded with tears he left to fill out the hours of daily toil, for daily bread.

On Sophia's return the first words were, "Was n't father here whilst I was out? I thought I heard you talking with him."

"Yes, and he thinks he can't meet the engagements already made."

“If he would make less engagements of some kinds, and more of others it would be quite as well,” she peevishly said. “Father works hours enough with his hands, but he has a senseless head. Were it otherwise, we would not always be bound under the yoke of poverty. There is not another girl in this town who has so little that is nice to wear as I have,” she continued with heavy sobs.

“I know,” said Aunt Sabrina, “that father is short-sighted. If I did not see ahead myself, and square him round every now and then, the mercy knows what would become of us. I do not believe we would have a home to cover our heads to-day. I do hope, child, you will have better luck than I did when I married your father. I like him well enough, only I don’t like poverty. It’s no way convenient, this always bein’ poor.”

“I mean I will have it, I am bound on it,” said Sophia. “I will make a strike for L. H. Benjamin! see if I don’t. I do not care if he is old and walks with a cane, so long as it is gold-headed. If it is a candid fact that Maria has too tight a hold of him to break, I will work things out in some other way. A fortune I will have, and a good one, too. ‘Where there is a will there is a way,’ so see if I do not. I have all confidence that my book will be a success, and that will be a fortune of itself.”

“O, my, yes,” said Aunt Sabrina, “there, that is too. I had almost forgot about it. I ought not to feel poor, but try and see things more as they are. I do suppose I have a fortune in you to feel proud of, and it may not be long before it can be seen, either. I do not want *nom de plume* always.”

“But mother it will not answer to talk and not

do. We must be looking into things. If father will not be influenced to contract more debt, I must be patched up then, I suppose."

Said Aunt Sabrina, "You jist go and bring down your striped silk; you might bring down your black silk, also. Then there is that salmon colored poplin, you might bring that down."

Sophia hastily complied, and in a short time a pile of (so-called) old dresses were flung on the table. First one and then another was newly tried on, each in turn having its own deficiency. After various plans had been suggested, with as many failures, the only alternative was mother's wardrobe.

"There, mother," said Sophia, "is your new butternut colored cashmere, would not that look well, changed a little and more tastefully trimmed?"

"I do not know but that would do; we will see." It took but a few minutes to decide. It was soon seen a slight change in the drapery, the seams taken deeper in two or three places, with the trimming off Sophia's old African satin, would make a stylish suit without extra expense. The question was no sooner settled with satisfaction, and the heart of Sophia lighted with every expectation of pleasure, as she looked into the near future, when she would be at a grand social, so tastefully dressed in her mother's butternut colored cashmere, hoping to attract the attention of L. H. Benjamin, than a change awaited her. The door opened. "Here, Miss Sophia, is a note for you," said a rosy-cheeked little girl.

"Where did it come from?"

"Mr. Harrison asked me to give it to you."

There was no time lost in opening the envelope. "Oh, mother," she exclaimed, "how confused my

plans! How surprised I am! I am truly vexed! The Starkys have invited Tom, and this note is from him, asking me to be in readiness at seven P. M. to accompany him. I do wonder if I am to have him in my way. I did want full chance myself, I wished to be free, but if he is to go, and I must go with him, I shall be tied fast, for Tom is always like a tick, sticks close."

"I do feel most dreadful sorry myself," said Aunt Sabrina, "that it must be so. But I don't see how you can git around it. You know we are awfully dependent upon him."

"Yes, that is what being dependent does, it is bondage. So I suppose I must make up my mind to appear pleased, but the truth is I am not. I do not wish to have him with me. I wished to carry out a thing or two according to my own will, that I cannot, and have him with me. I suppose as long as he thinks of me as his, and I do go with him, I must go until I have reached the end of going. I do not want anything to come in the way of our arrangement for this winter. We have it all calculated, the school will commence in just one week more, I would not miss that for the world. It is a splendid drive to Castle Hill and it makes glad times for me. I enjoy it so much, Tom has such a nice rig, bells, and good warm robes. It makes me feel gay to think of it."

"Yes, yes, Sophia, you must try and git along with Tom, it would n't do for you to be cold and sidewise. I think you may have a chance to get acquainted with L. H. if he should be there, which of course he will be, without much interference, and if you shouldn't, there may come another openin', for

I do believe the sayin' that 'what is to be, will be,' so if you are to be Mrs. L. H. Benjamin, you will be."

During the remainder of the day, and days following, little if anything was accomplished by Aunt Sabrina and Sophia, beyond the needful preparations for the social. Aunt Sabrina's dress was adjusted to Sophia's form. Yards of ribbon in bunches and bows, an abundance of rich lace, arranged with exquisite taste; also, a set of fine jewelry, so that instead of being patched up, she was covered with a mass of superfluity.

CHAPTER VI.

Tuesday afternoon came, preceding the evening in which the invited guests were to assemble at Mr. Starky's, with high wind and heavy rain storm. Sophia looked downcast and sorrowfully disappointed. "I will warrant it;" she said, "if ever I want to appear out there will be something to inconvenience me. I had calculated on clear sky, and moderate weather. To have the occasion agreeable, it is such we need. But I cannot give it up; I must go. I have every article of dress that is necessary to make a good appearance; besides the guests will be of the very best society. I cannot now make a miss."

"I think," said Aunt Sabrina, "that it's more than likely Tom will go. You know he's awful perseverin'. May be Saul would lend a helpin' hand; he knows you want to go. It will soon be tea time, and when he gets here we can find out somethin' more of the prospects."

"I shall make the thing possible," said Sophia, "for I am going if the wind does blow. Tom and Saul together can get me there."

Just then Saul came in.

"What do you think of the weather," asked Sophia.

"Terrible, terrible," responded Saul.

"Yes, but you'll go to the social, will you not?"

"Why, no, there will be none, unless this storm

abates between this and five o'clock. No one but an urchin could get there. I have had all I could do get from the office to the house."

"I think," said Aunt Sabrina, "the wind may fall at sunset. I raly hope it may, for it would be altogether too bad to have Sophia disappointed. She's been lookin' forward to this evening with so many happy expectations. She had, I should say, better be dressed and in readiness at the hour. Young folks are awful perseverin' sometimes, you know, and Tom is one of that kind; he does business up in that way."

"I am quite sùre you can act your pleasure in regard to having Sophia go; but it is certainly very unsuitable, according to my mind," replied Saul.

"We know it looks rather dark out; but there's no tellin' but the clouds may break away after a little. I have done sich things many a time; go in a storm, and return in clear, calm star-light," said Aunt Sabrina.

"All right, you are one, and I am another. During such storms as this, I prefer to be within doors, unless obliged to go out. I shall make home business my social for this evening," and left the room.

"That is jist as comfortin' as Saul is when he takes a notion," said Aunt Sabrina, "but we will see after awhile."

A few minutes passed in sighs and fears, when Tom, in rubber boots and coat, made his appearance. his face was all aglow with freshness; and a merry laugh rang out as he chirped "Good evening to you all. This coat I wore to wrap you in, Sophia; can you get in it?"

"Oh yes; I can get in anything that will take me

there. Are you in earnest. Will you go, Tom?"

"Sure!" he loudly shouted, "are you ready?"

"Almost," said Aunt Sabrina, "will be by seven. I do hope you will carry yourself well, Tom," she added. "There will be a great many strangers at the Starkys', I expect. Some from Castle Hill as well as from other neighborin' towns. They aren't going to let a few drops of water stop them."

"A few drops! I tell you this is a perfect deluge," said Tom. "I always mean to be as good as my word, and have come to go if Sophie wished to have me go with her, through this storm, but storm she will have to prepare for. It only being a few steps I can get her there all right, I guess."

At precisely seven o'clock Tom took a strong hold of Sophia with one hand, and a lantern in the other, and down the steps to the street they went. At the gate Sophia began to catch for breath, saying, "O, it hails."

"It won't strike through," said Tom, "my coat is thick, can't back out now, it is too late, we are going to the social."

The heavy rain drops beat and spattered; the wind blew a strong gale, but with a brave heart Tom led the way, bracing against wind and storm until they reached the front door of the Starky mansion.

"Some one has come," said a voice within, and soon the heavy door swung back on its hinges.

"Good evening, Mr. Harrison," said Mrs. Starky. "I am happy to see you, but how did you get here through this storm."

"Bless you," said Tom, "do you not know a man can always get through when he is well fledged on

one hand, and his lantern in the other one? This lady," making discernible her face, "Miss Brown," he added.

Poor girl, she reeled and stumbled in almost breathless exhaustion. "Ten miles walk in good weather would not have been as hard as this," she said as she was being led from the front hall to the reception room, where she was tenderly cared for by Mrs. Starky and Maria, who thanked her for her bravery, saying "After you have had a good rest, we will try to have you enjoy yourself sufficiently well to recompense you for the fatigue and exposure in getting here."

"Are there many here?" asked Sophia.

"Not any at all except you and Mr. Harrison."

"But there will be!" continued Sophia.

"I am sure I do not know," answered Mrs. Starky, "how great an effort people may make, we hardly expected any one. Yet, we cannot tell; there may be a few in from near by, we shall be happy to see all who may come. It is quite a disappointment to us. We hoped to have had the privilege of seeing many of our friends this evening, but according to the saying often referred to, 'whatever is, is for the best,' we must be believing, and regard this fearful storm as a dispensation of divine Providence for some good; and be submissive if our purposes are not all carried out according to our design, and as we should have been pleased to have them. 'He who sees all things sees the best.'"

After the first half hour had passed getting comfortably dry and rested, Mr. Harrison and Sophia were invited to take seats in the front parlor, where they had for the first fifteen minutes a most delight-

ful musical entertainment. After which the entire family, including Grandma and Aunt Delilah made themselves as agreeable as possible, by telling, old stories, anecdotes, and adventures until it was time to be seated around an extravagant table.

They had prepared turkey, oysters, and pastry in abundance, nuts and candy furnished for a large delegation, and as there were but few of them, it was remarked by Mr. Starky, "that they should eat and talk all the more."

The clock struck the hour of eleven much too soon. The evening had glided swiftly and pleasantly away. Mr. Harrison began to think it time to return home; but Mr. Starky told him the storm was abating, and a little later would add a little more to the enjoyment of the evening, and insisted in his not being in a hurry. Mr. Harrison, being differently impressed, walked to the door opening on the veranda, and much to his surprise, saw the clouds fast breaking away, and that stars were shining in the west. The guests were once more seated in the parlor, and after a few words of conversation, Maria took her seat at the piano, and skillfully played, and sung with sweet voice and solemn emphasis, the hymn so familiar to all: "When shall we meet again." Immediately after which, Mr. Harrison and Sophia made preparations for home, apparently well pleased with their reception. When they had received many thanks from the kind family for having had the favor of their society that evening, and their best wishes for their own present and future happiness, each bade good night, and Tom and Sophia walked home "in clear, calm starlight.

CHAPTER VII.

The fatigue and exposure of the evening were too much for Sophia. When Wednesday morning breakfast came, she was not at the table.

“We’ll let her lie,” said Aunt Sabrina, “for there’ll be so many things to tell and talk about, that we want her to feel rested and freshened up.”

To Aunt Sabrina the forenoon was twice its usual length, in consequence of her inclination to hear all that had been said and seen.

“No tellin’,” she said, “whether I should have waited or not, had n’t it been for Aunt Trichie’s comin’. She is always gettin’ wind of somethin’, and the first thing I know she’ll be walkin’ right in on a body.”

She had called with that same old critical look, to see if anything new had happened, for whenever there was an opportunity for her to learn a new thing, she never lost it. Sophia had no sooner made her appearance, than Aunt Trichie returned. She had been to the business part of the town, and on her way homeward made a second call.

“Good morning, Miss Sophia,” she articulated, “I must have a little sport with you. They’ve been tellin’ me down town, that you and Tom braved the storm last evenin’, and went over to the social. I want to hear somethin’ about it. I hope you had more that was comfortin’ than I had; for I was most dreadfully started last night. I expected to hear

bad news this mornin', and so I jist tied on my bonnet and started over to find out what it was."

"What could it have been?" said Aunt Sabrina; "What did it seem like?"

"Why!" responded Aunt Trichie, "it was jist 'along in the evenin' a piece, when my old man went to the door; 'Law, Trichie,' sez he, 'the evenin' star is shinin!' 'What!' sez I; 'Caleb, the evenin' star ain't shinin'!' 'Yes,' sez he, 't will all be cleared up bimeby.' I laid down my knittin' and started for the door. All I could see was a little bright spot off in the northeasterly direction. 'Caleb,' sez I, 'do you call that a star?' 'Why, yes, Trichie,' sez he, 'do n't you know a star when it 's right afore your eyes?' I turned round and answered him kind o' short, 'A lamp in a coal mine, more like,' sez I. Then I kept on watchin', till after a little it was clear lost out. Then I sot down studyin'; bimeby it struck me! the doctor's lantern, thinks I. Then I spoke out; 'Caleb,' sez I, 'there 's somebody sufferin', and that light was the doctor's lantern.' 'No, no!' sez he, 'Now, Trichie, don't be havin' the cholera, and be disturbin' all night.' 'Well,' sez I, 'I can't help my feelin's. I'll do the best I can.' I did, but I have been in a dreadful fluster, and as soon as I could, I started out to hear what it meant."

At this time Saul had been within hearing, and instead of putting in his appearance, stood back, an animated listener. While Tom was in the wood-house, with his mouth and ears open, catching every word as it fell from the lips of Aunt Trichie. There was no hesitancy as to the belief with either party in regard to the supposed doctor's lantern and without ceremony they both entered the room, and for

the next five minutes the whole fabric resounded with shouts of roaring laughter.

The merriment had so far reduced the inquietude of Aunt Sabrina's mind that no questions were asked in reference to the previous evening until after being seated at the dinner table. She then said, "Well, you had a good comfortable time gittin' home, jist about as I expected, I purty gen'rally know what is about right. I kept a watch-out; I see it was clearin' off all fair. Who all was there?"

"There wan't a single person but just us two."

Aunt Sabrina's inflexible disposition was so aroused that she struck her hand heavily upon the table, and, after uncouthly expressing herself, ended by saying, "She did like to see young folks act like young folks. That she did not believe in their settlin' down as if they was a lump of sugar, or salt, or some sich thing. You got there all right enough, did n't you?"

"Why we got there, but then it was like going on a voyage, I tell you, but Tom said, 'can't back out now, we are going to the social.' So I held on, and he pulled me through."

"I know," said Aunt Sabrina, "that Tom is so perseyerin'; he is jist as a man should be. When he puts his hand to the plough, he never looks back. What did they say?"

"O, they expressed surprise."

"Yes, they was sorrowfully surprised, I expect. If it had been somebody else, L. H. Benjamin or some sich, they would been dreadfully pleased. Then you did n't see him, eh!"

"Why no, no one but just their own family, but they thanked us for our bravery, and mother you know how they are, so soft and smooth. Their talk

is always such pretty talk, I wondered last evening where they went for it. They borrow, it that I know."

"Do tell me, child, everything about it, I want to hear particulars. I feel a good deal like Aunt Trichie; I always want to get all the information; "but, right here before I forget it, I must tell you what she said. It was, 'if she had a man that could take her through sich a rain and wind storm as we had yesterday, and on in the evenin', she thought she could trust him through all the rest of her life.' I think that a purty good compliment for Tom, and he's jist the kind that's deservin' it."

"Just because he took me through the storm, mother?"

"Yes, and for quite a good many other things. He is what might be called a gentleman. S'pose he would be if he was only professional; but then he's a right down good fellow, anyway."

"Then you do think him worth having do you," said Sophia, heartily laughing at the time.

"My, yes, but then I know what I said, and I told the truth too, jist as I felt it. I tell you," she continued, "there is nothin' like gold, if a body only has plenty of that, they have all they need to carry them through this world. And it would be no ways wrong in your doin' what would be for the best, if Tom is good."

"Well, mother, you and I agree first best, so whatever my wisdom directs me to do will be pleasing to you, and what my aim is, you know."

"So I do, and I hope to see it all carried out some day."

The conversation between mother and daughter

was being technically observed by Saul, who turned at the table with his face side-wise, throwing his right arm over the back round of his chair whilst he rested the left elbow on the edge of the table, running his fingers through his hair, with eyes that spoke volumes penetratingly fixed upon Sophia. Aunt Sabrina's unyielding disposition caused her to be insensible to Saul's commanding appearance. And she proceeded to interrogate.

“I will try, mother, to tell it all through. It took some time to get dried off and straightened up, you see, for the best wrapping in the world would not serve well in such a severe rain storm as that was; but in time we were taken into the parlor, where the entire family convened. Maria made herself interesting by taking a seat at the piano. She played and sung. Music is sweet. It did sound heavenly; but then she felt, I know she did, so mortally mighty at it, that I was glad when she got through. Then they began to tell stories. Mr. Starky told some that were really interesting to hear, but they were calculated to lead to self emulation. That is their way; if they can only influence people to think them superior, that is enough for them. During this kind of conversation, I suppose to elevate Tom and me, they laughed much, and I did too, but I did n't want to. I felt like anything else. To tell the truth plainly, I was mad. I was mad because I was there. I do not want to go there. I never do. I only wanted to get to the social for the sake of seeing those who would be there; especially a few particular ones; then to be caught as I was, was 'like the man in the cave.' I would rather have been in jail than to be there; that's so. But

there I was, and had to stay till I could get away. The best part was the table. That was a grand sight, and so delicious—everything. But I didn't dare eat all I wanted, for I knew if I did they would call me a gormandizer. They would insist upon my having more of this and that more plentifully dished; but I know them so well. I knew what their awful comments would be behind my back, so I did my way, ate what I dared, and on the sly slipped some of the nuts and candy in my pocket. Then after leaving the table, we had the blissful satisfaction of seeing Maria run her fingers over the piano keys. O, it was tall harmony, I tell you. After so long a time we did get round and started off, and if ever I was thankful for a privilege in my life, it was to get away from them, and out in the street once more. Now, mother, you have heard it all through."

"I suppose I have," said Aunt Sabrina. "For my part, I feel as though I could turn everything bottom upward that ever I saw. A great shame; after we had spent so much time in gettin' you tastily fixed up as any one in this world could be. You did look more like a painted picture, or butterfly than a real girl, and I did feel so proud of you. I thought if any one could pass you by without special notice, it would be a strange thing; for what was a plain truth, you did look charmingly beautiful. Then to have no one see you but Tom and the Starkys is awful aggravatin."

"Mrs. Starky minced, as she always does, and spoke of their feeling disappointed, and of what they had hoped for, but brought up the termination that, 'whatever is, is for the best.'"

"Accordin' to my notion, that is about as she did

feel. She would a good deal rather you would not been seen, than to have been for she knew right well that you would outshine Maria; and that there would been danger if L. H. Benjamin had been there, that she did."

"Mother," said Sophia, "do you recollect what you said to Aunt Trichie about putting out the Starkys' eyes. When it was told to me I laughed heartily, for I saw your scheme at once."

"Why, yes. I was talkin' to Aunt Trichie then, and you do know we have to talk at random when she comes round quizzin'. Don't suppose it 's anything wrong, for to tell the truth always would be makin' mischief, and we do know that would be wrong."

The subject of conversation kept all at the table listeners until necessity compelled them to leave it. The crimson had risen and faded alternately on Saul's face, and as soon as an opportunity presented itself, he kindly took Sophia by the hand and led her up to his room, which was getting her as far as possible from her mother. He then placed the chairs near together that they might sit close, and after a short pause, he began to reason with her in regard to her blunders of mind, and to awaken her to the truth that all thoughts, words, deeds, doings were recorded in God's all-remembering book, saying: "Do you not know it?"

He told her that another record had just been borne on high and registered; he asked her to consider its unimportant weight, and then look forward to the time when she would stand before the judgment-seat of Christ to bear its criticism. He reminded her in touching language, if permitted, how

unavailing would be her offering in self defense and that conscience alone would reveal to her the sad truth of condemnation when called to stand before the spotless Lamb of God who died for her redemption. He endeavored to solemnly and seriously impress upon her mind the truth, that things beyond this life were those to be sought, labored, longed for, and not the gold, the god of earth. That "eternity is the soul's immortal manhood." He renewed to her his study of mind to acquaint himself perfectly in regard to her true character. He told her that whilst she did not perhaps mean to do willfully wrong, or be absolutely sinful, he asked what right had she to deceive, to judge unjustly, to cast false insinuations, to speak evil of those who are kindly disposed, to pretend to love, falsifying. He assured her there was no right in it, that there could not be. But such he told her were the lines, as he read them, on every page of her life.

He continued by saying, though his words might seem severe to her, they were said for her good, and that the duty he was performing was a conscientious one, and one that was being borne on high and registered there. Though he could not say he thought it would add to his crown a star in glory, still he should meet its approval. Yet it was not for the blessedness that might rest upon him in consequence that he took upon himself the privilege of presenting to her mind those truths which she was unmindful of, but were he to leave it undone, he should be answerable for having left undone that which was his decided conviction to do. He then arose and kindly taking her by the hand expressed sympathy in her behalf, and asked her if she would not bear in remembrance

those things which he had spoken to her, and wisely consider that it is in this life that we live for the life to come. And remember also, we have given us no certain claim upon which we may anchor hope. To-day we live, to-morrow we may die, as said the poet:

“Still, grass stalks e’en now may have lifted their heads,
That may die by the spade that will make our last bed.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Among the associations in life, the circumstances which attend things in general, there are essentials which necessarily arise, such as we would cheerfully shun, but a matter of indifference if they are noticed. An instance of this kind is now open before us.

Hon. Hiram Starky was the grandson of a European nobleman. His father, John Jacob Starky, left Britain's shores for the western continent when Hiram was but a small lad. He was a man of large means, and an extensive brain development which enabled him to lay a broad platform for the cultivation and support of his family. It is therefore not strange to suppose that Hon. Hiram Starky had all the advantages of a classical education. His natural ability was far beyond the common average, and being enriched with spirituality, a lover of divinity and divine things, in early manhood, he was fitly classed with those who constitute the salt of the earth, the light of the world. The sensibility of his nature was so easily awakened when a charitable object was presented, or duty that should be done, it did not matter how humble or self-sacrificing, if it only bore the characteristics of truth, honesty and honor, he ever cheerfully complied and faithfully performed. He exercised such force and activity of mind, that short-comings could not justly be applied to him. After having ripened into manhood, he employed time and talent beneficially, both for his

own personal good, and in the accomplishment of duties in stations for which he was particularly adapted and appointed. But a few years of his manhood passed before his marriage with Miss Annie Moor, an estimable and highly educated lady from whom the bloom of girlhood had not faded.

Soon after his marriage he left New England, and through the influence of acquaintances, of whom L. H. Benjamin was one, he invested means in and near Copperville, the town in which he soon after settled permanently. The union between Mr. and Mrs. Starky was that of true happiness. They lived in the pure sunshine of faith, hope and love. Consequently there were no blemishes to mar the peace and pleasantness of their lives. Their united influence was a compound of usefulness, which doubly qualified them for the sphere of husband and father, wife and mother. Whilst their children were like "Olive branches," they were judiciously taught and trained.

Agreeably to the depth of her wisdom, Mrs. Starky would often be heard to repeat the beautiful lines from the pen of the gifted author who says:

"Delightful task to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young ideas how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instructions o'er the mind,
And breath the enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast."

At the time in which our first mention is made of the family, Mr. and Mrs. Starky, Maria, four sons, an elderly lady who had been a particular friend and one highly appreciated by Mrs. Moor previous to the union between Mr. and Mrs. Starky, and one who had given her the name of grandma as a

heritage, also a maiden lady, a distant relative, of whom we speak as Aunt Delilah, constituted the family.

But upon a day, unlooked for and unexpected, when the glow of youth was fresh, and life was green, when hope was high and anticipated pleasures filled their young hearts, a prevalent disease attacked the family and three of five children were, in a few short hours removed from their earthly inheritance to the household above.

Few families in so short a time have realized so severe a blow, but it was borne with fortitude and Christian grace. Whilst their hearts were saddened, and their eyes overflowing with tears, their language was "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

They having been for so many years truly characterized with divine things, and having led exemplary lives, the removal of their children still added to their already exalted influence a vestment that more perfectly separated them from what is termed earth and earthly things to those spiritual. The tie heavenward was inseparable. It could not therefore be supposed that Mrs. Starky could associate with worldly gossip and unfriendly communications. Her heart's work was for God and not the enemy of God. When things of undue importance were thrown before her, they were treated with marked indifference. She believed that to do good, she should shun the evil, and know only that which was pure and peaceable; that kind words, good deeds, charity, love for her fellow beings were the sure stepping stones from earth to immortal glory.

It was pleasing to know the principles of the

parents were implanted in their children. They were what might be looked upon as daguerreotypes, especially Maria, who had the exact features of her father and the outlines of her mother, and too, whom she so perfectly imitated in mind, manner of speaking, and personal appearance that it was frequently remarked that she looked like her father and resembled her mother. It is needless to review the lines of her young life, and for the time being will only say, her study and employment were chiefly to gain possession of every ideal that would be advantageous to her in the field to which her prospects led her.

And O, how happy her young heart was. She knew, if Providence permitted, her mission was to be one of love, to teach, labor for and guide the dark of mind, and face to the light of Christ, and the way of truth. It is true when alone she would sometimes at the thought of leaving parents, brother, home friends, with all their associations and endearments, feel an overwhelming impulse like a flood of many waters; but upon second thought she would remember anew the passage which reads, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," and quickly brighten up with sweet thoughts and hopes, and sing:

Jesus can fill my heart with song,
And help my tongue to sing.

But few friends outside the family knew of her engagement. Among the few, L. H. Benjamin was one. He having been for many years a particular friend of Mr. Starky's, and a father in the church, he was made acquainted with the general affairs of the family, and knew of Maria's plans, and was happy in her prospects.

CHAPTER IX.

“I do wonder what has happened to Sophie. She seems to be feelin’ down-hearted. I’m afraid she ’s workin’ too hard at her book. I hope she won’t study herself sick, better be a little longer at it,” said Mr. Brown.

“I have asked no questions at all,” said Aunt Sabrina, “but I see Saul when he led her away from the dinner table to-day, his looks was enough, guess he took her up to his room. I expect he’s been med-dlin’. That is about the way it goes. I ain’t blind. I see his twist at the dinner table, but I calculate to exercise independence in my own house, any way enough to talk, when I have anything to say.”

“I think,” said Mr. Brown, “that Saul thinks lots of Sophie. I hardly think he would want to reprove her. It ’s jist been to tell her something. May be to somehow cheer her up. You know she was feelin’ dreadful bad; the social did n’t amount to anything, and she is young, and sometimes sich things go purty hard.”

“I see how all that is,” said Aunt Sabrina, “and I felt bad enough too, but then I don’t want a third person to make it worse by fault findin’ and thinkin’ they know more than any body else.”

At this moment Mr. Brown’s attention was turned to a gentleman on business; and as Aunt Sabrina’s mind had become excited, she made her way to

Sophia's room, where she found her making rapid progress with her pen. The written sheets lay scattered over the table, and the general appearance of the room denoted negligence.

"For mercy sakes!" exclaimed Aunt Sabrina, as she caught sight of the room. "This is about the way I have always heard say, things look, when a person has once got their mind sot on writin', they never know any thing else. Do you see, child, there is my butternut colored cashmere, all in a wad on the floor! Is that the way I do? I have always tried to teach you to pick things up, and have your room straightened to look well enough for company any hour in the day."

"Mother!" said Sophia, "I cannot always stop to pick things up when I am in a hurry. I came home last evening tired, and where things fell there they have lain. I think I have had plenty to do since. You held me an hour, and Saul two; and the rest of the time I have needed to get things penned down. I have had plenty to write about this afternoon, and I have n't it all written yet."

"Well, child! that's what I came up here for; I wanted to know what he meant, leadin' you away as he did."

"Oh, to preach; he thinks himself one of God's jewels. May be he is, I am sure I can't tell. Any way I don't care, I will do as I please, but to hear him was better than my dinner. Just look here, do you see all this?" as she waved her hand over the written pages. "Had I not heard his sermon this would not all have been. So I should feel thankful to him. And it is for this, if for anything at all, that he will meet with the approval of which he

spoke, if he should have the luck to meet with any. Mother, I do not like Saul, and yet there are some reasons for which I do. He is an honor to us, that I know, and I like him for that."

"My, yes," added Aunt Sabrina, "he has a profession, and is a big man among men, so we must put up with him if he is over-bearin'. I have heard something about scentless herbs, that if you bruised them they would be most dreadful sweet and fragrant. And child, I think, may be that's the way with you, the more you are tried, the more you show what you are. It seems to have been that way this time. How long do you suppose it is goin' to take you to write your book."

"I cannot tell. To write is sometimes like picking up crumbs in the dark. It will surprise me, often, when I think I have full possession of ideas good and valuable, believe me, before I can get them penned down they slip away. Much depends upon what I am trying to say. What I now want is to get all down I can, and I must hurry, too, for Tom is to be here soon, and I want to be prepared to receive him, we have much to talk about. There are those in town who want to join the singing school, and go over in a load, but I do not like the plan, and shall oppose it. I shall hold to the old way, just Tom and I in his little sleigh. We then can have his own robes and be so comfortable; besides it makes it seem more gay."

With a much happier heart Aunt Sabrina left the room, whilst Sophia hastily penned down the items of importance, as she considered them, made a few changes in her room, and went down into the parlor, where in a short time she had the pleasure of receiv-

ing Tom. The argument was of considerable length, as the parties were not united. Tom could see no reason why it would not be as well to do as he had been solicited, join teams and all go over in one load, by so doing a few could be accommodated who otherwise would be deprived of the privilege. Sophia believed in every tub standing on its own bottom. That it ought not to be expected that she should be crucified for the bliss of others. She also saw an intruder whose aim was to counteract her arrangement, and said, "It will be villainy on your part, Tom, if you allow it to be."

It would be needless to enumerate the points argued, but as might be supposed, Sophia, with her mother to now and then put in a word, ruled. Tom left broken-hearted for those, for whom he felt a kind regard, and who were hopefully trusting to his generosity to provide for them a way to get to the Castle Hill singing school.

The first evening was near at hand, and whatever the arrangement was, it would have to be quickly made. But Tom having an ingenious mind was not long laying plans which were at once adopted and cheerfully accepted.

Friday afternoon came and Sophia was in the height of her glory. "Mother," she said, "I am glad we ruled, aren't you?"

"Why, yes, for your sake I am, I don't suppose you would have been at all happy to be crowded into a load, and then, there are many things that never seem as well where there are too many together."

"I do not care," she muttered, "I could ride in the load if I wished, but I will not. I will do as I

please, what I like best is to have my own way. Then too, if there was a load a few from this place would go that I do not wish should. If I can do anything to trip them I will, and I suppose I have, and that is glory to me." With a flirt and a whirl she danced round the room, chirping and clapping her hands in great merriment at the thought of her having been a hindrance to those who were entitled to equal rights and privileges with herself.

The longed for hour at last came, and she was politely led to the street, where to her surprise she saw they were to ride on wheels.

"I thought, Tom, we were to go in the little sleigh?"

"There is not ice enough, we shall be obliged to ride on wheels."

"But Tom there is ice enough, and I know it; ice is as good as snow."

"It is as good, but there is not enough all the way over; come, hop in, it is time we were riding."

"Why do you drive this elephant of a horse? You know, Tom, that I never like to ride behind him."

"I could not well do otherwise," said Tom, "Sam drives the best by the side of one of Mr. Starky's gay horses."

"What was he to be driven by the side of one of Mr. Starky's horses for?"

"To carry over a load of some fifteen from this place who wished to go. Come, I say, hop in. The load is now three-quarters of a mile ahead." He then took a fast hold of Sophia, and with some effort got her seated in the carriage.

"I don't care! I'm mad! You are mighty mean,

Tom! You well know I hate this horse, besides, you have come a blind pull."

"Can't help it, darling," said Tom, as he leaned a little sidewise towards her, giving her a slight hunch with his elbow. "Sophie," he continued, "you must brighten up; we are now on our way to singing school."

"Tom, I told you I was mad, and I told the truth, too, for I am! I supposed we were going alone."

"Are n't we, there are but just two of us and the horse."

"What I mean is I did not want any one from this place to go where we do. I want to go where they can't. You know, Tom, I love to triumph over a few; that I do."

"Well, say you do; there is where we differ; I do not, and darling, there are circumstances under which I should be governed by my own judgment. I could not endure to have those ladies disappointed, and as Saul would drive the team, and Mr. Starky was willing to let one horse go, I was happy in making the arrangement."

"Did you make that arrangement yourself, Tom?"

"Certainly, I did."

"Then, I don't think you have any amount of love for me; do exactly what you know I did not want you should."

"I do most assuredly love you, darling. I am very ardently attached to you, and try to see as you do, and do as you would like to have me. I ever aim to accommodate you, and many times inconvenience myself so to do; but it affords me pleasure. The difference is we do not always look at things in the same light. At such times I generally refrain

from speaking my mind;" and rather gaily sang out.

"But the thoughts we cannot bridle,
Force their way without the will."

"Then your thought wan't right. Suppose they are n't now. I wish I was home."

"Can't go that way now," said Tom, "we are on our way to singing school." At which saying he drew up on the reins, and the horse traveled at a rapid rate until they overtook the load.

"Tom, who are in that load? I hear them; do you? They seem like a jolly lot."

"Wait a little and you will see for yourself. We are nearly there. At the bend I will drive down through the alley, and come up on the main street ahead. If you get there first, you can see them unload; it will give you a better chance of knowing than I can tell you."

Tom did as he said, and in a short time Sophia was awaiting him on the porch, in front of Benjamin's hall. Tom was not long away. He was there with Sophia when the load neared the porch, and readily stepped forward to assist first one and then another to alight. They were all in a cheerful, happy mood, and without recognition they passed Sophia, and entered the hall. The faces of nearly all were familiar to her, but "They did not know me," she carefully whispered to Tom.

"Perhaps they think you do not wish to have them."

"They would not be thinking far out of the way, if they did. Who was that who sat next to Saul, on the front seat?"

"One Dr. Green, I believe; a stranger."

The thought of one Dr. Green, a stranger, greatly puzzled Sophia. All through the evening she would look sidewise to catch a glimpse of the new doctor. His handsome face was too much for her sensitive mind, and she wished she had been in the load. "But I am forever on the background when there is coin to be gained," she sighed to herself. The poor girl looked, waited and watched in vain for an introduction. The looks of the stranger overbalanced her mind to so great a degree that she took no part in singing, and had no desire beyond the privilege of making his acquaintance.

Just before leaving the hall an opportunity presented itself, and she enquired of Saul who Dr. Green was. He told her he did not know, but believed he thought of locating in Copperville.

During the ride homeward Sophia was so silent, Tom felt he really had wronged her, by not driving Sam. "Sophie," he kindly said, "I do hope, for your sake, we may have snow before next Friday evening. If we do your wish shall be gratified. I will, if possible, make the ride a success to you. Please keep up good courage for my sake, and remember the adage, that it's a bad beginning that makes a good ending."

CHAPTER X.

During the early part of the week Sophia was in a state of sad perplexity. She was sure if there should come snow, that Tom would be as good as his word, and do as he supposed she wished to have him. But there was the image of Dr. Green before her eyes, and her mind was too unsettled to think of anything, but to know him. If he was to be a constant attendant she should prefer to be with those who had the pleasure of his society, and not have it appear that she was really pinned fast to Tom.

“Saul,” said she at dinner one day, “do you suppose Doctor Green will be an attendant at our singing school during the term.”

“I should hardly think he would be. He only happened to be with us Friday evening.”

“Is he in town now,” asked Sophia.

“I believe he left this morning. He is a young physician who is trying to find a suitable place to commence practice, I am told. He seemed to form a favorable opinion of our town, at least that is as I understood him.”

“Do you think he will return?”

“It is possible he may, but not immediately.”

Sophia's heart at once grew lighter, so much so that after dinner she reassumed her place at the writing table with the resolve to accomplish just so much before the next Friday evening. If Doctor Green

had left town she did not wish to ride in a load to Castle Hill. She knew perfectly well, if nothing happened to prevent, she would go, and without doubt have a more agreeable time than before. If snow fell she was sure of a nice ride, for Tom would not fail in making it a success, for he had said it.

“Sophie,” said Aunt Sabrina, “Aunt Trichie is here and wants to see you.”

“I am engaged at present, and can't be disturbed, she must excuse me,” was the reply.

“It is too good to keep,” said Aunt Trichie, and forthwith pushed on to Sophia's room. With a scowl Sophia at first refused to hear her, for fear she would not be able to fill the task before her.

“But you must know,” said Aunt Trichie. “They've been tellin' me all round, that there's been a fine young doctor here from some place, after Maria Starky, and that they are goin' to be married after a while, when he gets round ready to settle down. Then, there is that poor old L. H. Benjamin, he is to be pitied if he is rich, for I guess, if the truth was known, he had a hold of her that no one had any right to break. His goin' there so much has not been for nothin', every body sez. Besides that they've been tellin' me that Sophia Brown has got to be a book-writer. Every body is talkin' about it and sez they: ‘We don't wonder she manifests such self-possession,’ and sez I to them, ‘why, no, if she is a book-writer, then she does possess somethin’.’”

In spite of Sophia's forcible will to overcome Aunt Trichie's declarations, the thread was long spun, and it webbed around her to so great a degree, that she was obliged to lay down her pen for fur-

ther consideration. She dwelt upon the unexpected engagement between Dr. Green and Maria Starkey until she became wearied and perplexed. She had had no other thought than that Maria was to be Mrs. L. H. Benjamin, unless she could interpose, which had previously been her decided determination to do. The thread was too long and too tangled for her to straighten. In the midst of busy thought, as she sat twisting the fringes that bordered the drapery of her dress, she was summoned to meet one of those ladies to whom she could justly be termed an opponent.

“It has been suggested,” said the lady, “that if you are not willing to ride with a few, of whom I am one, to Castle Hill, there are those of us who will organize a singing school here in our own town. It has been thought best to consult you, and have your opinion. We are willing to do either way.”

The question had in it a puzzle, and without delay Sophia replied “that her arrangements were made.”

Sophia believed it unadvisable to unfold the unintelligible town gossip to Tom. She had a fear and dread of Saul. For a while she battled with reason, but the more she tried to comprehend, the deeper she fell into a whirlpool of confusion. As she was not able to control her ideas to write, she prepared herself for a walk, with the intention of calling at the office if she could find Saul alone. It so happened they met a few steps from the office door. Upon her face was a dull sad look, that denoted sorrow. Saul cheerfully smiled, took her hand and asked her to walk in.

“Are you alone, Saul?” asked Sophia.

“At present. Are you well to-day?” he inquired.

"I am heart-sick," was her reply, "I should like to tell you, but I have a fear and dread of you."

"Fear and dread of me! Have I not told you that I am your most reliable friend. One you can trust the deepest secret your heart can hold. What is it? Let me hear."

With fast falling tears, and faltering expression, she in time related the town stories, the puzzling proposition, and by whom originated.

"Now, Sophia, allow me to say that nine-tenths of all you hear is falsified. As it regards Aunt Trichie, she is, I should judge, a peculiar old body, and seems to possess an irresistible influence. Whilst I would not prejudice your mind against her, I would not, if I were you, place too much dependence on what she gathers up in the town. So far as this Dr. Green is concerned, I do not believe there is one in the town who had ever seen or heard of him before his arrival on Thursday last. The idea of a hasty engagement between him and Maria is a base falsehood. In regard to a singing school being organized here, to my mind it is doubtful. You see, Sophia, there is altogether too much enmity, too much of the root of bitterness that will not coincide with right and reason, consequently there are eruptions which take place, and as you are one of those who will offend, you must expect to endure your share of offenses. You recollect you were unyielding and would not consent to ride with others, some at least of whom are excellent ladies. It was without doubt viewed in a light to suit themselves, and threw over you a blaze of indignation; in return they would try to harrass and vex as a just revenge. You know, Sophia, just what I think of such things,

and to avoid them they must be void within ourselves. Your becoming misrepresented as a literary character has become rumored about. In what way I am not positively prepared to say, but am of the opinion through the short-sightedness of your parents who have but a limited idea of learning and literature, but an over-rated estimation of your capacity, which is sufficiently well, according to the common standard of intellect, and if you were wisely educated to execute the knowledge you have, would deserve honor and would obtain it, should you dispense with those idle ills so imbibed in your nature. Then your enjoyments would be many, and your life would become a pleasing remembrance. Time with me is limited, but I must speak of Father Benjamin, that venerable old gentleman who has passed his three-score and ten years. To be referred to and spoken of as a buoyant beau is one of the actual sins of your life. It is said the whole story has originated from you, and has become a wide-spread report. So far as I am able to judge, I am led to think it false. At all events I give it no credence, it is not worth a single thought, much less to gabble about. Should it be his wish to marry again, it is his privilege, as much so as any man; and to marry whoever he pleases, who may be pleased with him. And I am willing to leave the old gentleman to his own wish to do as wisdom directs."

"Well, Saul, you always see wrongs enough in me to hang me, were they put in execution."

"But how can I help seeing wrongs? You say Maria is trying to win the heart of Father Benjamin for the sake of his vast amount of property, and circulate it as a known truth. Is such commendable?"

Far from it. Had you any just reason to have suspected a thing of the kind, you should have kept it to yourself. But you are a careless thinker, and speak without due consideration. In this way you do yourself an injustice which the community will not pass unnoticed. The one thing more I wish to turn your attention to is, false and true love. False love has an offensive core, it is rotten, whilst true love has its 'volume in a word, an ocean in a tear.' There is a wide difference, you see between the two—true and false—and it is this difference that I wish you to weigh well in your mind. You have gotten possession of one of the best hearts in Copperville. That is evidently true. There is not another one I more highly prize than Mr. Harrison; he is a noble fellow; his deportment is fine; his intellectual capacity good. He is strictly honest, well to do, but as you remark, 'he is nothing but a gardener.' Could you but see, you would then know it would be better to be the wife of an honest gardener, than that of a dishonest practitioner, no matter what their profession might be. There are scores of professional men who do not amount to a feather's weight, but are well calculated to deceive and mislead. I do not wish you to marry one you do not love, but I do not want you to falsify. Do not make of Mr. Harrison your pack-horse. If you cannot appreciate as you are appreciated, make no pretense. As I have told you before, be truthful in all you say and do. Strive to do well. Do good as you have opportunity. Seek peace and pursue it, and that dull sad look upon your face, so frequently seen, will fade away and the pure sunshine of hope, and happiness will take its place."

CHAPTER XI.

When Sophia felt she had received all the advice and reproof she cared for, she took the walk homeward, leaving Saul with quite as heavy a heart as she had herself previously borne. She was of the opinion that there was a reality in having a singing school organized, and why. She had an idea of her own who the instructor would be. And the truth of Dr. Green marrying Maria was a thing she meant to know.

With her head and heart full of beliefs, she betook herself to the pen, again being more forcibly inspired with writing than before. The remainder of the day was a success to her, so much so that her face was lit up with a sweet smile which greatly attracted the attention of her parents.

“Why, Sophia,” said Aunt Sabrina as she entered the dining room, “you look almost radiant, I do feel glad to see you so happy. What is it about? Your book?”

“In part, I suppose,” said Sophia, and raising her hand westward, said, “does not that look like a snow bank yonder?”

“Yes it does,” responded Mr. Brown, “I think we shall have snow before mornin’.”

The thought of sledding by Friday evening, at this time filled Sophia’s heart with great glee, as was shown by her attempt to sing the old familiar song:

“Those old sleigh bells, those old sleigh bells,
How many a tale their jingling tells.”

“Then, Sophie, you raly do feel happy. Well, I’m turr’ble glad of it. I expect you will be quite a singer by time spring comes.”

“If I am not a singer, I shall be something else.”

“Author, I expect it will be,” said Aunt Sabrina.

“Mother, Saul has a poor opinion of my authorship, but I will show him.”

“’Tisn’t best to rely on his opinion always. Jist go right straight ahead and do your own way. You’ll come out a good deal nearer right than you would to be twisted round by him.”

“Believe me, he has no confidence in Dr. Green’s engagement to Maria at all.”

“I hardly believe that myself, I think she will stick to L. H. She likes the looks of his mansion, of course.”

“Sorry she does, I tell you Green has a charming face, and he is professional. If he has stepped in, it has put her in a strait between two. I have a calculation drawn up in my own mind, that I am going to know myself alone. I believe I have made a good guess. And if I find I have figured things out right in regard to the parties here, I will, if possible be a cloud to them, just see if I am not.”

At this point, the conversation was interrupted by Saul, who had unexpectedly walked in for further discussion. For a moment his eyes thoughtfully rested upon Sophia, after which he expressed surprise at the brightness of her countenance. “You bear, Sophia,” he smilingly said, “the resemblance of two distinct characters, ‘Sunshine and Tempest.’”

“Why, Saul,” exclaimed Sophia, “could you not have said Sunshine and Shadow as well?”

“I do not recollect ever having known where shadow was used to designate a character,” said Saul with great merriment. “You must excuse the error, if an error it is, but could you see in yourself the change as it is to be seen by me, you would not think me out of the way. Remember only a few hours ago you were in my office, all in tears, a mixture of angry feelings with evil denunciations, so much so that I almost wept for you. I could hardly have expected you to have been in a worse condition of mind had you been in the midst of the sea.”

“Then I suppose you are excusable if you speak of me as ‘Sunshine and Tempest.’ Do you wish me to consider your coming in, an exhibition of tender regard?”

“I most assuredly do. I have not been able to perform my duties accurately since you left me.”

“I am very sorry,” said Sophia, “I hope I may not find it necessary to disturb you again.”

“It is to be hoped there may be no occasion, and if you accept my counsel there will not be. But should there be, and my advice and opinion can in any way benefit you, I shall be glad to give it.”

By this time there was a great amount of irritation on the part of Aunt Sabrina, and as Saul passed out of the side door to the walk again, she made a few remarks, such as we will not mention. Sophia remembered her agitation of mind and said “Mother, I really was in a ruffle, that was so; and you know Saul is so serious, he talked and admonished me according to his views, and I came home feeling better. To listen to him when he is really in earnest,

is like 'bread to the eater.' Since then what a blessed portion I have been able to lay away."

"Well," said Aunt Sabrina, "it 's great thing to be able to treasure up usefulness. I expect it will out-live us all. I have heard ministers say, 'good deeds never die,' so I don't expect good writin's will any more."

As Aunt Trichie had appeared in sight, Sophia tripped away, and began to prepare for Friday evening.

Mr. Brown was not mistaken in his belief, that snow would fall before morning. It came, a tremendous snow storm, which lasted nearly a whole week, with wind and heavy drifts.

To be detained was in no way disheartening to Sophia. The deeper the snow and larger the drifts the better she was pleased. She was perfectly willing to await for the longed-for anticipated sleigh ride.

Two weeks passed away with but little of importance beyond those hours spent in soliloquizing which are essential to all who engage in literary pursuits. When the second evening came for a sleigh ride it was a great success. It is hardly possible to suppose any one could have enjoyed more. Several successive evenings brought to Sophia the same satisfaction, until she became more than ever egotistical. There were a few in and near Castle Hill who could brave and dare equal with herself, and to those she disclosed her determination to upset Maria and spoil the mutuality between her and L. H. Benjamin. It so happened that there was to be a vocalist at the hall in a few evenings, and it was thought, perhaps, that would be the time for them to accomplish their design. It proved a successful opportunity with an

unsuccessful termination. When the evening came, Sophia, with her few friends, had managed to get themselves seated directly behind Mr. Benjamin, who wished to hear all that was interesting, but his attention was greatly disturbed by the girls, whose gabble was of a disagreeable nature.

As Mr. Benjamin could not govern his mind to hear that which was interesting in consequence of their disturbance, and after hearing his own name spoken, also Maria's, with such undue magnitude of dishonor, and when he felt he could endure no more, he arose and confronted them squarely, and after a short pause, with a stern look of indignation, he interrupted them by saying: "Then you are here for discomfiture, are you? Such can justly be compared to those who sow the wind, as we are told; those who do must reap the whirlwind."

These words, as they slowly fell from the lips of that venerable old gentleman, touched every heart, and all eyes were turned towards the intruders. It was a sad saying for Sophia to listen to when she was called to order, and asked to take a back seat. Poor girl, how little she gained by her attempt to inflict wounds into the heart of one so truly amiable as Maria—naught but shame, we cannot say remorse from a lack of conscientiousness. It was her wish to hurt Maria. She was not sorry to do the wrong, only felt regret at her failure in the attempt.

When the interruption reached the ear of Mr. Harrison it filled his heart with deepest grief. As soon as an opportunity presented itself, he sought Sophia and suggested a return home. He found her ready and willing to go without delay, and very cautiously said in his ear: "let's recede."

“All right,” was the reply.

A few minutes later and they were seen riding away.

“Then Sophie, you say, ‘let’s recede,’ do you.”

“Yes I do, I will never go to Castle Hill again. Benjamin is an old hypocrite,” to which Tom made no reply.

As the runners swiftly slid over the beaten track, he amused himself by playing with his whip, sometimes lashing the snow heaps, then again snapping the cracker, whilst a dull, sad look settled upon his face, apparently in deep thought.

“Tom,” said Sophia, “what are you thinking about? You haven’t spoken but once since we left the hall.”

“My mother taught me to think twice, and speak once,” was the reply. And forthwith sang out melodiously:

“O tall queenly nights to eternity’s haze,

• You have followed your short little husbands of days.”

“Then you do feel this is to be the last time, do you?”

“I take you at your word,” said Tom, followed by a pause. After which he remarked that, “he did not feel willing to suffer total deprivation. “It is possible,” he continued, “that we may be able to have an instructor in our home town. It has been spoken of, and I have been solicited to sign and attend.”

“Do you know who they think of having for teacher.”

“I do not positively, but my opinion is that it is this Dr. Green. He seemed to make quite an

impression. If I am not mistaken a few, two at least, became perfectly enamored."

"Yes, Maria for one."

"No, indeed, you are mistaken. She did not see him. She was not in town during his stay here."

"Tom, do you know that to be so?"

"I certainly do. It was a false report gotten up for the sake of a drive on the few who did see him, and apparently became completely fascinated by him."

"Who are the few who wish a school organized? Is Sue Hatting one?"

"I believe she is, and without doubt could they get Saul's influence it would be a success."

It took Sophia but a moment to think, and she was prepared to say, "I will tell him to do his best, it might be a nice thing," with a plan in her own mind which she did not openly express.

"Then would you favor the motion? Would you be one to attend?" asked Tom.

"Perhaps, yes, more than likely," was her reply.

After a good hearty laugh he added, "When you all shall have gotten together in one heap you will be like so many cats."

"I did not say I would go for instruction, but just for fun, and be in the way of those who would not wish to see me there."

"Soph," said Tom, "you make yourself the most indelible of any mortal I ever saw."

"That is just what I like to be, and do," said Sophia with glee, "make marks that won't bleach out. Are you marked, Tom?"

"Bless you, yes, long ago," was his swift reply as he reined the horse up to the post.

CHAPTER XII.

As soon as Sophia had reached home she was made happy by finding a fire had been kindled in her room, where she could spend an hour alone in sweet retirement. She looked over the past with regret. She was sorry she had said recede. She believed it would be real on the part of Tom, for she was sure he did not feel pleased with her intermeddling with L. H. Benjamin, but as she had said recede, and much more, she knew she had overthrown those pleasureable sleigh-rides she so much delighted in, herself, and had no one to blame but herself. She was in all probability exceedingly sorry that anything should have happened to spoil their plans, and defeat their arrangement, but what she had said was said, and her proud heart would not swerve. With a rather sublime style she arose, walked to the table, picked up her pen and wrote as follows: "There are flowers on either side of the path of life. I will weave the mishaps of to-day into a garland that will serve as a girdle for to-morrow."

The sentences as they flowed from her pen afforded the satisfaction she felt she needed, and at once becoming more buoyant in spirit began to devise some way in which she should approach Saul. She knew the necessity of being cautious, as he was far seeing, and she did not wish him to think her one of Dr. Green's fascinated friends, for fear he would oppose him.

The next morning was delightful. The sun had risen in splendor, and the snow sparkled in its rays. The atmosphere was mild and lovely, and as far as the eye could reach was seen the matchless wisdom of Him who builded up the hills and carved out the valleys, who had planted the vine, the tall oak and drooping willow, and arranged and beautified this broad earth for the abode of man by the vastness of His creative power.

“How everything in nature seems to smile this morning,” said Sophia, as she looked abroad through the window, just before being seated at the breakfast table.

“Yes,” replied Saul, “we rarely see a more lovely winter morning. Everything wears a charm. Should it continue the sledding will soon be spoiled, that would cast a blur over your enjoyment, I suppose.”

“O yes, but then, when one way is closed another will always open; I am not so particularly fond of vocal music, I go for the pleasure of going. I suppose there is some prospect of having a school organized here. Tom spoke of it as true last evening. I think he is quite in favor of it; are you Saul?”

“It is a matter of indifference. I should not exert an influence either way.”

“I am most afraid you will offend if you do not coincide. You are always so much in favor of pleasing, that some of our ladies have great confidence in you, and prefer to select you as chief leader in consequence of the general faculty you have for making an effort a success,” said Sophia.

“Much would depend upon the circumstances. I had formed no definite conclusion in regard to the

little I had heard about it, and that little was coupled with confusion, and such I have no appetite for. It was for these reasons that I have not expressed my opinion, as associated with any in the plan. Could it be so arranged as to have it agreeable and beneficial I should be pleased."

"Did you learn who they thought of having for teacher?" asked Sophia.

"I did not learn from those who called at my office. From outside gossip I have heard this Dr. Green spoken of as the man in view. Should it be true, and I have anything to say, I shall oppose him."

"Why so?" said Sophia.

"It would be altogether better to have some knowledge of the one employed. Dr. Green is a stranger. I judge him very egotistical. He has what is called a handsome face, but by close investigation his resemblance is not so pleasing. Rather chaffy, Sophia. According to my mind he lacks eloquence of beauty."

Saul's views and expressions in regard to Dr. Green were exasperating to Sophia. Not feeling at liberty to argue with Saul, and too full to retain her feelings, she passed back to where her mother was engaged. In her haste she failed to notice the door did not fasten, but fell open behind her, which afforded Saul the privilege of hearing distinctly.

"Mother," said she, "believe me, Saul is down on Dr. Green. He is not pleased with him, handsome as he is, and no doubt good."

"I dar'st to say," responded Aunt Sabrina. "If he was only a preacher, or some sich, he 'd be dreadful nice. I have heard Aunt Trichie say Dr. Green is bein' talked about all over this town, and everybody likes him. They say he is so smilingly beautiful."

At which Saul picked up his hat, advanced a few steps nearer the open door and added: "I am not particular to either defend or oppose, but will simply say to you that which has been before said:

" 'Many a fair skin hath covered a ruining disease,
And many a laughing cheek been bright with the glare of madness.' "

As soon as the last sentence fell from his lips, he walked rapidly away, leaving mother and daughter to their own infatuation. It so happened that just at that moment there was a special demand upon Aunt Sabrina, which deprived her of the privilege of interrogating. She, therefore, briefly expressed her mind in few words very unbecomingly, after which Sophia returned to her room to enjoy a season of self-conceited composure. Some days passed with an extreme quiet, which was too good for long continuance. Sophia began to feel ruffled, and suspicious that something might occur without her knowledge, and it was necessary that she should be on the lookout in order to know what was being transacted in the town. That thought had no sooner taken possession of her mind, than she decided to tastefully equip herself, which she did, and with an air of importance, she took the street toward the business part of the town just in time to see a small collection of ladies as they were about to enter the town hall.

"There," she said to herself, "I am in the very nick of time. Their effort for a singing school is now under way," and after a little delay in order to have them get well engaged in the plan of organization, she lightly walked in among them, with a queen-like deportment, which suggested an ideal of triumph, and independently took a seat.

There were several gentlemen present, of whom Dr. Green was one. The hours passed swiftly by, but the effort was slow in progress. It was manifest that there was a disunion between the parties, which, though unnamed, seemed to increase rather than diminish.

It was noticed that Dr. Green's eyes turned too frequently and attentively towards Sophia to give due satisfaction to those who had a heart to win him themselves.

As it became more and more obvious that the disunion had in it a theory, Dr. Green expressed his opinion that it would be better to postpone the organization until some future time, which was at once seconded, and the delegation dispersed.

It is hardly possible to express Sophia's delight. She understood perfectly well that her guessing had not been far out of the way, and she had the satisfaction of believing she had been to the parties exactly what she had said she would, if possible, "a cloud," and walked home exceedingly happy.

Immediately after the delegation had left the hall, Dr. Green and one other, with whom he had become acquainted, tarried in the first hall, on the steps leading to the street. "Excuse my inquisitiveness," said the Doctor.

"Certainly," was the reply.

"Who was that beautiful looking lady who walked in so gracefully, rather late, and sat alone off to the right?"

"That was Miss Sophia Brown."

"Does she reside in Copperville?" asked the Doctor.

"She does."

“In what part of the town?”

“Have you not noticed that beautiful location as you turn off the main street,” raising his hand and pointing eastward; “Mr. Brown joins that on the south. I suppose it was on Sophia’s account that there was a failure this afternoon.”

“Is it possible!” said the Doctor. “What seems to be the trouble?”

“I am not fully prepared to say. I never had any acquaintance with Sophia. I know her when I see her, and know of her. There seems to have arisen a very poignant feeling between her and a few others, each trying to usurp power over the other. It was suspicioned that she had some special motive in view by coming in, which was irritating to her opponents, and they would sooner fail in their effort to organize a school, than have her presence with them.”

“Is she wicked?” asked the Doctor.

“I should think not. At least she has the exclusive attention of Mr. Harrison, one of the best fellows in Copperville. I have heard it said of late that she is literary, and is now engaged on a work that will lead to popularity.”

Much surprised, the Doctor raised his right hand high for a moment, then brought it down firmly on one knee exclaiming: “That’s it! Now I understand it. Her superiority is envied without doubt. Troubles do many times spring from the root of jealousy.”

At this point in their conversation, the Doctor was more than ready to drop the subject, and return with his newly made friend to the walk, where they in a short time parted.

It was truly so, that Sophia had deeply impressed

the mind of the Doctor. He had looked upon her with admiration, and after having been told that she was literary, there was nothing more needed to substantiate him in her behalf. After returning to his room, just as the sun was sinking in the west, his mind became more exuberant; and as his memory traveled back over the past, he remembered so distinctly the look of her fair face, graceful form, and noble deportment, that his ability to retain himself became almost unabiding. Forgetting himself, ere he was aware the twilight hour had passed, and the dark curtain of night was hanging over him. Still, to forget was all in vain. The name of Sophia closely lingered in his mind; and in the midst of busy thought, he threw himself upon a couch, where unexpectedly he lost himself "in tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep." But the name and form of her who lingered on his lips and brain followed him to the land of dreams.

'Tis strange to say, that happily, as if in some new world afar, some undescribed land, they seemed to meet as though they oft had met, and love as though they long had loved, and locking arm in arm they wended their way through flowery forest fields, freshened with evening dew. The moon sent forth her silvery light, and brightly shone the stars. The air was mild and clover-scented, and in ecstasy of thought they talked to each other flatteringly, soft and low, as lovers talk, and watched their shadows on the green.

How far and wide their ramblings were could not be told, but from the flowery field, and shady garden bowers, unto a limpid brook they strayed, and there in token of remembrance left their names in pebble

type upon the beach. It was a work of art wrought with exquisite taste, to which she said: "How beautiful!" "More beautiful by far," said he, "they'd be, had both been welded into one."

The scenery was magnificent, and all around them, whichever way they went, were divers pleasures, each one having in itself some newly fresh born beauty, before unknown to them, and love and happiness had equal sway until beyond conception, became embodied those excessive raptures of delight, and lo! it was one blissful, harmonious paradise.

At length the enraptured scene convulsed his brain and broke the midnight slumber. As wakefulness returned, the ecstatic vision drifted away, and consciousness revealed to him the sad truth that he had taken but a short trip in the land of dreams.

CHAPTER XIII.

“How sweet and lovely those are,” said Mrs. Starky, as her husband was about to enter the sitting room with a few specimens of plants from the greenhouse, one of which was a bridal rose in bloom.

“Yes, indeed, they are lovely, and the thought occurred to me, as I was looking at them with admiration, that perhaps Saul would be pleased to have a few nice plants in his office window, especially this bridal rose.”

“Very true,” said Mrs. Starky, “I have no doubt they would please him. I should be glad to have him have them. Plants bear a friendly resemblance, and almost seem like society to those who have a taste for them.”

With a warm heart and cheerful smile upon his countenance, Mr. Starky deliberately walked to the office, where he found Saul busily engaged in the business of life, and without hesitation presented him the plants, which were thankfully received.

“They are to me a happy surprise,” said Saul. “I am a great lover of plants and flowers, both wild and tame. I do not know but I could justly be termed peculiar in regard to such things. At all events it was always natural for me to love all that God has made, especially the delicate rose, pink, lily, violet, etc.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Starky, “I am pleased to hear you express yourself in that way. I, too, have always

looked upon the handiwork of our Creator with admiration. To look upon His work in that light we cannot fail to love Him. If we love Him, we will worship Him. Our endeavors will be to promote his cause and kingdom on the earth. To labor for so high a cause as that of Christ's, yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness, which are love, joy, peace. If we have these, we have his spirit, we have happiness, and our own happiness no one can take away. 'As a vase filled with the most beautiful flowers, so is a heart when filled with the fruits of the spirit.' "

"I enjoy every word as it falls from your lips, Mr. Starky. There is mutuality between us, I am glad to know there are a few who do appreciate the works and wisdom of God. It is not my wish to pass sentence upon any, but I have felt sorrowfully surprised at the barrenness, unfruitfulness, as well as the scarcity of Christians since coming into Copperville. To take a general view, we are at once prepared to say, 'Behold all is vanity.' "

"That is very true. There are but few who think it worth while to work in their Master's Vineyard. Of the few, when we assemble together there is such a space between each one, that it almost chills me at times, and I am reminded of a venerable old soldier of the Cross who once felt hurt at the distance between the servants of Christ at a prayer meeting and arose and said, 'dear brederen, if you were going to build a good warm fire, you would not put one little skindling here, and another skindling off there, but you would put all your little skindlings up close together, for according to the strength of the fire, the warmth increases; and it is just so

with us, we need to get close that we may each feel the warmth from the fire that kindles upon the altar of our hearts.' It was my principal object in calling on you this morning; I wished to consult you, and have your opinion in regard to our having union meetings. By making a prayerful effort, see if good cannot be done. We have the promise, for He has said, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'"

"I agree with you, Mr. Starky, I am ready for the work. There is nothing that could afford me more pleasure."

Said Mr. Starky, "Since we both agree in this matter, I shall feel at liberty to extend a general invitation to assemble at our church to-morrow evening to commence a series of meetings, which we hope through the blessing of God may be the means of turning many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And I trust that 'the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds.'"

"I have perfect confidence," said Saul, "that good will prevail, and I shall be glad to know you have made a beginning. I will be your fellow helper, and I trust there may be many ready to stay up your hands."

Mr. Starky was exceedingly happy, and was about to take his leave of Saul, when Aunt Trichie made her appearance with a little bundle of papers for Saul's inspection.

“Well, Aunt Trichie, we are happy to see you this morning,” said Mr. Starky, “we feel the time to favor Zion may have come, and we have decided to commence a series of meetings. May we not expect you to be one with us?”

“Why, yes, I expect you may, I’m always droppin’ in.”

“But will you not engage with us in the service and become a good hearty worker? What we want is to build up the church of Christ and demolish the synagogue of Satan.”

“I don’t know how much I can do, I am always tryin’. I do everybody all the good I can, and when I see anybody doin’ a thing that’s wrong I always step right up and tell them that isn’t right, and that they’d better be mendin’ their ways.”

“That is all very good,” said Mr. Starky, “but we want you should meet with us, and tell to the world what the Lord has done for you, and strive for the conversion of others. This is a broad field, Aunt Trichie. I am now going out to make our intentions known and shall expect your influence.”

“All right, that is so, Mr. Starky, you may expect it, for I will tell everybody I see, and there’s no no tellin’ what may come from it. If a good lot of us should once get started, and all draw together, ‘draw just like good old Pharaoh’s chariot horses,’ as an old colored man said one time, we’d mebbe do a good thing. I tell you if some of them here should get religion like yours, Mr. Starky, they wouldn’t seem anyway nateral. But I am in a hurry,” she added, “I must tell Saul a word or two and be goin’,” and at once began to make her wants and wishes known in such a way as was well

calculated to produce a week of perpetual wakefulness.

Mr. Starky preceded Aunt Trichie but a few steps on the walk. He had purposed to call on Brothers Steadfast and Standhope, and be back at the office prior to the dinner hour. Unfortunately for him, he did not find either one of them at home, consequently he happened on the walk, near to where he saw Aunt Trichie, and as he drew close could not battle with himself sufficiently well to choke back the laughter, and rather than show merriment for fear of being what might be termed a stumbling stone, he left the main walk for the alley which led directly to Saul's office.

Saul was surprised to see him return so soon, and as the expression of his countenance denoted pleasure, said, "You must have been very fortunate this morning, have you not?"

Mr. Starky, heartily laughing, said, "I can't hold any longer," after which Saul was made acquainted with Aunt Trichie's solicitation on the public street. She had accosted Judge Jones by saying, "'See here, Mr. Starky and Saul have got on their high horses, and they're goin' to have evenin' meetin's. Goin' to commence to-morrow evenin', and we want you all to be there, for now is the time to set yourself a thinkin', and not keep all your treasure in earthen vessels.' Believe me, she succeeded in getting his promise to be at the church. Beside that, she has been in those shops in Tinson's block in this little space of time, with all she was in so much of a hurry."

"I presume she will visit every family, office and workshop in Copperville between this and to-morrow

evening," said Saul, "for I take her for a very busy body."

"Should she be the means of bringing many in, she will have done worthily, for we are told that, 'belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.'"

By this time Saul was obliged to ask to be excused, as public business demanded his immediate attention, and he was under obligations to turn his mind to it.

"I am aware," said Mr. Starky, "that I have trespassed, but it was not my intention; I had wished to be here in time to take you home with me to dinner and show you the different species of plants in the greenhouse now in bloom. I will leave you for the present, and if you will permit me, I will call again in time to accompany you to dinner. It would afford us pleasure to have you."

Saul thankfully accepted the invitation, and the arrangement was agreed to. At the hour appointed they were seen on the walk, arm in arm, with quick steps and cheerful faces, when much to their surprise they heard a voice say, "there goes some of God's nobility." Without changing their steps they hastened on, congratulating each other as they went, that "they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name."

After having reached the house, and they had been for a few minutes seated in the study, Mrs. Starky came to the door, saying, they had been unfortunate in not having the dinner ready in due time, and asked if they could be excused.

"Certainly," said Mr. Starky, then turning to Saul, said, "Perhaps we had better take the advan-

tage of going to the greenhouse before dinner," which was quite as pleasing to Saul.

They at once took their hats, Mr. Starky leading the way through the dining room and out on the veranda, where Saul's observing eye saw Maria standing at an open window, paring potatoes.

"Then you take part in domestic duties, do you, Miss Maria?" said Saul as he halted for a moment.

"Certainly," was her reply, "I am learning the art of cooking."

"I am pleased to know it. To understand the art of cooking is very commendable," continued Saul.

The gentlemen had no sooner returned from the greenhouse, where they had spent a few minutes viewing the admirable beauties of nature, and were seated at the dinner table, when the bell rung, and Aunt Trichie was there, tired and almost breathless.

"I have hurried as fast as I could," she said, "and now I have only jist dropped in to tell you I have been tellin' and talkin' to everybody I see all round here. Then I've been over the river to the places there, and you know they're purty hard over there, but sez I to them, the time has come when you'd better be tendin' to your soul's salvation. It may be, sez I, if you wait a little longer it will be waitin' too long, and so I kept on talking to them the best I could, and bimeby, after a while, they promised me they'd be over. If all gets there that has told me they would, there'll be a full house I tell you."

Said Mrs. Starky, "We do indeed feel thankful to you, Aunt Trichie. It can be said of you, in your behalf, that you went 'out into the highways and hedges and constrained them to come in that my

house may be filled.' Will you not have some dinner with us?"

"No, I thank you, Mrs. Starky, I must be gettin' round home. I have lots to get done between this and to-morrow evenin'," and with the word good-bye, she left.

"Her solicitude is wonderful," said Saul.

"Yes," said Mrs. Starky, "it reminds me of the passage where it reads, 'God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are wise, and the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong.'"

"I feel encouraged," said Mr. Starky, "and have faith, so that all that remains is to go forward. I will make an effort to see a few families in the country this afternoon. Could you accompany me, Saul?"

"I should be glad to, but there are items of importance for me to attend to. To be truthful I sometimes feel the necessity of being a two-faced man."

"In my opinion," said Maria, "you were not calculated for a lawyer; you should have been a minister."

"I am on the side of Christ, but never felt called to preach the gospel; I do not think it right for any to enter the ministry short of understanding the call distinctly, 'woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.' It is necessary that we have pious lawyers, and whilst I practice one profession, shall hold fast to the other. With many thanks I must bid you good-day."

CHAPTER XIV.

It was gratifying beyond expression when the appointed evening came, to those who had taken a decided interest in having a series of meetings, to see a large congregation assemble at the church in due season.

Rev. Bro. Standhope spoke from the words, "Prepare to meet thy God." He held the attention of the audience for nearly an hour, and as was manifestly shown, the words spoken reached the hearing ear, and the hearer's heart. After which were exhortations by Messrs Steadfast, Starky, Saul and others.

An invitation was then given to those who might feel a desire to put on Christ, to manifest it by coming forward to the front seats vacated for them, if any such there were. Mr. Harrison was the first, Judge Jones the second, immediately after several others followed.

When the privilege was given for any to speak if they wished, Judge Jones arose and said, "I do not fully understand myself, or why I take this stand. I am what is termed a man of the world; I had not at any time given thought beyond the business of this life. I know well there is a beyond. I know that all must die, and that I one day shall, but had not regarded it as a thing of moment. Yesterday I was accosted by Aunt Trichie, that is the name by which she is known. She told me meetings were to be held, and that, 'now was the time for me

to think, and not keep my treasure in earthen vessels.' Though her words were simple in their meaning; they took possession of me. They have brought me here, I have not in myself the power to out-weigh them." Bursting into a flood of tears he sat down.

Mr. Harrison accepted the second opportunity, and spoke in language impressive and sincere. After which, an old lady from the confines of the town arose and related Aunt Trichie's call and earnest pleading to have her attend the meetings. She confessed she had not been inside of a church for many years, and though she promised to be over she had no desire, and that it was a wonder to her what any one went for, but she s'posed it was to get good. "So now I'm come," said she, "to see if good can come to me."

Mr. Starky arose and told her, "There was great good to be gained by coming. It will be our aim to do you good; to be instrumental in the hand of God in bringing you to the knowledge of Him who is able to save and crown you with everlasting good."

A few others made remarks tender and touching, and at a late hour, nearly all, if not quite, left for their several places, feeling benefited, and that it was good for them that they had been there.

Could we but lift the curtain that covers the invisible mind and look into the secret of man's heart, what an inexhaustible fountain of gratitude and thankfulness could be shown in the minds of Messrs. Starky and Saul; far beyond nature to express, and known only to Him who can look upon the heart and read it there.

The day following the first meeting, Saul resolved to approach Mr. and Mrs. Brown, and if possible,

impress their minds with the necessity of attending the meetings. He said to them, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, before you is an open door that no man can shut, when shut, no man can open. These are truths such as I want you to fully realize. Come up to the work and make your calling and election sure."

Mr. Brown told him he was willing and waiting to be taught; that he had often felt he needed something more than the world could give.

"I am glad to hear it," said Saul. "What you lack is grace in the heart; Jesus is ready and willing to give it. Will you ask him for it?"

"I will," was the reply.

"There is a great work before us, and it is already begun. It can be said, to-day we have planted the vine and on the morrow we will gather the vintage."

During the conversation Aunt Sabrina remained speechless. It was noticeable to Saul, who felt it his duty to address her personally, and forthwith made a beginning, to which she replied, "I have got enough to do at home. I believe I am as good as the Starkys. They have got Aunt Trichie running to every house, store, work-room and grog-shop in the town, and she has been in here trying to hurry me up to think I am a stranger to grace, but if the truth was known, I have got as much of it as I need. So you needn't be puttin' yourself out of the way to take up laborin' with me, and I want you should let Sophia alone, for she, poor child, is almost worked to death. She has every thing to pull through that any one need to have. If she thinks she has time to go to meetin' she will go, but Saul you know jist what we think of the Starkys. I would rather hear

a dog bark than hear that man try to talk religion.”

Saul turned toward Mr. Brown in time to see him wipe the fast falling tears just as he was taking his hat to go again to his work. Saul walked up to him, took his hand saying, “I suppose you are in readiness to go to your work shop, are you?” Mr. Brown was too much choked with grief and tears to reply beyond a bow. “Well,” said Saul, “go, and may God go with you, pray for yourself and I will pray for you.” As the door closed behind him, Saul turned to Aunt Sabrina and said, “We have every prospect of a glorious revival. Last evening was our first meeting and there were several who came forward for prayer, some of whom will become garnished jewels in the house of God, I have all confidence to believe.”

“Who are they,” asked Aunt Sabrina.

“Mr. Harrison, Judge Jones, Lizzie Straightgate, Susie Hatting, and others I do not know. Two of the number at least were there through the influence of Aunt Trichie.”

“I do want to know if Judge Jones has come to that? I would never have believed it.”

“Judge Jones has a heart, but he is a man who has lived absorbed in public business for years.”

“I should n’t wonder if his business and love of money would yet crowd out the Word. You see its purty hard turnin’ round, when one has got to be as old, and hard as I s’pose he has.”

“God is able to give him a new heart, and will. I saw him this morning; he is an humble seeker after righteousness and will obtain it. No one was ever refused and he will not be.”

“Then Tom, you say, is takin’ a turn too, eh?”

“I said Mr. Harrison.”

“Well, he’s the same one; we always call him Tom, jist as though he was one of us.”

“Yes, with all sincerity of heart. What I want is you and your whole household to become one of faith.—to become servants of Christ, an honor to the church and the world.”

“I expect I am now; I am jist as good as the best of them; but, Saul, somehow you never see things quite right. You are never satisfied unless you can be reprimandin’. I feel I am a little bit too old to be led around by a youngster.”

“I am not wishing to rule you as a master over his servant, but be as a servant in my Master’s vineyard.”

At which time Aunt Sabrina made as much rush and bustle about the house as was in any way convenient for her until Saul felt defeated in his attempt for the better, and walked back to his office.

He had no sooner left the house than Sophia hastened into the room to know what had been keeping him so long, and before Aunt Sabrina could explain the matter, Sophia continued her story-telling with great emphasis, saying, “Tom has been in and I do believe he is really serious. He wanted me to be ready to go with him this evening to the church. He was not willing to listen to any excuse I could offer, would hardly accept the word ‘no.’ And to hear him was enough to turn even the silvery light of the moon to blue; but I told him I could not, it was not possible. Mother, I was tempted to tell him the whole and have it the end. I would, but I did so woefully hate to. I thought perhaps I had better wait a little, let him first get his stomach full of

religion, he will then be all the better prepared to meet his doom. You know I have to get my manuscript ready by the first of May or as near that time as I can. And, to do this I must be busy and have but few interruptions."

"That is so," said Aunt Sabrina, "you purty gin-erally see straight into things. You know the best what is before you. I expect it's true that Tom is goin' to be a church member. Saul thinks so, he has been tellin' it. He thinks there is going to be grand times. Calls it workin' in his Master's vineyard. Mebbe it is, but he better not meddle too much with them that's as good as himself. He got father cryin'. He's easy to cry always, you know, but he didn't get tears out of my eyes; I know too much. I'm glad you didn't unfold things to Tom jist yet. I awfully dread it, for I expect it will make a turr'ble time. It will be so hard for him to give you up. His gettin' religion may be a blessed thing, for if he didn't there's no tellin' what might come. I have had a great many suspicions and bad dreams of late, but I hope it will come out sunshine after awhile. Anyway that's my prayer."

At this point the conversation was disturbed by Aunt Trichie, who had made a special call to insist upon Sophia's going with her to the church that evening.

Said she, "I am goin' all 'round, seein' everybody, doin' all the good I can, and am feelin' full of happiness. There's precious times comin', I tell you. Judge Jones, he's all waked up. It's a blessed thing, everybody sez. I see him jist a little bit ago, and sez he to me, 'Is there no balm in Gilead, is

there no physician there?' Sez I to him, yes he's near to every one of us. Now then it won't be but a little while and he will be like the bright shinin' of a candle. Then there is Lizzie, Susie, Tom and old Mother Fay, beside some more, and you see there is room for you. It would seem hard enough if all the rest were brought in and you left out. You can't never feel what that will be till the time comes. And if that time has to come, there will never be any more chance for change. I can't talk and tell things like Saul and the ministers, but I tell the best I can, and leave the rest with God."

Sophia gave Aunt Trichie a disdainful look, and after tossing herself about the room with a self-conceited, overbearing air, tripped away to her room to again pick up the pen.

As her appearance was so cold and forbidding Aunt Trichie soon left with a sorrowful heart. Aunt Sabrina closely followed beside her as she passed out, and after closing the door sought Sophia, and said, "I don't expect now we shall see any peace, there is always somethin' comin' up to distract a body."

"Mother," said Sophia, "the doctor will be in immediately after his return from the city, and I will consult him in regard to the better way for me to approach Tom. It is just here, if Tom is not made to understand that I am not to be his, he will continually weary me, besides I cannot have the attention of two. One thing is true, heaven's blessings smile on me, and so long as they do, I can feel myself approved. I am permitted to enjoy the highest earthly blessing of any one in Copperville. I have won the doctor."

CHAPTER XV.

Whilst it would be pleasing to pursue the religious meetings with all their prosperity and encouragement, it is necessary we should turn back and consider the position and proposition of Dr. Green the morning after his ecstatic dream.

The face and form of Sophia was, as had been during the previous evening, vividly impressed upon his mind. "But I am," he reasoned with himself, "a stranger." However that thought burdened him but a moment. He considered his own competency and turning to the desk wrote a clear, perceptible view of himself, giving it an ostentatious polish which was sufficient to make him all right, according to his own judgment. Proud of his capacity; he folded the sheet, enclosed it in an envelope, which he deposited in the side pocket of his coat. After depositing the envelope he took a general view of himself in the mirror, and felt satisfied that his certificate, good looks and personal appearance would be enough to counteract and overthrow any previous engagement that could have been made between Sophia and Mr. Harrison.

Believing the most venturesome was not always the safer way, he decided to address a note to her, asking the privilege of making her acquaintance. He was exceedingly careful to select the finest gilt-edged paper, with a lovely flower stamped on one corner, also a fancy envelope with the address

superbly written. As he was extremely anxious, and too much afraid it might be overlooked in the postoffice, he hired a lad to deliver it immediately, then settled himself to await the reply.

The note was duly received by Sophia, who hastily opened it, and after running over the lines with almost breathless surprise, called out "Mother!"

With swift steps and uplifted hands Aunt Sabrina hastened to her, exclaiming "now what?" As Sophia apparently was too happily surprised to speak, Aunt Sabrina eagerly snatched the note and glancing over the page, said, "Why, that ain't anything bad. It is n't anything more than I should have expected."

"Yes, but then it makes me feel so overjoyed. He is so beautiful and lovely. Then, too, he is Dr. Green, and the profession is everything of itself. Besides, oh my! if I only catch him will I not be fixed."

"Indeed you will, but you must strengthen up and help get things in order, for I shouldn't wonder if he would be for comin' right on to-day."

"But this note is to be answered first," and away Sophia went, but her search for suitable paper was all in vain. Mr. Brown having just come in sight she called out, "Father, I want, I must have, some nice gilt-edged paper, and an envelope that will compete with this one," as she held it up for him to see. "Will you go? Will you get it, father?"

Mr. Brown, obedient to the demand, went, and in a little time all was had that was required to fit her for the task of penning a suitable reply, which was done with as much taste as her skill would permit.

After an hour of hurry and bustle the house was fitly arranged for the reception of the new guest, to

whom had been given the privilege of spending an hour between three and five o'clock that afternoon. When the appointed time came for the doctor to arrive, he was there and politely received, but, we are obliged to say, the heart of each vehemently beat. The words literature and popularity had, from that which was actual, alienated the mind of the Doctor. Consequently his attempt to approach Sophia was extremely embarrassing for these reasons, whilst Sophia labored under the influence of the word professional, until upon her mind it became inscribed with emphasis. It was indeed laughable to think of their position for the first half hour. The Doctor sat and pulled, stretched, folded and pinched the corners of his handkerchief, once and again tucking it back into, then out of, the inside pocket of his coat. Whilst Sophia played with the Daily News, occasionally putting the edges of the paper between her teeth, then lightly tapping the tips of her shoulders with it until the word bashfulness suggested itself to the mind of the Doctor. He then immediately broke the silence by saying "I feel Providence has wisely ordered my return to Copperville."

Sophia had several handsome replies premeditated but none that suited the remark made. She therefore stammered out something in regard to Copperville and its enticements.

The Doctor saw her embarrassment and continued his discourse by saying he thought, where two hearts beat in unison on earth, no matter how far separated, they were often brought together by an edict of an over-ruling Providence for the accomplishment of his good purposes.



“It was indeed laughable to think of their position for the first half hour.”

We will not attempt to relate the particulars of their conversation, but simply add that the remarks made by the Doctor suited well the mind of Sophia, who put forth her best endeavors, and strange as it may appear mutuality was strongly felt and exhibited by either party; so much so, that before the hour had passed, which ere they were aware had lengthened into two, each was confident of having won the other. Before the Doctor left it was understood that the following day was to be particularly appointed to decide definitely in regard to a permanent engagement. "It is necessary," said he, "that your parents should be consulted in this matter, and that we have their consent. I shall expect their presence, and shall be happy to present this," drawing the envelope from his coat pocket.

"What is it," asked Sophia.

"My credentials. It is wisdom to carry proof when among strangers," said the Doctor. He then bade her an affectionate good-bye and left, exceedingly happy, in view of his reception and success, more particularly so for the reason that he could abandon the belief that it would be necessary that he should "swell himself to bursting size, to utter bulky words of admiration vast."

There was no time lost after the Doctor left. Sophia at once made her mother acquainted with the Doctor's proposition and her happy prospects, also the necessity of an understanding between them in order to know just how to arrange their plans on the coming morrow.

"Father," said Aunt Sabrina, "we shall have to put our wits together, for I expect we are to have the new Doctor for son-in-law. I jist tell you this so

you will be prepared for the rest after tea. You see it won't do to talk before Saul."

"No, indeed," replied Sophia, "it will not be his privilege to know my affairs, and hand out his skill-witted comments."

"I think," said Aunt Sabrina, "you jist better take a pan and go git some of Tom's good hot-bed lettuce to have ready for breakfast, while Saul is in eatin', for you show your happiness so, you know you can't see yourself. Why, Sophia, you fly like the down of a thistle, then there's sich a sparklin' in your eyes, and your cheeks are like 'cherries in a pot of cream.' That isn't quite nateral, I know he would be sure to see it, and there would be no endin' if he once did."

With a reluctant feeling at heart, Sophia accepted her mother's proposal and went for the lettuce, but returned whilst Saul was yet at the table.

At the first glimpse of her face, he quickly remarked, "Your looks are rather enchanting. Whom were you trying to win?"

"I wonder if I am not already won," said Sophia, as she picked up some of the beautiful leaves so fresh and green and presented them to him to turn his attention.

"Those are very fine indeed, but what is still finer is the look of your fair face."

Aunt Sabrina could scarcely contain herself, and fearing she might let an out-of-place word slip forth left the table.

Saul needed no more than eyesight to understand the situation. It was his candid opinion that Sophia was the very one to whom Dr. Green had forwarded a note, and that there was an understanding

between them, but to what extent was a question. Not having confidence to believe he would get an idea of the truth for the reason that his opinion had been formerly expressed, he made no attempt to canvass the question but left as soon as possible with an air of indifference which was keenly felt by Sophia. She was sure Saul had come into possession of some knowledge that led him to suspicion the intimacy between her and the Doctor. "I tell you," she spoke out loudly, "we shall have to look two ways when Saul is in, for I would not have him know my plans for the world. It is evident that he is embittered against the Doctor. He has said it plainly enough, and would gladly put a stumbling stone in my way."

"Yes," said Aunt Sabrina, "that he would; I shouldn't wonder if you had better jist drop a word or two in the doctor's ear, so he will be a little careful. To be careful never does any body harm. But father is waitin' to know what is wanted of him. He says he can't stay long; he must go back to the shop this evenin' and work awhile."

"Why, father, I am next thing to being engaged to the Doctor, what we want is to consult you, and have your consent. He will be here to-morrow to have it all permanently arranged. We want you to be present; will you be, father? Of course you know I should want you to appear well, be all clean and dressed in your best suit, for it will be one of the most important occasions of your life, and one that will not call for a repetition."

"Sophia," said the heart-burdened father, "I don't know what to say; I can't see as you and mother do. Tom is a likely man, and well-to-do.

Maybe Dr. Green is, I don't know. I am a good deal afeared of him."

"You need not be," said Sophia swiftly, "he carries his credentials; he is all right, that I know."

"I hope so," continued the father, "but then, there is your book, I was calculatin' on your gittin' that printed. I think that ought to come fust, so father can have some of the proceeds. You see if Dr. Green should git you fust, and get things in his own hands, he would be countin' it as real estate property belongin' to you, and that would make it all his. Besides, there would be the weddin' that would cost lots, and make a hard pull for me."

"That, father, is why we should counsel together this evening, and have our minds prepared before he is here to be with us. He is in a hurry and wants we should be married soon, but if he will give me till the first or middle of May, I think I can complete the work and get it into the hands of a publisher. What is necessary is to have it understood that our marriage cannot take place until I shall have sufficient time given me to accomplish the work."

"That, then, is all right so far as it goes, but Sophia, do you think you are doin' right in throwin' Tom away? You know you have promised to be his wife, and he's been so good and true to us all. It would be hard to see him turned off."

"I think it right I should marry the man I love the best; I cannot love Tom since I saw Dr. Green, and, father, don't ask me to. Mother is willing I should marry the man who suits me best. And we do know it would be more suitable for me to marry

a professional gentleman, than one who is a mere gardener."

"I am willin' to leave it with you and mother, for as you say so it would have to be. It is now time I was leavin' to finish up for this evenin' my chore of work at the shop."

"Mother, I would not be at all surprised if father did not see the Doctor at all to-morrow. If he should not, it will cast a blur over me. Father swallows every word Tom says, and no one does quite as near right, and he believes he can't live without him, but I guess there are others who have dollars and cents, and cents will buy garden vegetables. What is bought is better than a gift."

"I know myself that I think a good deal of Tom, but after all it's jist as you say, Tom is a gardener and that's no way like bein' a doctor. I don't think you need to feel worried if father should refuse to be in to-morrow, for if the Doctor is made to know once that he is so wonderfully in favor of Tom, he will see through it all, and not think any the less of you. Mebbe he would more, I've heard say when a man had to dig ten years to earn his wife, he loved her enough better ever afterward to feel paid in full."

"I should call that love to begin with," said Sophia.

After an hour or more had passed, Sophia settled herself with the belief that all would be fair and smooth, and nothing was required of her beyond self-composure until the time for the Doctor to arrive next day. She then satisfied her appetite with a few lettuce leaves nicely prepared from Tom's hot-bed, and retired for the night. It was a long one of

dreamless wakefulness. There was an anxiety resting upon her mind, not of fear, but what might be termed dread. She believed when the morrow had passed, and she knew that every arrangement was permanently made, she should then feel at rest, for she could look beyond into the near future, when her life would be to her, "like one long summer day."

"Sophia," said Aunt Sabrina, "do you know what time in the day it is? The men have all had their breakfast and gone."

"I can't help it," said Sophia, "I have not had a wink of sleep all night, I could not compose myself."

"The dear me, I don't think you need to have lain awake all night. I have been talkin' to father, I think he'll get around in time, and give his consent. He knows what I think purty plain, you know I ginerally rule, I have to in his case."

Sophia was not long getting to the table, but sundry duties compelled Aunt Sabrina to relinquish her relish for conversation, and she tried to influence Sophia to retirement, "to see if you can't get your nerves pacified," as she said, "for you don't want to look scared, I always think when a body looks that way, they look wild like. Mebbe you had better take a little of this balm cordial that father takes."

"I will chew green tea, that will answer. Don't fear, mother, I shall be all right by the time the Doctor gets here; if not I shall be soon after, for his looks are enough to soothe and heal, without roots or herbs."

"Well, raly," responded Aunt Sabrina with a good hearty laugh, "we don't find sich men every day; you are most dreadful fortunate I declare."

"Good fortune is what I am bound for, that I

have told you. Shall I dress in your butternut cashmere this afternoon?"

"Yes, if you want to; I can put on my drab alpaca. I sha'n't expect to be long in the room."

Without naming the many particulars that might interest, we will let it suffice to say that the Doctor was present at the hour appointed, neatly dressed and fragrantly perfumed. After a few minutes had passed in social conversation between Sophia and the Doctor, the parents were introduced. Without hesitation or embarrassment the Doctor proceeded to mention his proposed intention, and asked for a prompt and frank reply. At which time he extended the sheet of paper immediately after removing it from the envelope, with as much swiftness as though he was acting the part of a playboy. Sophia read the written testimony to her parents, then presented it to them to look at, that they might see it for themselves.

"That's dreadful purty, and what's more it's good evidence," said Aunt Sabrina. "It tells us you are all right, is one sure thing." Whilst the father remained as silent as a mute.

"If it is satisfactory evidence may I not expect your willing consent?"

"Why, if the union between you and Sophia is one of hearts, I'm willin'," said Aunt Sabrina.

"Are you, Mr. Brown?"

"I s'pose so," he replied with faltering voice, and fast falling tears.

The Doctor then arose, took Sophia by the hand, and in a standing position before the sorrowing hearted father, and gratified mother, declared himself one who would ever be faithful to his trust, and constant to his vow.

CHAPTER XVI.

“Sophia,” said Aunt Sabrina as she entered the dining room, “is the Doctor here yet?”

“He has just left me, did you not like him, mother? Can't he do things up superbly?”

“Well, I should say he could. He was in sich a hurry, I hardly had time to think.”

“He believed that to be the better way, especially after I put a word in his ear about father. You know he did not really give his consent, but the Doctor thought nothing beyond that he was so affectionately fond of me, and the idea of giving me away was tenderly touching to him. But now we both feel much more happy since we are really engaged, and the arrangements made as nearly as they can be for the present. And mother, the Doctor will expect the privilege of coming in as he has leisure and feeling at home. I have assured him that this will be home to him, and that he can exercise freedom, for which he thanked me much. He told me he should not only regard it as a privilege but a boon. Said he could be compared to a stray bee, that would gladly return again to the hive.”

“I'll warr'nt he feels that way; but now he can be comforted, for I will do my very best for him. How are you goin' to manage Tom?”

“I have not yet determined that part. There are so many things to think about and get done. That book is the greatest puzzle. I almost wish I had

never commenced it; but then, had I not there could not have been the happy result for me to share in that there will now be. So long as it is but a treatise on 'Realities, Arguments and Adventures,' I can the sooner close it up and call it done. The truth is, I must be about it; I must improve every moment. And, too, there should be some trading done I think, so I can be working in some sewing now and then for a change."

"I think that way myself, and to kind o' work in a beginnin' it may be I can get a few dollars of Saul."

"What a blessed thing it is for me that I have a mother," said Sophia, as she lightly tripped away to engage in her literary work, which had become irksome under the circumstance of her engagement with Dr. Green, when previously it had been to her a great pleasure. She preferred to turn her attention to fancy work, as she expressed it, but upon a word fitly spoken by her mother, she remarked with an air of brilliancy, "the books will buy," and with a firm decision to persevere she steadily devoted herself to the task with all the power of her mind and skill that her fingers could perform, until several days had passed with no particular interruption beyond now and then a call. Sometimes the Doctor, then Tom, and occasionally Aunt Trichie, each with his own special purpose, and in turn receiving the accustomed entertainment, until the time arrived of which we have heretofore made mention in a previous chapter. The circumstances that surrounded Sophia at this time were of a remarkable character. She was highly delighted with the prospect of being the wife of a professional gentleman.

She felt richly endowed, elated, promoted, and indeed it would be difficult to present a clear representation of her exalted anticipations.

Meanwhile there was a disquiet in consequence of her unfaithfulness to him to whom she had been so long engaged that the freedom of her enjoyment was disturbed. But, as she said, "My engagement with Tom must be broken. These serious reflections he is having I cannot endure. The attention of two I cannot have, and though I woefully dread it, somehow or in some way it must be done."

For these reasons the first opportunity according to her own judgment, she consulted the Doctor, who thought it unadvisable that she should talk with Tom face to face, for fear he might over-rule her, and in consequence have a prolonged trouble.

"I should consider it altogether the better way," said the Doctor, "to write Mr. Harrison a decided set-off and let that be the end of it. Who knows," he continued, "but we might meet here, there would be nothing unlikely about it. I think the sooner he is made to know you are to be mine, the better it will be."

"That is so, I am confident," said Sophia, "still I have a dread to act. Father is ardently attached to him, and there were reasons why it was thought best to keep quiet for a while. But now since these meetings are being conducted, and he is among those who feel deeply interested, his anxiety for me greatly disturbs me. He has become a perfect vexer. I cannot, will not, go with him, consequently I feel the time very truly has come, when it is just that he should know the reality before him."

"I hope you will no longer hesitate," said the

Doctor, "it is to me a matter of great moment."

"I certainly will not neglect it after to-morrow, I will assure you," was her prompt reply.

The door was no sooner closed behind him, than Aunt Sabrina made it convenient to drop into Sophia's room to discuss the matter, for she was sure Sophia would do as she had said, "consult the Doctor."

"What does he think?" asked Aunt Sabrina.

"Why, he does not want I should hesitate, but write him immediately a short and convincing note, and believe me it is what I am now trying to do. But, mother, it is the hardest thing to write I ever wrote in my life; with all I do so much prefer the Doctor, to write Tom a decided set-off comes awful tough, I assure you. I have picked up my pen, I am not quite sure, but maybe ten times, to make a beginning and failed."

"Well, now, you had better lay it away till mornin'. You are in too much of a fluster to know jist what to say. Time is required to do all things, and especially sich a piece of work as this is."

"One would suppose it could be hastily done, but if not so, then it must be long drawn," muttered Sophia.

"Can't I help you a little? We don't want to make him mad or the like, but to keep the right side of him as nearly as we can; he is so accommodatin' always, you know."

"Of course I am willing you and father should be on friendly terms with him. In fact I, too, wish to be, but for me to exchange hearts will change his feelings toward us. But I must try and get together a few ideas, for now the Doctor will, more than at

any time before, be looking into the matter." And she at once made another attempt with some better success. After re-reading it a time or two, she asked, "Will that do?"

"I don't see but it will," said Aunt Sabrina, "but you'd better jist add to it that I send my best respects to him."

In short it was pronounced finished, and read as follows:

"MR. T. HARRISON,

DEAR SIR:—Please do not feel too much surprised at the contents of this note. To be short, plain and truthful I must say I wish to be released from my engagement with you. I hope you will not feel hurt with me, or do yourself an injustice in consequence. I wish you prosperity in all things, and may you be buoyed up above every sorrow that may take possession of you, and make you willing that I should be free from you, to act my own pleasure in regard to choice, especially in choosing a husband.

"Respectfully,

"SOPHIA BROWN."

The next morning Aunt Sabrina said, "Sophia, do you think you will let that do, you wrote last evenin'?"

"I think I may, but mother, I am of the opinion that I will let it lie a few days. I have written, and if the Doctor asks me in regard to it, I can tell him I have, and that will make it all right with him. It will be right, but not as he would suppose. He will expect me to send it post haste. I shall exercise my own judgment about the matter. It is a plain truth, that to hold back a little will be to our advantage. If the Doctor thinks the thing is done, and Tom cut off, it is the same to him as though he was."

“If you are satisfied, I shall be glad enough to have you do that way. Father is needin’ Tom’s horses, right bad, for a day or two and that would give him one more chance, if there should never be another for him to have.”

The Doctor being exceedingly thoughtful that morning, it occurred to his mind that it would be better if he regarded carefully Sophia’s position, and exercised freedom in her behalf. “It is not a small thing to dethrone an old king,” said he to himself. “Mr. Harrison has been too long her special attendant. She may, under present circumstances, need my support and she shall have it.” Accordingly he picked up his hat and walked over with quick steps, and into the house, very unexpectedly to Sophia. As soon as a favorable opportunity presented itself, he asked, “Have you written?”

“I have,” was the reply.

“I am having, perhaps,” said the Doctor, “an unwarrantable suspicion. Are you hopeful in your effort to dislodge Mr. Harrison’s affections?”

“I see no reason why I should not be. He will feel bad without doubt; I may at the outset suffer some inconvenience, but I shall gain the victory.”

“It was my apprehension that you might have some difficulty, and perhaps I could render you some assistance by standing by you. A burden is easier borne when there are two to bear it.”

At this point in the conversation Sophia was called by her mother, whom she hastily obeyed, and on reaching the kitchen saw Tom coming up the walk from the side gate in his old familiar way. With a low, soft voice Sophia said, “Mother, be careful how you speak. Speak very low; it will

not do for the Doctor to hear. I am too much afraid he would want to be here with the view of defending me. He is very much concerned on my account."

But as fortune would have it, Tom was only there to present them with a basket of fine parsnips and artichokes from his garden. As soon as Tom's feet struck the walk Sophia said, "Mother that note must go at once to the postoffice. It will not do; I am under obligations to the Doctor and he is awake to it. The sooner Tom reads the note the better it will be. I pity him, it will almost take his life."

"Yes," said Aunt Sabrina, "but then he has got to be a Christian. He's been brought out, so Aunt Trichie told me, yesterday. You know sich folks think their afflictions work for their good, and there's no tellin' but he will git things fixed up in some sich way as that for himself. It will be a blessed thing if he only does. Should his religion carry him through all this trouble straight, it will be doin' more than ever I thought it would do."

"Yes, indeed, and I hope it may," said Sophia, "for it would seem sad enough to me if I had to feel that I had sealed his death warrant," and with these words she returned to the Doctor.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was a dull morning, with darkened, overhanging, impenetrable clouds, misty rain and distant rumbling thunder, but there were no overcasting clouds that covered the mind of Harrison when he, with nimble tread and happy countenance, entered Saul's office.

"I have something with which to interest you this morning," said Harrison, as he, with a pleasing air, presented a note to Saul, who at once received it, and after having hastily read it turned with eyes fixed upon him. A long pause ensued. Harrison broke the silence by saying, "I am waiting for a word."

Said Saul earnestly, "I find in myself an indescribable vacancy. I do not know in what way to express my own mind."

"Are you surprised?" asked Harrison.

"Not as much as I presume you are."

"I am not as much as I might have been," said Harrison, "but, thank God, it is not with me to-day as it would have been three months in the past. To-day it is a happy surprise. No happier one could have come to me."

"Are you aware of the cause?" asked Saul.

"My suspicions were awakened yesterday. Have you had reason to believe such as this would have come to me?"

"I have been very much afraid of it," said Saul. "In what way were your suspicions awakened yesterday, pray tell?"

“I was inquired of in regard to the health of the family, and told that Dr. Green had been seen to go in several times. I thought to try a test, and at once picked up a basket of vegetables and walked over, having in view a selfish motive. It did not need the skill of a philosopher to understand there was an ear not far off. I discovered what I could in a short time, formed an opinion of my own, and left satisfied. Last evening I found this in the postoffice. According to my view of the matter she has some anxiety for me, if no love.”

“She has perfect confidence in your constancy and affection for her,” said Saul.

“She is truly aware I never make a vow to break. Were it otherwise in consequence of this recent change of feeling on my part, perhaps she—” and choked back the utterance.

“I understand your meaning,” said Saul, “I am not blinded in the matter.”

“The time has been,” continued Harrison, “that I loved Sophia with an exuberant affection, but were I to make the confession that conscience would allow, I should say, since the commencement of our meetings I have suffered conviction, and would gladly have looked forward with the hope of release, which I supposed would not come; but since it has come with no default on my part, I am to-day a happier man. Do you really believe Dr. Green to be at the bottom of this matter?”

“In all probability,” was Saul’s quick reply.

“The question in my mind is where did they first meet. I knew nothing of an introduction between them.”

“I take him for a fast man,” said Saul. “It has been

but a short time since he made his first appearance in Copperville. He sat by me on our ride to Castle Hill, you will recollect."

"Saul, what is your opinion of him, anyway? You have had a better opportunity of knowing him than I have."

"Because you ask it, and under the circumstances I will give it. It is this: If his conscience had a thousand several tongues, and every tongue brought in a several tale, every tale would condemn him as a villain."

"If you are correct what will that poor girl's portion be? Wed to a loon. But we will not be too fast with our suspicions; Dr. Green may not be the man."

"He is the very man; I believe it. I have had occasion heretofore to freely express myself about him."

"And I blind! How could such a thing be? Why Saul, I have not at any time since our first engagement failed to spend an hour at least with her every week, besides being to and from the house frequently. Called it home, felt at home. I had every reason to feel perfectly free, as I supposed. I very soon learned their financial position, that it was not the most comfortable of any in the world, and it afforded me pleasure to assist them not only in one, but in every way. They were always welcome to whatever was needed of such as I had, and so far as I am able to judge, they were free to take what they wished. I never at any time met a gentleman there, or learned of anything to arouse a suspicion of jealousy. So far as heartfelt affection was concerned, I had in Sophia the most implicit confidence.

I was well aware she was not perfect in many things, but knew her home influence was in no way calculated to improve her. It was my opinion that age, a new home, and change of scenery would largely benefit her. I had not one thought but that she was to be mine. Mine as long as life lasted, and I her own, to be and do for her all that was possible under every circumstance and condition. But to plainly tell you, since our religious meetings are being conducted, I have become disheartened with her cold indifference in both words and actions. Not only so, but, to use a still stronger term, felt disgusted. I had a fervent desire for her undying soul; I wanted to feel that we were spiritually united. I made an effort, but it was impossible to get possession of her mind. Saul, believe me, she became almost violent. Should it surprise you if I say I could look upon one other, and say to myself, if Sophia was only what you are, if she only had your heart, and Saul, it led me to further question, 'how can two walk together except they be agreed.' With the reply you are acquainted. It may not seem as strange to you for these reasons, when I say that my mind having become differently impressed and having drawn up a certain degree of disunion, I was properly prepared to receive this note, and feel no unhappiness."

"Harrison, would you allow me to ask who the especially pleasing one is, and not think me impertinent?"

"Your question is excusable. Let me hear, please, I have no doubt as to the truth of your impression."

"Lizzie, is it not?"

"She is the very one I look upon with admiration."

"I am not at all surprised at your taste. She is

an estimable young lady; so far as I am able to judge she has an excellent mind. I should be pleased to know your attention was turned to her, and that you were duly appreciated by her. It has been said:

“‘Tis well to woo, 'tis well to wed,
For so the world has done,
Since lilies grew, and roses bloomed,
And morning brought the sun.’”

“Indeed I thank you,” said Harrison, “and may I not hope that my example will prove valuable to yourself.”

“Whilst it is my candid opinion that every man should have a wife, and every woman a husband, there are circumstances under which either may live alone. Marriage is the union of two hearts, and unless there can be that perfect union of hearts, there should be none of hands.”

“Is it possible that you have not met with the right one yet?” said Harrison, with a merry twinkle of the eye.

“You are not acquainted with my history, Harrison. Every man has a heart, and every heart has its own store-room.”

At this moment, Saul could no longer hide the sensitiveness of his mind for the tears that flooded his eyes to overflowing, and trickled down upon his manly cheeks. The heart of Harrison was touched, and for a few minutes everything was hushed.

At length Harrison said, “Pardon me for having awakened a sad remembrance. It was unconsciously done, I knew nothing of your misfortune.”

“Certainly not,” responded Saul, “it is not advisable for me to speak of these matters. But upon

you the favor of knowing I will cheerfully confer.

“My maiden lives in fairer lands,
Arabelle, my darling Arabelle.

It was through her influence that I become acquainted with the doctrine of Christ and consecrated to his service.”

With a mixed feeling of humility and reverence on the part of Harrison, whose eyes rested upon Saul with devoted attention, he said, “Why is it that you have chosen the law practice.”

“I aim to practice both the profession of law and godliness. To my mind there is no class of men who should be possessors of more of the fundamental doctrine of the gospel than those who handle the law. Christianity is the basis of all purity and perfection. Let it prevail, and there will be no persons found sitting side by side with the bar of enmity between them. We have been permitted to see here among us, since our religious meetings were commenced, the strong walls of prejudice and bitterness crumble to nothingness. It is no uncommon thing for me to be asked, ‘Why are you a lawyer?’ I presume to think that, with the spirit of grace, I may be able to do greater good in the law practice than any other. I have so far and always mean to lead men from trouble, not into it. Whilst I expect to live by my profession, my advice is, if you want to live, unless absolutely necessary, let law alone. Blot out these penny-eyed lawyers who work for coin more than the well being of the one whom they are trying to defend, and we will see more prosperity in our land, and less of the hardships of poverty.

“There are certain things carried on in the law

practice that I shall ever prohibit, at least as far as my influence can extend. Neither man nor woman ever need come to me with a complaint, asking me to conduct a suit against their voluntarily wedded companion, short of such positive proof against either party, as is forbidden in the law of God. Let there be less divorce bills granted, and there will be less resemblance to Mormonism, and no occasion whatever for thrusting out. Take nine cases out of every ten where bills have been granted, it does not seem to make any difference with either male or female; let them have a second opportunity of choosing a companion, and they are not any better satisfied with the second than they were with the first, and indeed there is sometimes a repetition; and it is where the second bill is granted that Mormonism is more accurately applied. I tell you, Harrison, I am down on such things. There is in it neither truth, honesty, nor honor; and to me all that is untrue, dishonest, and dishonorable is like noxious weeds grown in a fertilized soil. For these reasons it is necessary that united pairs should be mutually united; in which case, if they are, there is no falling out by the way. And with this truth before us, Harrison, according to my mind no greater favor could have been conferred upon you, than that which has just been."

CHAPTER XVIII.

“I do wonder what is keepin’ Saul from his dinner to-day; everything is gettin’ cold and spoiled. I s’pose he thinks I’ve nothin’ else to do but to wait upon him, so it makes no difference, I can make it right when he does come.”

“O, my, no,” said Aunt Trichie, as she was just entering through the wood-house, “I think mebbe they’re havin’ prayer meetin’ in the law office. I’ve been passin’ by ever so many times, you see I am out tryin’ to do everybody all the good I can. I go round to kinder keep them up in good cheer, and that’s what I expect Saul’s doin’. Mebbe Tom wants some information and encouragement, I see him in there the first thing this mornin’, and he was there yet when I jist now come past.”

“I do wonder if Tom is livin’ in that law office to-day,” said Aunt Sabrina with air of excitement, meanwhile casting an inquiring glance toward Sophia, who in one moment turned pale with terror at the announcement, and after returning a sly wink, turned around, to escape Aunt Trichie’s observing eye, if possible.

“Oh, don’t feel worried over it,” said Aunt Trichie, “for I tell you there’s great times come, and that it’s a great blessin’ that’s come upon us. We’re havin’ prayer meetin’s all over. Now is a time when everybody gits up close together. And there is so much love. Don’t see anything but love

and good feelin's now days. I lay my house work all right down, so I can be doin' good everywhere round outside."

It is hardly necessary to say the suspicion that excited the minds of Aunt Sabrina and Sophia was unnoticed by Aunt Trichie. Still she continued to present in her own most simple language the brighter side by rehearsing the probability of a religious association between Saul and Tom, in the law office, the same as was being had at various places throughout the town. And with all the strength of her mind she attempted to lay before them the prevailing religious influence, and her own fervent desire to impress the minds of all those to whom she could have access, with the sense of the obligations they were under to their Maker. She also reassured them that her call on them was for no other purpose than to spiritually benefit them.

Spoke Aunt Sabrina in a cold, abrupt way, "I don't care how much you talk and pray. It's been had in the house once to-day, but I can tell you I find more than that to do. I am almost worked to death, and Sophia, too, poor child. We are almost crazy with all there is before us. You don't know anything about it. If you can afford to lay your work down, and gad around the town to please the Starkys, that 's your business. I am glad to hear tell of love; I think it's time it come. They tell me the Starkys got up these meetin's. They are tryin' to make a great show. Do they pay you for your time?"

"The dear me, Aunt Sabrina, you don't get things anywhere near right. I ain't workin' for the Starkys, I am doin' for the Lord; and that's what I'm come to see you for now."

“I know without any tellin’ all about the Lord; and I know myself besides, and I shall tell you the same I told Saul, you needn’t be puttin’ yourself out of the way to take up laborin’ with me. There is a great deal else to be done beside goin’ to meetin’. I don’t suppose there is another one in all this town that’s doin’ half what Sophia is, or will git any better reward. She is doin’ good that ages can never obliterate. That is what Dr. Green says, he’s heard about it.”

“That Dr. Green, eh! Does he keep comin’?”

“Neighborly like.”

“That’s all, I s’pose,” said Aunt Trichie, “Tom was always good, but he’s better now. They’ve been tellin’ me all round that he’s worth his weight in gold. Blessed thing for Sophia that she’s got on him a fast hold. But I haven’t got so much time to spare, I must be gettin’ on, but afore I go you must promise me you will be over to the meetin’ house this evenin’.”

“I certainly will not,” said Sophia swiftly, “I am a law unto myself.”

As everything was forbidding, Aunt Trichie walked away, as she had many times, sorrowing, and upon her lips the parting words, “the Lord bless you.”

She had no sooner taken her leave of them, than Aunt Sabrina and Sophia began to unfold to each other their fears and apprehensions. It was beyond doubt a truth, if Tom was spending a day in that law office, he was there for no good, and after putting all the possibilities together, felt themselves in deep water.

While thus counseling together, with hearts full

of consternation and unwarrantable conclusions, the Doctor happened in, and was soon made acquainted with the sign that signified a fast coming warfare.

“While the appearance has in itself,” said the Doctor, “a broad signification from which we may justly draw a conclusion that will acquiesce with your suspicion, we will not borrow too much trouble; let him take action first; should it be necessary, it would be justifiable certainly, on my part, were I to roll over him as would the car wheels of Jaganaut. I can,” he continued, “see no reason if a marriage contract can be broken by a single oath, and an expense of a few dollars, why a trivial engagement should need either. It would certainly be a very ungentlemanly act on the part of Harrison to interfere with us, after having been plainly notified as to the change of heart, especially as he has just been newly dressed in the garb of Christianity. One would suppose he would be more considerate for fear of being what is termed a stumbling stone; or in other words, a dishonor to the cause.”

“I did hope his gittin’ religion,” said Aunt Sabrina, “would help ease him off, but I do expect, to give Sophia up is like takin’ his heart right out of him.”

“That is very probable, but I shall contend for her, and stand by her. You can trustingly confide in me. I believe I am as brave as Harrison is strong. So, darling, I want to see you wipe away these tears before I leave you. I have a patient in the country that I must necessarily visit, and it is now time I was riding. I shall expect to see you brightened on my return. Good-bye.”

“I am so glad,” said Sophia, “the Doctor has a

patient to visit in the country. I do not wish him here when Saul is in the house. Just now I should much rather they would not meet. I know so well how he would do; he would glare those large eyes of his, and put on that commanding, dictatorial appearance so natural to him, and he would take special pleasure in showing it out, if the Doctor was here, as he always does when he is with those for whom he has no respect."

"I guess I knew all about Saul, and I feel a good deal as you do. I would rather the Doctor would be away; but then I have got him to face, and that ain't all. I expect we shall have what can't be called pleasant times, when he comes to supper, if he does, for I shall give him a piece of my mind."

"It will do no good, mother, if you do. He will do his best in a suit against me all the same, if Tom is bound to fight me."

At the tea hour Saul was in, and took his place at the table with his usual cheerfulness, spoke of the atmosphere, and of having had an unfavorable day for out-door business, etc.

To which Aunt Sabrina with a strong expression of bitterness spoke out, "Is that what has been keepin' Tom in your office all day?"

Saul cast an inquiring look but made no reply.

"Aunt Trichie thought you was havin' prayer meeting, but if the truth was known we should find it had been a peculiar kind of a prayer meeting, is what I suspect."

"What do you wish me to understand, Aunt Sabrina?"

"I want to know if Tom is goin' to take up arms against Sophia."

“Mother, mother,” sighed Mr. Brown, “I don’t want to hear trouble.”

“But I guess you will have to hear it, and share in it too, as well as myself.”

“Why should Harrison take up arms against Sophia? What has she done?” asked Saul.

“I expect you know.”

“Why should you expect me to know?”

“Didn’t Tom tell you?”

“What idea have you of his telling. Has anything especially new happened?”

“I should say there had, and if Sophia thinks the difference between a gardener and doctor enough to break her engagement with Tom, she will.”

“Then, am I to understand that Sophia is already on mutual terms with Dr. Green?”

“I expect you may.”

“I will say to you, no plainer story could be told me, than has been right here in this room, by you and yours. When I by accident learned that Dr. Green had hired a lad to deliver to Sophia a note, it told me a story. Then meeting you as I daily do, and seeing all I have, told much more. For me to tell you what I think would not please you, for I am disgusted with the whole affair. That fellow came here a stranger. He has puffed himself, and for some cause he has dared to introduce himself into your family, and you seem to regard him as a compeer.”

“Saul, what on ’arth have you got against that man? He is jist as fine a gentleman as you are.”

“How came you to know it?”

“He carries his credentials,” said Sophia.

“Then, Sophia, he really does carry his credentials, does he. Will you be so kind as to ask the

privilege of presenting them to me? It would be a favor."

"Were I to, you would be sure to find something not quite right about them."

"If his testimony is not right, and I could detect it in time for your good, you should feel thankful to me for it."

"Well Saul," said Aunt Sabrina, "you need n't be meddlin'. I have seen it for myself, and heard it too. He carries jist as beautiful a piece of paper; it's as purty as a picture, and it tells all about him. No one should want anything more or better. I don't."

"All right," said Saul, "if you are satisfied it is immaterial to me. To know, however, that our friends do well is very gratifying. To see them plunge themselves in a gulf of woebegone misfortune has the opposite effect."

Saul, not willing to give the desired information, but having gotten all that was really needed to guarantee the position of Dr. Green, was quite willing to take his leave.

Aunt Sabrina and Sophia were too full of indignation to pay particular attention to Saul as he left, but they supposed he had returned to his place of business; on the contrary, he had, as he felt, a message to deliver, and walked directly to Harrison's cottage.

Meanwhile, Sophia and her mother brooded, studied and considered, until they at length decided it was possible Harrison would not take action against her, if they were careful to show no suspicion, and be usually pleasant with him. Having thus considered, Aunt Sabrina thought she might

better just run over and speak a few words to him, pleasantly, and get a little hot-bed lettuce, as that would make things look more natural, and show she was in no way angry, but having all good feelings toward him, which she did. When to her unbounded surprise she found Saul and Tom apparently confidentially engaged in a private conversation. Not stopping to regard any notice they might have taken of her, she speedily retraced her steps, woe-shaken and enraged.

“It’s a fact,” she said, as she reentered the house, “Saul and Tom have got their heads together, and they are there like two settin’ hens on one nest. There is no tellin’ where these things are goin’ to end.” And with an almost paralyzing shriek of desperation, she sunk into an arm-chair with her clamorous gabble, until she quieted down from weariness.

CHAPTER XIX.

As we sometimes remark, long heads look a long ways. Saul and Harrison were two long-headed, witty fellows, too full of truth and good humor to involve themselves, or be the means of absorbing others, in a whirlpool of trouble. They merely rehearsed in confidence the probability of an inconsistent step for Sophia to trust herself to the care of Dr. Green, but as either party could at this time choose for themselves, Harrison was comfortable and happy with the view of one whom he looked upon as faultless, and Sophia was free to use her own liberty.

“I dread,” said Harrison, “the first step. Saul what shall I say?”

“If you lack confidence,” said Saul, “walk over to my office in the morning, and I shall have ready a written document.”

“You must study up instruction now, I cannot wait till morning.”

“What! Harrison, going before you sleep?”

“Yes, before supper. We are told that, ‘procrastination is the thief of time,’ and it sometimes takes more. I feel, I can’t describe it, I cannot express the sacredness of my mind. It appears like a something most precious to be forever lost, unless gotten now. I wish I could define it, it has in it a rapture; it is flooding all my soul.”

“Harrison, it is love in the bud that ails you.”

“If this, then, that I am now pressed with, is love in the bud, I want the bud in bloom.”

“That is just what I wish you to have, I wish you success, Harrison. I should indeed be pleased to see your life paralleled with that one upon whom the scar of enmity has no place. Whose cheeks are tinged with the rose of girlhood, whose eyes like sparkling orbs express a noble gift of an intellectual capacity, lying just behind them. Whose face denotes amiability of character, for what is more contemptible than a peevish, sour-minded woman. Beside all else, that one to whom we refer has a heart filled with the spirit of grace, and has become a pattern of good works.”

Life has in it separate distinction and each distinction an opposite, an unlikeness such as joy and sorrow, love and hate, pleasure and gloom, mirth and seriousness, and as we must suppose, that this particular time of which we now speak, was one of mirth and seriousness. Harrison was in the first stage of mental affection, but entangled with the web of fear.

“Come, Saul, strike up, give me a world-worthy hint and I will arrange myself for the test. The achievement requires affability, and should I need a friend to corroborate in my behalf, stand at the helm. Saul, Lizzie is more than life to me; she has unconsciously sealed my very soul to her; and while I do feel that I possess ordinary courage, you know I am but, as Sophia expresses it, a gardener, and that is not like having a profession.”

“Yes, but, Harrison, to take the more correct view, we will see that while there may be a difference in the degree of station, there is also in char-

acter, in moral culture, education and personal development. It is far better to have the last named differences perfected, than the first. If equivalent to the latter, the first is non-essential, as stations in all ages and condition are subject to changes. I see nothing humiliating in your position. You are doing a praiseworthy business and are making good advancement, which in time may stimulate you to what might be termed a higher life, should you please. Your reputation is such that you are regarded as one of the first in the vicinity. Any lady who would refuse your hand because you are a tiller of the ground, would not be your equal in the differences of which we have just spoken, and altogether unworthy of recommendation or your special consideration."

"Saul, your sayings are stimulating, but, after all, do you not think it would be well to present a note to secure her attention?"

"No, no; go independently, not too rapidly, but consistently introduce your own business. 'A word to the wise is sufficient.' "

Harrison at once made ready and left, with some degree of fortitude, by simply saying, "I do wish my heart would stop its fluttering. Saul, can you hear it?"

"Not at a speaking distance," was his gleeful reply.

Saul tarried in Harrison's room during his absence, much delighted with the step he was taking, but counted the minutes that seemed long in their duration, under the circumstance of his anxiety. When just forty-five minutes by his ticking timepiece had passed, Harrison was seen on the walk, retracing

his steps homeward, with a twinkle in his eye, and the corners of his mouth drawn to indicate a smile that bespoke encouragement. As he neared the doorway, Saul clapped his hands and exclaimed "God bless you."

"Don't be too fast," said Harrison, "there is room to fear," and at once dropped into a chair as heavily as though he was lead. Then, after having taken his handkerchief from the side pocket of his coat, and wiping the suffused drops of perspiration from his brow, he said, "it is harder work to woo than hoe."

It could not be considered unwise if at this time the two were a little jolly, and indulged in a freak of merriment which terminated in song:

"Woo the fair one when around
 Early birds are singing ;
 When, o'er all the fragrant ground
 Early herbs are springing ;
 When the brookside, bank, and grove,
 All with blossoms laden,
 Shine of beauty, breathe of love,
 Woo the timid maiden.

"Woo her when, with rosy blush
 Summer eve is sinking ;
 When, on rills that softly gush,
 Stars are softly winking ;
 When through boughs that knit the bower
 Moonlight gleams are stealing ;
 Woo her, till the gentler hour
 Wakes a gentler feeling."

"But Saul, to be real earnest in this matter, I shall be obliged to present proof or fail. She is very conscientious, and will be exceedingly careful how she allows me the privilege of approaching her; that I could plainly understand. She as well as others

have supposed Sophia and me as good as one for the past two years. Now to take so sudden a turn is worth a thought. I do not blame Lizzie for being distant. In fact I love her all the more for it. I made no special proposition; I did not dare to, she would have cut me off at once. I did, however, introduce the idea far enough for her to understand my motive, which she did and agreed to give it thought, but it took some minutes' thinking to say it. I began to despair, but—"

"What next, Harrison?"

"I could not express it accurately."

"It would interest me to know," said Saul.

"I tell you the candid truth. Things did slip too rapidly through my mind. There was not, just then, the retention I should have wished."

"Don't tell it, Harrison; come right to the point. A story is never more interesting than when it strikes the center."

"That has not yet been struck, but, Saul, don't bother me, I want to think."

Saul instantly struck a match, and after having lighted a lamp, placed it where he could watch the expression of Harrison's eyes.

"Saul, what were you wishing to see?"

"You more perfectly. Can you not discern more distinctly, Harrison?"

"Not any, as Lizzie is not here; but Saul how I wish you could see her as I now do, with those sweet blushes on her cheeks."

"Did she blush, Harrison?"

"O, bless you, yes. I would not have believed it. It was that which helped furnish the standard of hope. Whilst perhaps I could look hopefully forward, I

can but turn a thought to Sophia, and when I do, I feel like a man with a pack on my back, I can think of no better comparison. It is for this reason that I need your influence. I am sure I do. Your word is termed 'solid bottom truth.' Your statement of facts given to Lizzie, as you know them, would operate in my behalf and should my engagement with Sophia be the prime obstacle it would at once be removed, and we could be united heart and hand soon. I should not want to wait long. I want no more long courtship. If I am to have a wife, I am going to have her. I should like to get settled down and know I had a mate. But Saul, were I to lose Lizzie, I should be no better off than you are. All that is beautiful in this world would have faded. I could not do otherwise than say with Byron:

“‘Would fain have loved as well,
But some unconquerable spell
Forbade my beating breast to own
A kindred care for aught but one.’”

Harrison's second call was more lengthy, and much more impressive to the mind of Lizzie. An emotion of tenderness was plainly exhibited on the part of Harrison, and though touching to the heart of Lizzie, she was slow to get possession of that which was a certainty. She reasoned, as had been suggested, that Harrison had been for so long a time Sophia's escort and exclusive attendant, "How," said she, "can your mind be so suddenly changed?"

In reply Harrison said, "Whilst your reasonings are well grounded, I can give you such proof as will fully convince you that my statement is correct, and that too by one who has been more familiar in this matter than myself, and at an earlier period."

For a moment Lizzie's face wore a puzzled look, which signified to Harrison's mind: "I can't believe!"

Harrison was deeply affected. It was not necessary that he should audibly express his disappointment. He felt almost beyond hope. "My portion! my portion!" He solemnly and silently exclaimed, as he sat with his eyes apparently fixed upon some distant object, and when the tear drops had filled them to overflowing, the heart of Lizzie melted perceptibly.

"I would not be unfeeling," she uttered with trembling lips; "but I cannot, Mr. Harrison, see through this veil."

"Will you allow me to remove the veil," said he.

"I will," was her reply.

After a few words on the part of both had been feelingly spoken, Harrison left to return again the same day. He walked directly to the law office, but as fate would have it, he was destined to a long delay. Saul could decipher the problem. He understood the meaning of the expression on Harrison's countenance. While he could not postpone the business that devolved upon him, he would frequently raise his large eyes and look upon Harrison with that fixed attention that denoted the sensitiveness of a mind awakened in his behalf.

Time often seems long and drear to the waiting one, and it did to Harrison at this time, when he felt his future was at stake. Saul made every possible advancement in his power, and at length the two were once more alone. After he had gotten a history of the story, he said: "That is not so discouraging as I supposed. To take the broader, more general view, she is not far out of the way. I think

it better to see her than write a note. Face to face is better always. If you wish I will see her alone or in company with you. Crush out this wall of perdition, and she can then see through the veil."

"You had better see her alone," said Harrison. "There would be more freedom on both sides. I do not wish to be shown in a false light. I wish her to see things as they are, and understand every particular from its center to its circumference. I want her confidence; I want her to see and know that I am 'dyed in the wool.'"

"All right, I will go," and at once Saul started on his mission of love and good will.

He had naturally a very commanding appearance, but could assume a soft, mild amiability that was as gentle as a lamb. Such were his predominant characteristics, he was well calculated to fill the chief of stations from the most arduous of business responsibilities to the mildest mission of love and charity. It is natural to believe he bore under the circumstances at this time that gentle carriage so well calculated to achieve and conquer. Nor was his effort unavailing. He was not long in giving a historical sketch of Harrison's life as a beau during the time he had been in the family; and the circumstances connected with Harrison's impression in her behalf, previous to Sophia's letter asking for a release from her engagement. He zealously recommended him to her confidence and esteem, with the assurance of his devoted attachment.

Very soon after Saul left, Lizzie sought solitary retirement. She did not feel she needed the advice or opinion of any individual in the matter. She wished to make an investigation that would corrob-

orate with the rarer qualities of natural super-excellence such as refine the conscience and enthrone the right. Therefore as she sat with her elbows resting upon the table, her hands propping a thoughtful forehead, her mind traveled through realms of space, like a picturesque scene, to a garden of flowers, where it conceived ideas new and beautiful and bore them back upon the wings of thought. "If these are," she reasoned, "visionary endearments, what can realities be?" Her heart mellowed; her sensibility changed as if under the influence of some supernatural power. The tears gushed forth, she exclaimed aloud, "O God! Thou hast a fountain stirred, whose waters never more shall rest." The prayer of Harrison had been granted. Lizzie was no longer burdened with the yoke of fear and dread, but was happy with the belief that her prospects for life had all the glow that nature could give. The sentiment contained in the rhyme once sung, now became authenticated:

"Woo her till the gentler hour,
Wakes a gentler feeling."

With this change of heart, Lizzie could await Harrison's third appearing with unassuming grace. The bolt that held closed the door of hope was unbarred, and who will can follow the thread of imagination, and conceive with profound admiration the expanded sentiments of love, joy and peace that united to complete the union, and cause the heart of Harrison to overflow with gratitude and thankfulness. It is now that we see them full of hopeful happiness in life's green spring, bound with that thread of influence calculated to knot all that may be termed as world-worthy. With so noble an outfit of honor

and personal development, there only remained the nuptial festivity to be considered.

“It does not agree with my feelings under the present condition of things,” said Lizzie, “to be adorned with costly silks and laces and have our marriage attended with mirth and gayety. I should be neatly attired in a plain robe, pretty and becoming, one calculated to correspond with our position as converts awaiting our baptism. Have the marriage service either conducted publicly at the church or as retired as possible at home.”

Harrison drank in these words as they fell from the lips of Lizzie like a draught of refreshing water.

“I know,” said Saul, “a plan that would exactly agree with my feelings, and should it agree with yours, I should be pleased to know it was adopted. It would be one of renown, and might have a good and lasting impression upon many.”

After openly expressing it, each looked steadfastly at the other for a few minutes, after which Harrison remarked that he “had not thought as far as that;” then turned his eyes considerately towards Lizzie as if to await her reply.

“I am favorably impressed,” she answered.

The question was then passed to the parents, who could see no impropriety, and willingly gave their consent. Shortly after which the last needful preparation was concluded that was to complete the matrimonial engagement, and place Harrison and Lizzie in the holy bond of wedlock.

Saul’s delight was exhibited in every look, turn and tone, and with that heartfelt reverence in their behalf as he was about to leave them, jokingly said “My least wish for you is, that your lives may have a long continuance.”

CHAPTER XX.

When the mind has become frantic, disturbed by inconsistent apprehensions, it is apparently quite as uncontrollable in this tendency as though the disturbance were based upon reality.

It was the decided opinion of Sophia, Dr. Green and Aunt Sabrina, that Saul, Mr. Harrison and one other, whose name will not be given, had covenanted together, that by their forming a trinity, on their part an effort could be made an unquestionable success, and the engagement permanently overthrown between Sophia and Dr. Green. This belief maddened them, until there did arise, according to their view of the matter, an actual foreseen danger.

At the period of which we have previously spoken, Aunt Sabrina's turbulent disposition would not allow her to swerve, but soon after the Doctor's return, she made her way into the parlor with a pale and haggard look, so much so as though she had but barely escaped a violent tempest, or the clutch of a straying desperado. The Doctor observed her deportment, and without hesitation uttered an uncourteous expression, to which she responded: "How can I help it. The war cloud is settlin' near us with its blackness and darkness. I can almost see the flashes of lightnin', and hear the roar of thunder in the distance. And we can't tell how soon it may be upon us." Then, Sophia, with tearful eye, turned to the Doctor and said: "Saul and Tom are having consultation this afternoon."

“Is it possible?” said the Doctor, who with agitated fury, and tumultuous threats, sprang to his feet, and drawing a revolver from his pocket, took his stand near the center of the room, with his right arm straightened to a horizontal position, wildly exclaiming, with his eyes fixed upon the revolver “Do you! do you see? If I must come to that, it must come, Harrison must, he shall, be brought to an understanding.”

Sophia shrieked aloud, and fainting, sunk back. The Doctor turned with a confused look, and as he saw her fearful condition, mellowed down with warm expressions of sympathy and regard, but soon found his words were a poor and ineffectual remedy. During his absence to an apothecary-shop to procure the needful drug, Aunt Sabrina endeavored to soothe and comfort Sophia as best she could, “It’s no use talkin’ it. You can’t be wife to both,” she said.

“No indeed,” responded Sophia tremblingly, “I cannot be. It is hard I know, poor Tom, but if he will only let me alone to do as I please, I can love him, too.”

“I think it hard enough to be hated,” said Aunt Sabrina, “but of the two, I do believe I would as soon be hated as over-rated, if this is the way it goes.”

Very soon after the Doctor returned, he called Aunt Sabrina aside, and told her it would be necessary to have Sophia’s feelings tenderly regarded. That she was undergoing altogether too much excitement and that it would overbalance her constitution unless every precaution was used that was possible to avoid it. “It is not advisable,” he continued, “to refer to Harrison in any way whatever. If a

cloud, as you presume to think, settles upon us, and things must come to the worst, I shall with all fury take vengeance on my adversary. Saul and Harrison I do not fear, one alone or both of them. I am as brave to do and dare as they are, and sufficiently able, ready and willing to confront both, either to conquer or to die. But as I say, this must be kept from Sophia, we cannot tell how it may terminate; it is possible a light may break through the gloom. Such things do when unlooked for many times occur."

"I have been buildin' a good deal," said Aunt Sabrina, "on his gettin' religion, but I'm feeling almost discouraged."

"Yes, yes, this religion is but a shabby cloak. We cannot depend upon these religious professors. They are, at least many of them, very imperfect in their restoration from prodigality."

For some days Sophia was kept within doors, secluded from even the sight of her own people. In time it became rumored that she was ill, and, as might be supposed, Aunt Trichie made frequent calls, but was not allowed to see her for fear she might be the means of producing some unnecessary agitation of mind.

One day, soon after she had left, the Doctor proceeded to where Aunt Sabrina was engaged, and said to her, "Why do you recognize that peculiar old mortal? I should not allow her to cross my threshold unless it was for medical attention."

Aunt Sabrina was very much irritated with the Doctor's remark, and in spite of her effort to restrain her feelings, showed signs of disgust. And readily signified her good will in behalf of Aunt

Trichie by saying "I think her a good ways short of bein' the least of all that is small."

"I am much obliged to you, Aunt Sabrina, for your freedom and generosity in favor of Aunt Trichie. She is one who should be regarded with interest. She is daily doing the work of one of God's husbandmen," said Saul, who had entered within hearing, unnoticed, and walked in unexpectedly before them, striking his heels heavily upon the floor in token of his indignation.

Immediately after he had passed out Sophia said, "Mother, that may have been a word fitly spoken. It is an old saying 'that there is no great loss without some small gain.' If the Doctor did inflict a serious wound just then it may result in our benefit."

"That is as I think, too; I am awful glad Saul happened to hear me say it. He may feel a good deal better for havin' heard me."

"I don't think the Doctor meant ill to Aunt Trichie. He does not fully understand her. Does not know who or what she is. Saul did not at first, but the dear bless me, he and the Starkys have got her so under their influence, and, as they think, such a blessing to the church, it would not do to infringe upon her a particle. You see," said she, turning to the Doctor, "they think her next to the angels in heaven. If you wish the good will of church society in this place, you will have to treat Aunt Trichie very respectfully."

"Yes," said Aunt Sabrina, "here we all know her. She is funny and old-fashioned. She loves to know all that's going on, and never forgits to tell it; but after all she's got a dreadful good heart. I do believe she'd work herself to death for the good

of another, and it wouldn't make any difference either whether it was friend or foe."

"Then I must consider myself as having been quite out of the way," said the Doctor. "I hope you will pardon me. Much depends upon one's early education. It is very true I suppose, I may some time see the necessity of curbing these aristocratic notions of mine. They are implanted in my nature, I inherited them."

"I have thought many times," said Sophia, "since I first saw you, that you closely resembled Saul, you are both naturally so high toned in appearance. There is but one exception; he has the one fault that I term imperfection, that is, he is so dyed with Christianity."

After the lapse of a few days, Aunt Trichie walked in and said, "I thought mebbe you'd like to go this evenin' to the meetin' house, so I'd jist drop in and tell you. There are to be ever so many baptized. Will you go?"

"Why, yes, I expect I will, I always calculate to go when there is to be any baptizin' done."

In a moment after Aunt Trichie had left, Sophia rushed in saying, "What was it Mother? What did she say?"

"There's to be a lot more baptized this evenin'."

"O bless me, can't I go?"

"That will have to be jist as the Doctor says, you know he's dreadfully scared about you for fear you will become, as he says it, over-balanced."

"I do not think it will hurt me one bit to go. I just think it fun to see them ducked under water. I enjoy it, I tell you I do. I wonder who they are, did she tell you?"

“No, and I didn’t ask her.”

With the words, “I will,” upon the lip, Dr. Green re-entered. “What is that you were talking about so very independently?” said he, “do you not remember that you are mine?” Then taking a fast hold of her went sailing round the room, jig-like, at the sight of which Aunt Sabrina remarked, “If Sophia can stand all that, I think she can stand it to go to the meetin’ house.”

“What! going to the church, were you; is that what you were talking about?” said he. And after having been told for what purpose he considered more earnestly for a moment, then said, “I do not think the walk would prove an injury, but the sight might be too much for her nerves, beside, at this juncture, it has been thought best to be prudent about appearing out too publicly. Should there be danger of aggravating Harrison, it might originate from outward boldness, sooner than from any other cause.”

Said Sophia, “We will admit all that; but, Doctor, as I should like so much to go, supposing I go with my people, and you by yourself, for this once more; are you willing? You need not either be far ahead or behind us; besides you can sit in sight, and we can return in company. Would not that do?”

“You are a pretty good calculator, but I should have to keep close enough to keep my eye on you, or you might show me a trick, and slip away with that clever old friend of yours, I am a little fearing.”

“There ain’t much time to lose, talkin’,” said Aunt Sabrina, “we want to get there early enough to git a good seat, so we can see, for if we can’t there’s no use in goin’.”

“But Doctor has not given me a definite answer.”

“Take the indefinite then, just as I did when I made a strike for you.”

“All right,” said Sophia, “be sure that I see you.”

At an early hour Mr. Brown with his family walked to the church, and took seats in a center pew, in front of the baptistery. They had a long time to wait, but as Aunt Sabrina said, she took courage as she knew every future had a present, so that what was to be would be.

Very true. At the regular hour for service the people congregated until the audience room was filled to its utmost capacity. It was an enjoyable sight for Sophia to see the large number of candidates walk in by pairs, with ardor and attention, and take the seats that had been prepared for them.

Rev. Standhope then offered a short prayer, which was followed by a pause. The reverend gentleman raised his right arm as an indication of continued silence. Looks were exchanged, anxious eyes inquiringly gazed. The multitude wondered, and soon it was whispered “What next?”

But they were not long waiting. They soon had the pleasure of seeing Saul and Maria walk down the aisle in front of the pulpit stand, where they parted to the right and left, followed by Harrison and Lizzie, who took their position directly between the two who had preceded them. Rev. Standhope then turned with gravity and with few words made complete the sacred rite. After which the baptism immediately followed; Mr. Harrison first, Lizzie second. What a praiseworthy exhibition of divine reverence! Led from the bridal altar to the baptismal waters!

Whilst the multitude of spectators witnessed the marriage service with unspeakable surprise, it was also with the highest degree of reverence. It was well calculated to leave a lasting impression upon the mind of every individual present, and as would be supposed an impression that would lead to their highest good. It was to Mr. and Mrs. Harrison the dawning of a new life, and many were the congratulations that issued from the lips of their devoted friends.

CHAPTER XXI.

Those in whom squeamish, fastidious principles have been inculcated and remain unmitigated in the kingdom of the mind, those principles with their painted particles must necessarily rank with their own foe, within the bound of individual dominion. At this time, then, self-preservation must have found an altitude in the region of a war-like dominion. To the observing eye, it could have been seen that Aunt Sabrina and Sophia retained their ordinary outward appearance, but were troubled by unspoken thoughts. In this state of mind they wended their way homeward, apparently unnoticing and unnoticed. To them it was a time when even words were too feeble to express the sentiment of their minds in regard to the strange, unlooked-for event.

"I could not have believed it," said Sophia, "that Tom would have taken such a step."

"Nor I," responded Aunt Sabrina, "but I'm led to believe it's as wise people say, that love often runs in a curious way."

"I would a hundred times rather he had taken arsenic," said Sophia, "there would have been more joy on my part to have seen him confined than married, buried under ground than under water."

"Jist so, I think, too. It looks a good deal as though he couldn't after all have had much of any love for you, to up and turn so square around and marry another girl. But then we're all through with

our war trouble, we sha'n't have that to think about any more, that is one comfort."

"I would much sooner think of war, or any other thing, no matter what, than of his being husband. I did not believe he would ever marry."

"I know that is as we thought, but after all there's never any tellin' what's in the mind of a man. They're awful treacherous bein's."

"But, mother, let us be careful what we say about Tom before the Doctor. We must make it appear all right with us, no matter how we feel. I must, anyway. Did you see him at the church?"

"No. I wondered where he'd got; but then in sich a crowd it could hardly be expected that he would be in sight. Maybe he'll be comin' 'long with father."

After a few minutes of serious thinking, Sophia said, "There is one thing I should like to know; that is if Tom does really love Lizzie. I don't doubt she does him, but the question is, does he love her? I do not believe he loves her one bit. It has been brought about by some stratagem."

"Let that be as it may, we now know they're married, and it won't be but a little while and you will be Mrs. Dr. Green. What I hope is that you will be more decently married. I shouldn't want to see you join hands in holy matrimony and then be plunged in the water the first thing. I never was put under water, and I am as good as the best of them."

"That was done for display. Some appeared very much pleased. I overheard some whispering. It was said, 'O, how heavenly; how angel-like; how dove-like.' Then I shut my ears. I didn't want to hear any more of that talk."

At this point in the conversation Mr. Brown entered, and said, "The Doctor will not be in till late to-morrow mornin'," then turned to leave.

"Don't go yet, father," said Sophia, "I want to know what you thought of the performance at the church."

"I've got no heart to talk about it. If it is all right, then it is right. You know well what I think of this changin' off business. I had looked upon Tom as my son, and I loved him as one of mine. And it was hard to me to see another by the side of him, so different from what I thought would be. I may see things better after awhile, and I don't want to wait long either. But there is one thing I do have to comfort me, that I didn't once have; that is, this sweet peace in believin' I don't see this world any more the old way. I feel like one brought out of the world. I wish, my dear wife, and you, my daughter, could taste the joy I do every day."

"Father," said Sophia, quickly, "if you keep on you will get to be as sanctified as the Starkys."

"I hope I may," he meekly replied, "and my prayer is that you may be, sooner or later."

"I do not suppose, according to your way of thinking, that you and I will ever sit together in what you call heavenly places. I can derive more comfort reading Byron one hour, than I could John Bunyan's whole work, and that is Bible-like. The Doctor thinks just as I do. We are a complete tie in such matters. For these, as well as many other reasons, we are going to make a joint couple. I suppose I ought not to care if Tom and Liz are married, so long as they have become so saintly. But I did want to show the people of our town my potent

power to win; besides, whilst I was awful sorry for Tom, I did want to make his heart-strings snap. I do just think it fun to wring up a fellow's heart and make it gush like a fountain."

"Sophia, you astonish me," said Aunt Sabrina, "I love to see you in good spirits and full of happiness, but you're carrying things too fur is what I think. Supposin' somethin' should happen the Doctor. He might somehow get killed."

"No, he won't either. He has had his life insured. It is all going to come just as we have it calculated. We are going to take life on life's side, have every joy a pleasure, every pleasure a hope, and every hope a heaven. Doctor says so. We are not going to hunt our happiness inside the bounds of church craft. I have never yet known a sublime thing, that the ridiculous did not closely follow."

"My child," said the sorrowing father, "I can't hear any more sich talk. If it is in your heart, don't let it out. I thought may be you'd be made better by goin' to the meetin' house this evening."

"Likely I would have been, sure of one thing, I should have felt better, if they had only made more fuss. Everything was too smooth to suit me. To come right down to the plain truth, Liz did look lovely. I never saw her more beautiful than she looked to me this evening, and she is awful pretty always. It almost seemed that there was a halo or something radiant over her head, both before and after she was raised up out of the water. I didn't mean to say it though. I do not want her to know I thought that. No! not for a pile. So, father, don't you tell it. I would not have Aunt Trichie get hold of that for all the world. Such a

saying to get abroad would be too good, even though I did think it. I would as soon run my head against a stone wall as to say it for Liz to hear. You see, father, were you to repeat it I should be so angry."

"Well, well," said the father, "you make my heart ache," and left the room.

Immediately after he had left Aunt Sabrina said, "Sophia is it raly a truth that the Doctor has had his life insured?"

"Mortal, yes, in four or five companies."

"In four or five companies! Why, the dear bless me, if that is so then and he should die, you would be as well off as though you had got L. H. Benjamin. Beside it looks better to marry a young man, and then a Doctor too. It does seem as though you are sure of a good fortune. I'm turr'ble glad of it, it makes me feel as light as a feather," she added as she passed out to retire for the night.

But Sophia was altogether too unsettled for retirement. Before she could allow sleep to close her eyes, she squared and leveled her plans with the determination to have them at once carried into execution. At the first appearance of dawn, she was up and doing. The sheets were soon paged, the prelude written and dedication accomplished. The title page only remained to be considered when she was summoned to breakfast.

As soon as Saul had left the table, she explained to her father the necessity of her having means to carry her work to a publishing house.

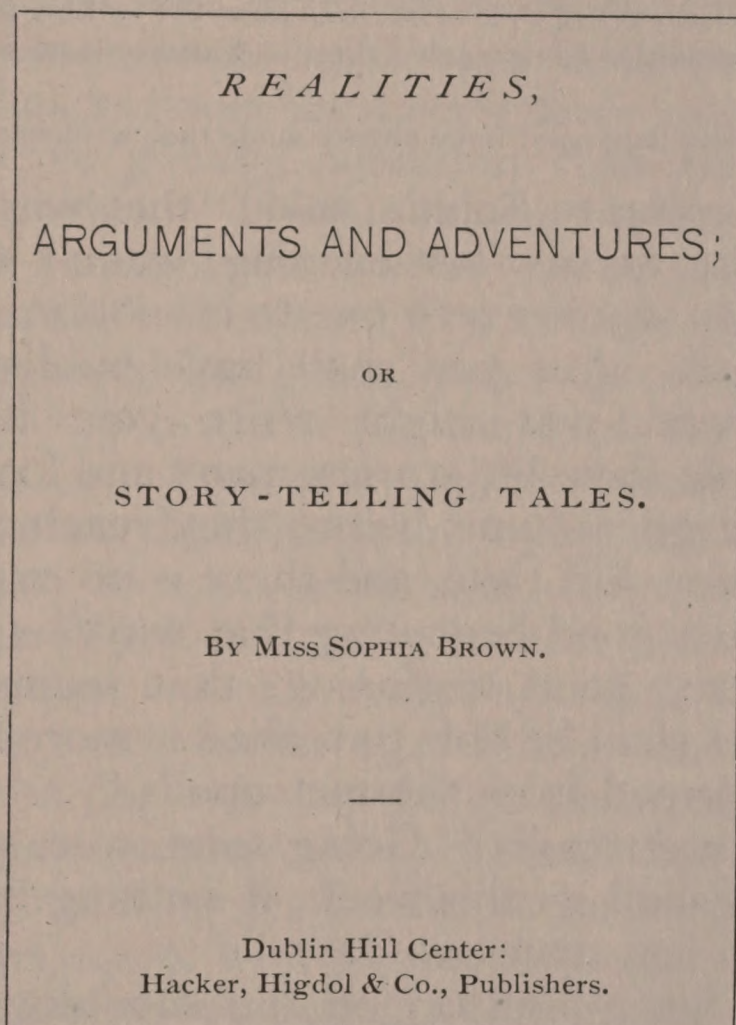
"All ready, is it?" he asked.

"I have made it so," she replied, "anyhow it is going."

"What are you goin' to call it?"

“If you can wait a little, I think I can fix up the title page, then you can see for yourself just as it will be.”

It did not take her long to pen it down. It was as follows:



“There it is, does not that look all right?”

Pleased with the appearance, the deluded father heartily laughed, “I guess you will make your mark in the world,” said he, “that looks a good deal like it;” and he readily agreed to furnish means to have her carry her work to the publishing company, with the liberty given her to make her own bargain.

The Doctor in a short time appeared with a perfect

halloo. His exhibition of delight was very forcibly expressed in innumerable comparisons and episodes, after which he confronted Aunt Sabrina and said with emphasis:

“Thou hast seen many sorrows, traveled-stained pilgrim of the world,
But that which hath vexed thee most, hath been the looking for evil;
And though calamities have crossed thee, and misery been heaped on thy
head,
Yet ills that never happened have chiefly made thee wretched.”

Then turning to Sophia, said, “that was an interesting sight we saw last evening, wasn’t it? Well all I have to say is every one to his notion. I think, dear madam, after you shall have published your present work, you might write your biography. Some people have life stories, many and long enough to fill a large volume before they reach the center of a common life time, and there is no mistake you have made a good beginning that way.”

“A pretty good beginning, that seems ever so much so; I shall be able to realize it more fully after having returned from the metropolis.”

“What metropolis? Going soon, were you?”

“Yes, I shall go this week, if nothing happens to prevent, in less than two days.”

Hitting her a light tap on the shoulder, “Hurrying up, are you?” said the Doctor.

“Sure,” she replied, “to let too many get ahead will not do.”

“A pretty smart little lady you are to have accomplished the work of a noted genius in so short a time. I shall feel above commonalty when I have in my possession a volume of your own production. We read that, ‘a great mind is an altar on a hill,’ such is your renowned capital, I suppose.”

“Speak consistently, Doctor, you know we also read that, ‘flattery sticketh closer than a burr.’ Since it has become so natural for me to confide in you, you might lead me to say, ‘folly thou art wisdom.’”

“Were I to, you would bless me for the lie.”

To an observer it could have been said that no union of hearts could have been more closely bound by the tie of genuine affection, than that of Dr. Green to Sophia. It was, indeed, an attempt altogether too venturesome for her to be trusted alone upon an errand of the kind to a strange city, and he strongly opposed her going, unless in company with some friend upon whom she could rely for guidance and protection. Sophia argued that she was capable of going alone; that she could voyage the world, and had no fear, or apprehension of danger. She considered herself self-sufficient; looked, without doubt, upon the step as one of bravery, attended with honor, which was very fortifying. With this unbroken confidence in her own capability, the needful preparations were made, and without repeating the objections which arose, Sophia at an early hour of the day fixed upon, with her portfolio of manuscript, took the train, to return immediately after the business was fully transacted.

In a few hours she had safely reached the main entrance of an immense publishing building, whose occupants were the worthy wits, with brains brimming with cultivated knowledge. Such do ordinarily have an overwhelming influence over minor subjects. If there is anything calculated to cause a person to feel themselves pared down to the size of a flea, it is to enter a large publishing house, and

attempt to lay one's own articles of composition before gifted men, who sit, if we may so speak, "as towers upon a thousand hills." It is not really known; however, that Sophia suffered any inconvenience, or felt in any way overawed, but believe something of the kind was realized, as it was somehow understood, that the beautiful tint excitement had dyed upon her cheeks changed to a lily white. For rudeness to take the place of courtesy in a wise man would be inconsistency. Courtesy is a valuable ingredient in the grand principle of manhood. It is therefore natural to believe the fair lady received all the attention her position demanded, which was simply the reception of the pages, with the assurance that due attention would be given them. That if it was considered a creditable work, after the examination, an agreement could be made, should she be pleased with their terms of publishing. In case the work was considered not worthy of public notice, the manuscripts were to be immediately returned.

Sophia readily understood that their rule of action was discipline, and their discipline a law, and that there could be nothing beyond their definite decision, which when made, consisted of no greater multiplicity of words than an ordinary telegraph dispatch. During the few minutes' conversation, Mr. Hacker, with a gentlemanly air, inquired of Sophia what her feelings would be in case the work merited no favor. She jestingly replied that "It will make no particular difference, as I have more than one iron in the fire."

With this termination she left the house for the union depot. Nothing of moment occurred during her stay there, and as the trains were on time, be-

tween the hours of sunrise and setting, Sophia had accomplished her mission, and was a happy occupant once more under the parental roof.

It was indeed a happy time for all interested in the enterprise. Especially those who looked hopefully forward to the harvest gathering. To more perfectly express it, hearts were not only happy but exceedingly joyful. From the expression of her eye it was supposed she had met with brilliant success, when it merely denoted the success in obtaining acceptance and general courtesy, with the degree of fortitude given her to venture upon so notable an errand as to convey her manuscript to a publishing company.

It made for her an illustrious tale to communicate, which she did to the hearing of itching ears that were ready to catch every accent as it fell from her lips. After listening to the story, it was rather sad for Aunt Sabrina to know, that the bargain was not wholly consummated. She had supposed there would be nothing more to be done, but await the printing and binding of books.

Said she, "Why could you not have talked them into a bargain now, whilst you were there?"

"O, forever, mother. I could as well plough the sea as to reason and change the minds of those men. And you better believe when I was once seated in the car for home there came a flash of glory over me. It is as I tell you, they have a system to go by, and from that they will not deviate. They will, as I have said, examine the work, after which the agreement as to terms of publishing can be made. I shall only have to wait a few days, during which time we can go on just the same way and be doing.

for it will, of course, be a success. It could not well be otherwise. It is all truth—that I have not turned into fiction—and it is as well written as any one can write, so why should it not be?”

With this easy, persuasive credulity of mind, she was abundantly prepared to arrange everything to the satisfaction of the family. It was the opinion of the Doctor that their marriage had better be postponed until the dawning of flowery June, which was considered advisable by all parties, as it would give, as Aunt Sabrina said, “a little more time to turn around.”

With this tide of prosperity, so nearly to pass over them, it was not thought unwise to discuss the probabilities of what to-morrow would bring. “I purpose that you, father, shall have,” said Sophia, “a nice sofa-cushioned self-rocker for your comfort, and I will get for mother a rich silk; that would suit her best. My brothers shall have a velocipede to ride, with whistles and bells. What things especially pleasing Doctor and I shall have, I hardly know, unless it should be a cage of tame birds or bees.”

“Who ever heard tell of such a thing as a cage of tame bees?” said little Bob.

“Doctor has. He said it was one of the prettiest sights he ever saw. A cage of tame bees, from the huge bumblebee to the little yellow jacket. He has told me about them. They were a great curiosity, do you not believe it?”

“No, Soph! that’s gas.”

“It’s candid truth, Bob, or he would not have told me about them. Doctor tells the truth.”

“Your cage of bees will be, he a wasp and you

honey-bee," was the reply, then with a boy-like prank frolicked off on the green to sport. The days were mild and lovely. To Sophia the night hours brought dreams of pleasure. Happiness was as surely forthcoming as the clover blossoms, and sure as the stars in a cloudless night. She took no notice of danger. She found no place for misfortune. Over all was the rainbow of hope. Prosperity was enshrined. Her life was to be a round of pleasure, and in this seeming hallowed lot, to her pure as the joy of angels, a few days swiftly glided away; but in their unerring flight the mist of sorrow was thickly gathering before her unconscious eyes.

Ere she was aware the manuscript was returned with an enclosed note which read:

DEAR MADAM:—Your manuscripts have been duly noticed. We return them. We also feel it a duty to advise you to lay your papers where you have your irons.

Could we but use the words disappointment, sadness, sorrow, gloom, we should be glad; but they are not sufficient to convey the meaning required. Indeed it is difficult to select language that will mirror to human conception the unparalleled suffering of her, who, with her preparation of mind, was so suddenly thrown from the mount of imaginary fame and tranquillity into a gulf of woebegone misfortune. Her sufferings could only be compared to the blow of a dagger to her heart, excruciating agony. The father kneeled in prayer. The mother sobbed aloud. The brothers hid as if from some rude torture. The Doctor alone stood with calm, undisturbed look and watched closely by her. It was to Sophia like an hour spent in the gateway of

death. It was remarked later by the Doctor that he thought her assuredly upon the threshold of eternity. His efforts to restore her were at last successful. As soon as he could get her to notice him, he said to her, "This is not the way to matrimony," which brought a faint smile upon her countenance. How quickly that smile was caught by those anxious parents, who were ready at the first appearance of hope to rejoice, exclaiming "There, that is worth more than a thousand books."

To soothe, calm and comfort her occupied the attention of their agitated minds. Their hearts were brimful with sympathy and all possible words of consolation were multiplied in her behalf.

The first words audibly spoken by Sophia were, "O Doctor, what would have become of me, had it not been for you. I had thought there was nothing better than gold; but, Doctor, you are of more value than that." At which time Dr. Green bent over her with all the warmth of a genuine friend, "I am afraid," he mildly said, "you overrate me; bad men are as common as birds." Then placing his hand upon her head and smoothing her jetty locks, he said, "There is no resting place for the wing of time; with it the vicissitudes of life go by never to return."

"I am glad to know," said Sophia, "that there can be no return of the past, I should not want it otherwise. I do not want to look again toward the deluded palace of hope, which these many months I have been building with twigs gathered by ambition from the wilderness of thought. No! not I; from this time evermore I will put my trust in the Doctor who is indisputably true to me." With her confi-

dence as firmly fixed as the eternal hills, her affections as deep as the waters of the sea, she leaped over the unfortunate past into the more pleasing path of the present which was illumined with bright anticipations that lay before her in the sunny future. In less than one short week, so unlooked for, and unthought of, just as night had cast her dark mantle, and the uplifted clouds curtained the stars from sight, Dr. Green walked in, took Sophia's hand, shook it with a firm grasp, kissed her affectionately and said, "You must keep up good courage, and be a good girl," he then hastily turned and with quick steps left her. At what hour in the night he took his final exit from the town, in what way, for what part of the continent he was bound, remains untold to this day.

CHAPTER XXII.

Life with its weight of cares moves forward like the boisterous waves of the sea. The events of the past are retained in memory, destined to be recalled and diffused anew, according to their magnitude and importance. In the history of years, there are occurrences which, though they differ in their signification, and proportion are tinged with a light or dark coloring. The more pleasing experiences are delightfully cherished in memory as a delicious substance; whilst unpleasant acts or incidents such as should preferably be lost in oblivion will also linger in remembrance even upon the threshold of memory, until the latest stage of life shall have worn away; hence there is being formed in the human mind a vocabulary of reminiscences. Were it otherwise, the poet could not have said:

“Hence away, nor dare intrude,
In that secret shadowy cell
Musing mem’ry loves to dwell,
With her sister solitude.
Far from the busy world she flies,
To taste that peace the world denies;
Entranced she sits from youth to age,
Reviewing life’s eventful page,
And noting ere they fade away,
The little lines of yesterday.”

How important then that a valuation should be placed upon the motive of action, in order to have

carried out a theory of ordained principles, such as give to memory a pleasurable enlightened deposit rather than throw over conscience the dull dark scarf of unmindful reproach. It was in this particular that Sophia was so deficient; she regarded not the judicious principles according to the general law of a good conscience. She failed to endorse the higher mode of practice, but voluntarily allowed her unregenerated mind to acquiesce with non-conformity to reason, rather than adhere to the wisdom of the wise in their demonstrations in her behalf; therefore her contemplations became, not of those calculated to enthrone the mind with the purer aspects of bright realities, but like a pall over her recollections was hung the dark curtain of despondency. It was hard for her to think otherwise of Dr. Green than that he was as pure as the sun. She could not see upon his fair brow the type of deceit. She could not think that in his bosom was hidden the badge of infamous ignominy. In her distress of mind she would cry, "He will return, I know he will, Doctor is too good to be untrue to me," and with this unbroken confidence she looked for him in vain, until despair swept over her and her faith died. But, Oh! how often during those gloomy hours of sadness was she heard to hum those pathetic lines from Byron, and say with emphasis "I would

"Fly like a bird of the air,
In search of a home and a rest,
A balm for the sickness of care,
A bliss for a bosom unblessed.
I would wander, it matters not where,
No clime can restore me my peace,
Or snatch from the frown of despair
A cheering, a fleeting release."

This discomfort of mind on the part of Sophia, which was keenly felt by the family, especially the parents, was truly sad. It was complicated sorrow and disappointment to all. While the father could look heavenward, and derive comfort from the fountain of divine grace, and cling to the belief that all things work together for good to those who love God, there was a division of feeling and mode of expression, as the mother's mind was earthward and could not see beyond temporal things. The father endeavored to advise, warn and encourage Sophia to look above the world to her elder Brother, and learn from her sad experience to accept Him for a friend who is the chief friend of friends—one who would not leave her nor forsake her. The mother soothed with a mother's affection, and taught her in the light of her own judgment, which was quite as erroneous as Sophia's.

“I wouldn't give up and grieve myself to death for one man. Tom didn't for you; he turned square 'round and took Liz. There is no tellin' but there will be another for you a hundred times better than Green; and we do know he'd be better if he'd be honest. I feel as sorry as I can feel, but then, if Dr. Green is a bad man, he isn't a good one, and if he isn't a good one you don't want him. If he has a mind to make of himself a poppy instead of a pink, let him.”

“But Doctor, is so beautiful in both looks and manners.”

“Yes, but he ain't any the better for it; beauty is no kernel. Now you mind what I say, we'll jist go right on with our dressmaking, and after you once git fixed up, there's no tellin' what may come, I

shouldn't wonder if good luck turned up yet for you. I'm feelin' a good deal better than I did. My dream was promisin' last night. There comes Aunt Trichie this blessed minute. She's got hold of something and is comin' round for the proof I darst to say."

"I am ever so glad to see you," said Aunt Trichie as she walked in, in her usual way, "I hain't seen you in a long while, Miss Sophia; I came to see you when you was sick, but that Dr. Green was so scary about you, he wouldn't let me have any satisfaction. He was afraid I would agitate you. They've been tellin' me all 'round, that he's run away."

"I thought," said Sophia, "you were having prayer meetings all over the town and talking religion."

"O, yes, that is so, Miss Sophia, but then there's always some other sayin's comin' 'long in. You see when Tom and Lizzie was married it made all the folkses eyes fly wide open, and sez they, seems if there's been more than doctorin' goin' on. It 'peared queerish like, for everybody all round here thought Tom was Sophia Brown's beau, but, sez they, that Dr. Green's been shovin' him out, must be. Now then, there's come up this other talk, but sez I to Caleb, 'mebbe Sophia knows, they're only jist keepin' secrets, shouldn't wonder!' 'Like enough,' sez he, 'no tellin', but blessed thing if they wasn't.'"

"Why so," asked Sophia.

"Why, because they're tellin' all over round that that Dr. Green is trickish; sez they, he lives without money, and gets his bread without pay."

"Don't tell any more, Aunt Trichie, I do not feel like hearing town stories. If the majority here have become piety lovers, they should manifest it by keepin' cleansed their own cup and platter."

“O, I didn’t come in to be meddlin’, I ain’t wantin’ to be troublin’ about Dr. Green, I only jist come in as I was passin’ by; but my heart is achin’ for you, Miss Sophia, and I’m thinkin’ and wonderin’ if there isn’t somethin’ I can do to comfort you like,” and proceeded to hint the sentiments of her mind too plainly for Sophia to mistake her meaning.

“It is not worth while for you to crowd upon me in such matters, I would not do as you would have me; if I had sorrow enough to sink me, I would not please the Starkys as much. They carry the church and town. They have you, and have managed to get father, that will do.”

“For a little while, Miss Sophia, only a little while. We are livin’ in a world of uncertainties, everything keeps changin’ round, but there is one certain thing that I keep lookin’ for all the time.” Then extending her hand to complete the formal good-bye, she said, “there has been laid in Zion a sure foundation stone. Will you find it, Miss Sophia?”

With all Sophia’s trouble and disappointment, there was nothing more aggravating to her than to throw before her the truths of undefiled religion. Whilst Aunt Trichie’s heart was very tender in her behalf, and she evinced the kindest of feeling and when bidding good-bye the tear drops sparkled in her eyes, yet Sophia could turn heedlessly from the door with the harsh words “I wish I never again need see her face. I would as soon be pelted as to always be talked to about getting ready to die. I am not going to die, I expect to live.”

It is not probable she did in her heart, really wish ill to Aunt Trichie, but she had reason to grieve for

her inhumanity and weep with sorrow-stricken blushes of shame. On the morrow, ere the sun had reached the meridian, Aunt Trichie was taken seriously ill, and in a few hours passed peacefully away. Her tranquillity of mind, her unfaltering confidence in the Messiah, her desire to depart was truly affecting.

“I am led to question,” said Mrs. Harrison, “in the language of the poet.”

“Will the day ever come, I wonder,
When I shall be glad to know
My hands shall be folded under
The next white fall of the snow?
That when again the clover
Wooeth the wandering bee,
Its crimson tide will drift over
All that is left of me?”

“When I shall be tired of living,
And long to go to my rest
With a cool and fragrant lily
Asleep on my silent breast?
God knoweth Sometime, it may be,
I shall smile to hear them say,
‘Dear heart, she’ll not awaken
At the dawn of another day.’”

“Is it possible,” said Aunt Sabrina, as Saul seated himself at the table with tearful eyes, “that Aunt Trichie is dead? I hadn’t heard one word about it. What was the matter with her?”

“I am not prepared to say with what disease she died, only that her end was peace.”

“Was you there?”

“I was; also Mr. and Mrs. Starky, Mr. and Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. Straitgate. The funeral obsequies will be at our church at ten o’clock, day after to-morrow.”

As soon as Saul had left, Aunt Sabrina, according to her customary way of doing, made it convenient to visit Sophia and impart the news of Aunt Trichie's sudden death.

"There will be a great many out to her funeral; I think you'd better go. Don't you think that way? You hadn't best settle down as though you was heart-broken; but look right up and straight ahead. If you can only get on your old fashioned independence, you will come out a good deal nearer right, accordin' to my thinkin'."

"I do not know," said Sophia, "whilst I do not feel like trying the world, perhaps I had better go."

"Yes, I want you should. It will be the best way for you. Why, if you set down here at home and cry all the time, folks will think you're killed, whether or no, and will do all the more talkin'. You wouldn't stand any chance at all for good luck. It's likely L. H. Benjamin will be over to the funeral. Aunt Trichie stood so high with these Christians, as they call themselves, they'll all be for turnin' out, I shouldn't wonder."

How sad to think of the weight of their unregenerated natures! Instead of taking life with its vague transit, and death with its realities, and considering wisely that life is more than life to live, and that death is more than death to die, the tenor of their minds seemed to be definitely allied to the indefinite relation of life with all its vicissitudes. It did really occur to the mind of Aunt Sabrina that there was a possibility that Sophia might yet gain the approbation and esteem of Father Benjamin if the right course was pursued, and it was not too well under-

stood that she had been betrothed to Dr. Green. This idea aroused in Sophia's mind her previous determination to win the old gentleman.

"I do not care," she said, "I would as soon win him. To be looked upon with admiration is no small speck in my estimation."

"There is nothin' like tryin'," said Aunt Sabrina, and with all the pride of a mother's heart, she strictly attended to Sophia's dress in getting her ready for the funeral, as much as though she was going to a banquet.

"I think," she said, "we better take a corner pew. You know where the grandees always set, and you know too, the eye falls first on what is before it. I know pretty well how to calculate; I am a pretty good hand at it."

There is but little room to doubt their purpose would have, at least to some degree, proved a success, had it not been that Father Benjamin was chosen pall-bearer.

"I think it a great shame," said Aunt Sabrina, "that there isn't men enough in Copperville to bury her own dead, without goin' to Castle Hill and Humington. What it could have been for, I don't know, but shouldn't wonder if it had been some of Starky's gittin' up. Anyway we'll find out when Saul comes." And she interrogated him in regard to the matter as soon as possible after his return, which was immediately after the burial.

"She was esteemed in the church, and the pall-bearers were chosen from among those by whom she was most appreciated," was his reply.

It was no uncommon thing for Aunt Sabrina and Sophia to chat awhile just at night-fall, and more

particularly so after Dr. Green's exit from among them. Aunt Sabrina ever seemed highly delighted with the society of her daughter, quite as much if not more than mothers usually are. She took great pleasure in planning for her future welfare, as she viewed it, and if possible, at this particular time more than ever before. By much thought in Sophia's behalf, she had contrived a plan which, if it could only be brought about, might be the means of bringing Sophia in proximity with L. H. Benjamin, the result of which would be more than likely to give rise to an extended acquaintance, the only needful thing required to get possession of his mental affection. She thought it much better for Sophia to be wife to that old gentleman for the sake of his property than feel she was totally without a matrimonial alliance in view, destined to grieve as she was then grieving. It did not seem to enter Aunt Sabrina's mind for one moment that there could be the slightest obstacle in the way to hinder the progress of her plan, on the part of L. H. Benjamin. She did not know his already established opinion of her daughter. She did not understand the motive by which he was governed. Therefore, blinded in her calculations, she resolved to acquaint Sophia with her plan, also her design for bringing it to pass which was in a new way altogether. Between the two the conversation was accordingly conducted. Whilst Aunt Sabrina would prefer L. H. Benjamin to Dr. Green in consequence of his strange disappearing, and though Sophia was well pleased with the new arrangement, she clung to the belief that Dr. Green would soon return, and "Mother," she said, "though he may, or may not come, there could

be nothing wrong in my having more than one string to my bow, so if your project can be carried out, it will be pleasing to me. I can at the same time keep my eye out for the Doctor. It is exactly here, whilst I would accept the hand of that old gentleman, I wouldn't; what I mean is, I would for his gold, if I knew the Doctor would never return, but should he appear, even were I dressed in my wedding suit ready to join hands with L. H. Benjamin, I would quickly drop out the back door, that I would. Mother, I will look and believe he will again come, till the last leaf in autumn shall have fallen. If he is not here by that time, and I hear nothing from him, I will do as I can."

"In this plain of yours we are agreed. I endorse the movement and you can go ahead; but we must watch Saul. I think of what Aunt Trichie used to say, that always when she was keepin' secrets she tried to look nateral."

Whilst it may be said that the internal faculties of the mind are in obscurity, the presiding sentiments of the mind are many times as external as otherwise, as mind holds a ruling force over the outward actions. It was at once observed that a new plan was laid. A new method was being tried. It did not need the skill of a philosopher to solve the problem. The movement calculated to operate in Sophia's behalf was fortunately foreseen by no false-seeing eye, and prudently repulsed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Could we but slide the bolt, and throw open the door at the gateway between the present and future, and follow down the dim aisle into the distance, to the unseen realities before us, how unreconcilable oftentimes would nature be to the conformity of her own destiny. But such cannot be. We are glad to know the Hand that divided the present from the future, who ordered the plan of universal relationship, set the bounds and barred the door. With this unforeseen view then, it is not wisdom to say what time will bring, beyond that which lies at the furthest end of every individual's history. To look forward, plan and calculate for futurity with judgment, is just according to circumstances, but cannot be made a surety, as the twist of imagination is a brittle thread.

In the history of our story, this truth is plainly exemplified. — The dawning of flowery June had passed; events had had their unfavorable ending. The series of meetings had closed. Aunt Trichie was no more among the living. Sophia was in a state of unhappy suspense, unsettled and wavering, and with this unsteady tendency of mind, the golden days of June, with their sweet roses, the lilies and the violets, the green meadows and maple groves were to her no more than the iciness of bleak December. To contemplate for one moment with sympathy in her behalf, we find ourselves at once

prepared to say in reference to her: "How very sad and lonely it must be to yearn for some familiar face, we never more may see." Still time was wearing on—each new day with its own changing scenes, with no event to particularly mark the page of memory, until one bright morning, ere June had passed away, just as the sun had reached the tree tops, Aunt Sabrina said: "I wonder what is going on over to Starky's! Do you see the carriages?"

"Yes," said Sophia, "I do, and I saw L. H. Benjamin in the yard, too, only a few moments ago. It has come to what I expected. I always knew Maria would take that old man for his mansion, unless there was some way to veto it. I do not think Saul much of a friend, to work out disappointment to us. Had he attended to his own affairs, our calculations might have been a hindrance, so much so, that Maria might never have graced the Benjamin castle. I look as well as she does, and am quite as good, if I do not make as much public show trying to do what she calls winning souls to Christ. But so it is. We see it right before our eyes. She is to be Mrs. L. H. Benjamin. It maddens me! I do hope she will be cut short in her expectations, by length of days being added to him. I hope he will live to see one hundred years."

"You are right, Sophia, I don't one bit blame you. I wouldn't give much for all she can ever do for him more than you could, besides, for looks, I don't see how any man on 'arth could fancy sich an ornery looking piece as she is. What I think is, here jist at this trying time, when you are feelin' so awful bad, if somethin' could have come to have changed you like, and kind a got up your spirits, it would

been sich a blessed good thing. You see if Dr. Green does not come back, and I don't much believe he ever will, he'll be a dead leaf to you, and don't you know that green leaves spring from the same place where the dead ones have died. When Green is dead in your heart, love for some other one will start and spring all new again. I tell you there's a great many in this world that you ain't seen, and jist as good as any you ever have, but this very minute I'm feelin' mad, like yourself, to think Maria has got to be made what I should n't wonder you could have been. It does seem that a little pewter polish, and a few fine things, take, after all, the shine off of real genuine born beauty."

In a similar way the conversation continued until the guests were leaving Mr. Starky's, when, much to their surprise, they saw Saul with a lady at his side, also Mr. and Mrs. Harrison pass toward the depot.

"Heaven bless me!" exclaimed Aunt Sabrina, "I don't know what won't come next. I would as soon have expected to see a rose-bud grown from a honeysuckle vine, as to have seen Saul with a woman hangin' on his arm."

"Why, mother, do you not suppose Saul has taste for ladies' society. He did have once, I expect, but a little bad luck has fixed him as stationary as the Alps."

"I don't believe in any sich a way of doin'. I like to see things movin' on to compare with what that man said. It was somethin' like this, 'how the world wags; from hour to hour we ripen and ripen, and then from hour to hour we rot and rot, and thereby hangs a tale.' It was somehow so; anyway I've heard Saul tell it."

“That is as I thought, mother; I hardly believed you had read it. Since he has been with us we hear many such quotations which otherwise we should not have known.”

It occurred to Saul's mind that a little joke would not be out of place under the circumstances; and prepared for it by straightening his face down long, chafing his eyes until they were considerably reddened; then with a slow step walked in, directly placing himself before Sophia, who at once observed him and said, “What has happened? You look rather blue.”

After a moment's pause he answered in a sad, low tone, “Mr. Starky has lost two of his family this morning.”

“Lost two of his family! Two of his family!” echoed through the rooms. “The dear me, which ones?” cried Aunt Sabrina, with wild excitement, “You don't say so! Two more of his family gone?”

Saul patiently hesitated to reply, until the first degree of excitement died down. He then mildly told them it was Maria and Aunt Delilah.

“Maria and Aunt Delilah! Can it possibly be? I never would have thought it!”

“Nor I!” responded Sophia. “That is not as we were calculating things, is it, mother?”

“No, no! far from it. We can't see ahead of us, that is certain.”

“Indeed not one day ahead,” said Sophia. “I do wish we could have had given us something besides faith with which to look into the future.”

“Yes, but then we've got to be satisfied and take things as they are,” said Aunt Sabrina, as she was about to turn to her domestic duties which were

pressing at that time, it being near the dinner hour.

Saul by this time felt quite well satisfied with the sensation he had produced, and continued his report by revealing the truth, that they were not dead, simply lost out of the family.

“Maria,” said he, “is now Mrs. Mortimore, and Aunt Delilah is Mrs. L. H. Benjamin.”

Whether from madness, acerbity or surprise, we are not prepared to say, only for the first several minutes Aunt Sabrina stood as stationary as though she had turned to adamant, whilst Sophia reeled with convulsed emotion, then fell fainting to the floor.

Saul’s effort to raise Sophia and place her upon a couch relaxed Aunt Sabrina’s tension, and she commenced in an excited way to express her belief as to the propriety of such matches.

“I do want to know,” said she, “if Maria has got that Mr. Mortimore that Aunt Trichie used to talk about as bein’ next to the kingdom of heaven. I thought he was calculatin’ to go off among the heathen.”

“The very one, Aunt Sabrina. He is a very worthy gentleman, one of high order. He told me this morning that he and Maria had for over five years been looking forward to the day when they should be made co-partners for life, each to share the other’s joy and sorrow in a home beyond the sea.”

“I wonder if that is what Maria is goin’ to be, a missionary! I never would have believed it. She has kept her expectations very close, ’pears to me. I had never heard a word about it.”

“Love and religion,” muttered Sophia.

“That’s so,” said Aunt Sabrina. “You see her knowin’ about it all this long time, ’counts for her bein’ so strainish like. When any body is that way, there’s purty ginerally somethin’ at the bottom.”

“Judge not that ye be not judged,” fell with emphasis from the lips of Saul. “Maria is a wise lady, too wise to expose her best interests to the world’s frown. There were those, however, who knew of her plans.”

“When are they going,” asked Sophia.

“They expect to leave our shores early in August.”

“Then we sha ’nt have them long, but I’d like to know how L. H. Benjamin came to marry Aunt Delilah.”

“He doubtless considered her his compeer. So far as a suitable match is concerned, a better one could not have made, according to my judgment. ’Tis true he is well advanced in years, but then there is no imprópriety in his having a wife to be company for him, especially as he has plenty of this world’s goods to supply their wants. His family all appeared very much pleased. There was no mirth or gayety. Every thing moved on with great solemnity. I never attended a more solemn wedding.”

The influence on Sophia’s mind on becoming better acquainted with what had happened seemed to restore her to her original strength. She strove to restrain her feelings, and kept quiet until after Saul had left, which was immediately after partaking of a dry lunch, when to her satisfaction she relieved her mind in a liberal way. She expressed her thousand doubts in regard to Mr. and Mrs. Mortimore’s usefulness and future happiness; but, there was comfort on her part, they were not going to be near enough

to be an affliction, and it was her sincere wish, when they had sailed away, that they might never be permitted to return. As for L. H. Benjamin, she had many suspicions as to what would become of him. "But as it is," she said, "I do not care, one thing is sure, I am two-edged over it. I hope any thing but good will happen him. To wish him evil is harmless, he stands so mightily."

"With this turbulent spirit all the unkind opinions that could be brought to mind, and rehearsed between mother and daughter during the remainder of the day, were expressed. At which time, also, Aunt Sabrina tried to stimulate Sophia to feel she was not alone, or without friends. That she had no reason to think herself beyond hope and happiness, and that disappointments were the most common occurrences of the day. "There will come another springtime, mind you that," said she, "besides, I always think the sun shines brightest after a shower. There are plenty enough things in this world that's comfortin', if we can only see them. I think I know jist where you made your mistake; could you only have loved Tom you would have had a stand-by friend."

"I see where I made my mistake, fast enough," said Sophia.

When the evening hour had passed and she had retired to her room, she began again to reconsider her unhappy lot, and think over those bright anticipations that once filled her heart with warm enthusiasm. "How can it be?" she sighed; "even those written pages that were worth a world to me, and filled my sky with gems of bright material, all have faded and died away like a midnight dream.

It is not justice to me. I have not earned for myself so much of sadness. Why fate should mark my brow with sorrow I cannot tell. Why my life should become embittered I do not know."

With her head and heart full of unhappy reflections she sunk sobbing upon her pillow. She found no rest in sleep. She could not look forward to the coming of the morrow with the hope of happy returns. She knew she had kind, sympathizing parents, yet her heart was sad, lonely and comfortless. It was indeed pitiable, this deep disturbance of her mind. With a melancholy stress of voice she would be heard to say "There is no creature that loves me, and if I die no soul will pity me." For days she continued in this unhappy state of mind, until a sort of lethargy stole over her. She became dispirited; a pale, wan look settled upon her face; her countenance changed, her strength left her, and she lay prostrate upon a couch.

Said Saul, "The only available remedy, in my opinion, is, if possible, to get possession of her mind, in order to overcome this burden of sorrow with which she is weighed down. Her sorrow of mind is her disease, which will without doubt ultimately prove fatal, unless means are used to prevent it."

The conversation between Saul and the grief-stricken parents was of considerable length. The idea was suggested that a change of place, new scenery and new acquaintances might operate largely in her behalf.

"I have gone to my daily labor thinkin' it was hard many times," said Mr. Brown, "but there was never anything half so hard to me as this is. Try,

Saul, and see." His feelings at this point overcame him and he was unable to speak.

"I understand you," said Saul, "I will make an effort. There shall nothing be left undone that I can do," and without further consideration he immediately walked to the door opening into her room, and after halting a moment upon the threshold he advanced towards her with a stately tread, repeating as he neared her, in a jovial way, the following rhyme:

"Art thou sick, sad, suffering?
I cannot ease a single pain,
But I'll go ask thy heavenly Father,
He will make thee well again."

Sophia turned her head upon her pillow, and with her eyes fixed upon him, smilingly said, as he neared her, "Saul I am glad to see you. How does it happen that I do?"

"That you do! Am I not around daily?" said Saul, "who is more conspicuous than I am?"

Throwing a napkin over her face she wept very bitterly.

A little later Saul said, "I was never that I recollect, at a greater loss for language to express my ideas."

However, after carefully considering for a moment, he asked, "Why do you feel so bad? I understood you to say you were glad to see me."

"But, Saul, this world is dark to me; I wish I was dead and out of it."

"Why do you make such a wish?"

"If there is nothing for me in this world, but to drink bitterness from the cup of woe, if all I love

and hold dear must die away, I want to die with them."

Saul placed his hand upon her forehead, where it rested for some minutes, during which time the tears started in his eyes.

"For what are those tears, Saul?"

"For you."

"How is that?"

"I have too much regard for you, to hear you say, you wish you were dead. To be willing to appear in the presence of God is well, where there is saving faith and a regenerated heart, but for a person to wish one's self dead simply because one does not succeed in things pertaining to this life is wrong. I want you to get well and be cheered up. As soon as you are able I will take you out riding."

"No, you wouldn't, there would be something to upset it. I have never yet attempted anything that was not overturned. I am doomed to sorrow and disappointment."

"I think, Sophia, I could bring it to your understanding that it is undisputably your own fault that has brought you where you now are. You were not providentially doomed to an embittered life, but such has come upon you from your own unsteady, inconstant credulity of mind, and you have no one but yourself to blame. Perhaps I should say, no one but yourself and mother. Could Aunt Sabrina have had wisdom to foresee that which was obvious to any ordinary person, and discharged her duty in your behalf, she may possibly have benefited you. As for myself, to look on sorrowingly was all that I could do. My words had no effect. I could only let you alone to be a blind leader of the blind, and

we are told, 'if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit.' I will now leave you, and when you shall have sufficiently recovered, if you wish, we will thoroughly discuss these troublesome matters. I am of the opinion that they can all be overcome."

"Don't go, Saul, let's talk it now."

"Had you not better rest? Wait until you have gotten more strength."

"No. I'm better now, I can hear to-day as well as to-morrow."

"Then you think you can stand Saul's talk, do you?"

"Yes, for what part of it I don't like I'll throw away."

"I guess you are on the rise."

"I have felt that way ever since you first come, if I did cry mightily."

"The first thing of importance then is, do you not recollect some weeks ago our conversation in my office? Did I not at that time try to awaken your mind in regard to true and false love? And did I not speak of your being misrepresented as a literary character? That very thing has been one of the strongest, most bitter roots in the history of your downfall. In the first place it elevated you above your compeers, it established an egotistical tendency, which, if properly entitled, could be termed infatuation. Of such were the fibers that composed your hammock, and through it you have fallen. In my mind, and I have all necessary proof to believe, it was for no other reason than financial gain that Dr. Green made pretensions to love. If you were truly that which you were represented to be, it was an object to him. Those noted for their genius have

cash values. They possess a worth such as is not common to ordinary people. But that is no indication of purity and perfection. Whilst they may be able by their genius to attract the public mind, they have no better hearts, many of them, than those they interest. Had they, much greater good could be accomplished by them. It was the genius upon which Dr. Green set his eye. Had your work not proved a total failure, he possibly might not have left you; at all events not until he should have secured his mite. As it was, he had no more desire to stay in Copperville than a wild duck would have that swims on the river. Not only so but it is hardly possible to suppose he could have staid so long as he did, had it not been that here he was made to feel free and at home.

“Sophia, I am telling you the truth, and for your good, as it has been given me. He has not paid one dime for either board or room rent since he came to Copperville, and for the last two weeks had no board elsewhere than here, so far as is known. He talked to you about his patients. He did not have them. It was a base hoax. There is still more I can tell you. A gentleman walked in his office the day he wrote his credentials and saw what he was doing plainly enough to understand it. By the father’s flogging the lad for leaving his work, it became known that Dr. Green had hired him to deliver a note to Miss Sophia Brown, after which he did not pay him the dime he agreed to for doing the errand. Knowing this, and much more, do you not think I had grounds for suspicion, far back to the very outset of his introduction and understood definitely what was being conducted and was confident the end would

be just as and no better than it is? I had no confidence in him from the beginning. His face denoted villainy. If he truly has a profession, which he probably has, it is as I have told you, there are scores of them who do not amount to a feather's weight, but are well calculated to deceive and mislead, and according to my mind, such is his highest ambition."

"I don't care, Doctor is handsome, there is that much of him."

"That is as you see him, and so far you were not alone. He was looked upon by many as a handsome man, but it was short-sightedness. I am myself a lover of beauty, every one is more or less; but regard it not a pearl of price, it is fleeting as the bow in the clouds. There is however a beauty to be admired of lasting value—that of mind spiritually developed. Such beauty can be referred to as a 'charmer charming' wisely. Whilst there are many other things of which we might speak, would it not be well to say, let those things which have passed, lie in the past, I recommend that you never give Dr. Green, that patch of aristocracy, another thought. He is not worth one. Do not think me harsh when I say he is a mere bubble. We can but hope the future may bring to you better success."

"Saul, there is one thing if you know, I wish you would truthfully tell me. Does Tom love Lize?"

"Yes, very affectionately; they are happily united. One thing I have in mind to suggest is, after you recover, perhaps you would enjoy going on a trip with me to visit some of our far-a-way relatives, who would, I am quite sure, be pleased to see a specimen or two of their Copperville friends."

“Glory! Are you in real earnest, Saul? Where would we go, up to Kingumton?”

“Yes, for one place. In Kingumton I think you would enjoy a few weeks’ stay. There are several cousins in and near Kingumton very nearly your age. Rather distant, ’tis true, some of them are, but I can prove our relationship satisfactorily should there be any doubt on their part as to the certainty. We could not go, however, until after Mr. and Mrs. Mortimore have embarked for India. I have a desire to see them on board the ship, and shall, with quite a number of their friends, accompany them to the harbor. After which it will afford me pleasure to go with you as I have already said. I now want you to lay aside this trouble of mind, and bear with composure the present condition of things. Experience is the chief of school masters. He sits as monarch over belief and opinion, and such is what I trust your experience will prove to be. That which was of yesterday be your instructor for tomorrow. It has been suggested that I, from a sense of duty to you, should examine those written pages. I have glanced over them, and at this time, perhaps, can as well say, any publishing company to have issued a work of the kind would have laid itself liable to prosecution. Your title is very good, if properly used, and had you the talent for writing, had you an active brain, that would generate thought, and you could look round about, upon persons and things, both natural and artificial, and could conceive ideas and impressions from them, you would have as free and independent right to them as the humming bird has to the honeysuckle. But what you have done is an altogether different thing. You have

noted circumstances which have come under your observation. Town gossip, your opinion of individuals which is not perfect, and to be short and truthful there is nothing creditable about the work. And I fully endorse Mr. Hacker's recommendation." Saul then arose, and with heartfelt sincerity assured her that she would be remembered, and "May I not expect," he asked, "to find you sitting up on my return in the morning?"

"Perhaps," said Sophia, "if I do not again get too much under a cloud."

"But there you must not get. Do you not know there is sunshine all over the world and that its light is shed for the benefit of every unblinded eye?"

"What do you call night?"

"Night is that part of day when the sun is beneath the horizon, we have the moon and stars at night."

"They arn't sunshine?"

"Certainly not, we do not need sunshine by which to sleep."

"Well," said Sophia, with a grim smile, "if the sun shines all over the world, it does in Kingumton, and when I get there I suppose it will shine on me."

"If you are so fortunate as to get there it will without doubt shine on you."

Saul could not hide his feelings. He was strongly disposed to laugh, and carried with him the same expression as he went to the tea table.

"I see no signs of dissolution," said Saul, "I am of the opinion that she will recover; I have spoken to her of a trip to Kingumton. After having spent a few weeks there she will without doubt be back in her ordinary frame of mind."

Said Aunt Sabrina, "About what time do you think you will go?"

"I will take her as soon as possible after my return from Boston."

This idea was very pleasing to the parents, and immediately after tea Aunt Sabrina went with her prepared toast and jelly to Sophia, and at once began to discuss the matter and so thoroughly there was nothing left unsaid. They were sure Saul would not deviate in his calculations, but go to Boston with whoever else would go, just for the sake of seeing Mr. and Mrs. Mortimore on shipboard, because they wanted to look big and go off to heathendom.

"So you see," said Sophia, "I must be put off, must lie back and wait. It is always the way, I never yet had any thing go so smooth that it had not in it a ruffle, an unavoidable something to dump me in troubled waters."

"But after a while you may sail on a good deal smoother sea. Things don't stand one way always," said Aunt Sabrina. "I am most dreadful glad for one thing and that is that Saul is willin' to take you to Kingumton, but like yourself I wish he could have gone sooner. I don't feel so well satisfied to have it put off sich a long while. I think it likely you could have gone by next week. You look better this afternoon. You are goin' to come up all right, Saul thinks." And then they began all the more earnestly to make their calculations, when to their surprise they were unexpectedly disturbed by the tolling of the church bell. A few minutes later the report came in that L. H. Benjamin was no more.

"It was but yesterday morning," said Saul, "that I saw him in good health and spirits. He and Mrs.

Benjamin rode over to be with Maria, as he said, 'all I shall ever see her in this world will be what I can during her short stay this side of the water. She may live to return, but it will not be until I shall have passed away.' This is an unlooked for event. Notwithstanding his age, his health had continued firm, his faculties good and his spirit buoyant for one of his years. We shall greatly miss him. He and Mrs. Benjamin were to be two of the number who were expecting to accompany Mr. and Mrs. Mortimore to the ship."

CHAPTER XXIV.

“Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men.” How often times in the history of human affairs do we find ourselves ready to adopt the language of the psalmist, and say, “help, Lord.” It is an expression not only said, but very materially felt and emphatically used. In the case of which we now speak, it was forcibly felt and used as Father Benjamin was one “known and read of all men,” a herald of the cross, a strong man armed. Whilst it was fully understood that he could not continue long after having passed his three-score and ten years, yet so powerful was his influence as an evangelical promoter, that faith, hope and love, prime meteors of to-day, were strongly combined to make tardy his upward flight, and still herald him forward upon the battle field of life.

But, “He giveth His beloved sleep, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labor for their works follow with them.” In the golden days of mid-summer, at the time of harvest gathering when the reapers were casting in the sickle, Father Benjamin was gathered by the great reaper and carried home by angel hands, bearing his sheaves with him.

Among the many vicissitudes connected with the life of so venerable a gentleman there are many which we must leave unnumbered and untold that might add largely to the interest of the reading public, but

like his fathers he fell asleep, as it is written, "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the street." The great principle that marked the character of Father Benjamin's life, was carried down to that period of time "When the earth should have become a forgotten substance," and the balance of his worldly possessions would be unlocked for distribution. There to find an unlooked for legacy, of untold value, which he had thoughtfully selected and copied with his own hand from the passage left by Patrick Henry in his will, was tenderly touching. It disclosed to human mind his depth of love in behalf of his family. The passage left by Patrick Henry in his will, though familiar to many, cannot be too frequently copied. It reads: "I have now disposed of all my property to my family. There is one thing more I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion. If they had that and I had not given them one shilling, they would be rich, and if they have not that, and I had given them all the world, they would be poor."

It was enough. The wall of separation was laid, that ever after distinguished them from the world, and enabled them to follow a beloved father's footprints to the throne.

It was at once remarked by Mrs. Mortimore, after hearing of the death of Father Benjamin, that Aunt Delilah should return to her former home to be company for her own mother after their departure. That she should feel far happier to think of her there, than with her newly made relatives at Castle Hill. And, as it was left for Aunt Delilah to choose for herself, she accepted the solicitation to return.

"There will be two less," said Maria, "to accom-

pany us to the ship, but we have parted here," and whilst tears thickly gathered in her full eyes, she sweetly sung:

"Here we are but straying pilgrims."

The Hand that had severed wrought for them a shadow that made the daily revolutions of life turn like an overladen wheel. Still the days went fleeting past with their preparations and farewell tokens, until for the last time, perhaps forever, had the sun set and risen upon them in their native home. With those who remained who were to accompany them to the ship, a vast multitude assembled at the depot, amid sighs, tears and heart aches, such as neither tongue can tell nor pen describe. And after a short farewell address by Rev. Mortimore, whose calm, serene deportment and eloquence of speech, mellowed with the sweet spirit of grace, which fastened upon the hearing ear never to be forgotten, the swiftly departing train bore them away.

"Glory! glory!" shouted Sophia, at the sound of the car whistle and the rapidly rolling wheels, "a calm is now what we may hope to have, there has been nothing but excitement for weeks; I thought they made display enough to have buried a queen when Aunt Trichie died, but heaven bless me, what was that to compare with L. H. Benjamin's funeral. They made a great swell, they had a showy time, but there is this comfort in it, it is that which will not have to be done over again. And now since we have got rid of Maria we may expect pleasant times to what we have had, as we shall have less opposing force against us."

"Yes, it is a great relief," said Aunt Sabrina,

“now, we’ve got nothin’ to do, but to go straight ahead. I do hope your goin’ to Kingumton will be to you a greater blessin’ than could have come to you in any other way. But then we’re poor blind creatures, we can’t tell how things is goin’ to turn with us or which way will be the best.

“I can’t help thinkin’ about Aunt Delilah, I expect she made great calculations to live high and keep L. H. yet a good long while, but he’s gone and left her. I should like to know most dreadful well how that will reads. I am thinkin’ Delilah has been cut off, mebbe, by her comin’ back to Starky’s. It looks that way. If she has been there is another disappointment. But then it’s a good deal to be called Mrs. Benjamin, besides it may make her feel better to think she will be more than likely buried by the side of him.”

“But there is more than that in my head,” said Sophia. “So long as I am feeling better, I tell you now is the time whilst Saul is away to make an extra effort to see if Doctor’s whereabouts can’t be found. Who knows but something serious may have happened him. He may be dangerously ill, and greatly need a friend to stand by him. I think if father will help me to the money, I will go to Dunberry this afternoon. There is where he used to spend much time after he located here. He told me it was a pleasant resort, and he could as well enjoy recreation, as to be bound inside the dingy walls of his office room.”

Aunt Sabrina put on her studying cap, as she commonly said, for a few minutes. Then she slipped out through the side door, unknown to Sophia, and found her way to the workshop, where she whispered with

great care the secret of Sophia's ambition to find out Dr. Green's whereabouts to Mr. Brown.

Said the latter, "I'm most dreadful sorry she is so unwillin' to give up that fellow. Here wife, take this paper to her. I saw the notice yesterday, but thought I'd better keep it to myself, but if she is bound to investigate, jist let her read that first," pointing to the column.

Aunt Sabrina walked leisurely back to the house, where she carefully read it before allowing Sophia the privilege of knowing. After which she said, "Here's an awful thing, Sophia; when you shall have read this, you will not want to go to Dunberry."

"Let's hear it," said Sophia.

SUICIDE—On Sabbath last, at Dunberry, Annie, only daughter of C. E. and A. R. M——, was found in a dying condition from the effects of morphine administered by her own hand, soon after which death ensued. A note was found on the table which read as follows:

"I see no bliss in life; I have no desire to stay. I prefer death and the grave, to the sight-seeing beauties of earth, and our once happy home. Forgive in me the act and let me go. Adieu,

"Your loving daughter,

"ANNIE."

For some days previous to Miss Annie's death she appeared to have sunken into a sort of lethargy which greatly disturbed the minds of her parents. They knew of her engagement with Dr. Green to whom she had been introduced early in December the previous year, and whose interest in her behalf had been strongly exhibited from time to time with an almost unnatural constancy. The early part of April was the time appointed for their marriage, but it was deferred until the early part of June, as the Doctor remarked, "June is a favorite month with me, I think it far more lovely than either of the other months, and, Annie, it may lend superior enchantments to our honeymoon." So far as could be observed Dr. Green was a royal, kind, noble-hearted friend, one who had been faithful to his trust so far as their knowledge extended.

They saw no reason to censure his fidelity. They suspected no cause for which their engagement should be annulled, until it became rumored that his room in Copperville was vacated, and its occupant had skipped to unknown parts.

When the report became verified, Annie appeared dismayed, and taking her already prepared bridal costume and after giving it a general looking over said, "We will lay it away, I shall never wear it." The probability was, she should never see her betrothed. She realized it with sorrow, and as the light of her young life became obliterated, she preferred death to life.

"Alas for love, if this be all,
And nought beyond, Oh, earth."

"I can't believe it," said Sophia in an excited tone. "I do not believe that Dr. Green had a more special friend than myself. According to that statement he, too, has had more than one string to his bow. And for what would that be? I never heard him speak of Annie, I doubt his ever having made her acquaintance. But I will, I am bound to know. I will go there; that I will. There is a wrong in it and I do know it."

With this height of excited ambition it was thought best to have Sophia go for self-satisfaction, which she did. She found the home of the grief-stricken parents, who kindly received her. She also found in their possession a photograph of the identical Dr. Green, her own most dearly cherished friend. She was assured that he had been a constant visitor at their home for over four months. And to their darling Annie he had vowed faithfulness. That of his attention to any other person they had no knowledge until after Annie's death. "And," said Mrs. M——, "if you were betrothed to Dr. Green, you are the fifth found to be 'under my special guardianship,' as he used to say to Annie."

“Must I believe,” said Sophia, “that Dr. Green has been paying strict attention to five different ladies, of whom I am one, all in the circumference of a few miles?”

“I am sorry that such should be acknowledged,” said Mrs. M—— with anguish of heart. “It was verily true to appearance that Dr. Green was devotedly attached to Daughter Annie. To our certain knowledge they were positively engaged to be married. We looked upon him as a gentleman of value. We highly prized him. We could not have believed that which now is could ever be. The other ladies of whom I speak as having a claim to him can answer for themselves.”

“It is enough,” said Sophia, and left to take the first train for home.

As Sophia entered the room, Aunt Sabrina said, “Then you’re back, are you? Did you get the right information?”

“I have gotten all the information I need, whether it is right or wrong. Anyway I shall set my stake in Kingumton. I think of what Saul will say when he hears the news. The first words spoken will be, ‘With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.’ I have heard him repeat it so many times, that it revolves in my mind like a buzz saw. Let it be as it may, there is a puzzle in it. For a lady to have more than one string to her bow is wisdom; for a gentleman wickedness. One thing is sure, I shall cherish the belief that I stood first with the Doctor.”

“But we’ll jist let him go,” said Aunt Sabrina. “I feel a good deal encouraged, I tell you, Sophia; since Saul first told me about takin’ you to King-

umton, I've been havin' most dreadful good dreams. You know what I've always been tellin' you, if you dream of light or brightness it betokens good luck and happiness, and the other night I dreamed of seein' you with a lighted candle in you hand, so I am feeling purty sure the right step is about to be taken. By the time Saul gets round, we'll have things in order. He won't be gone any great while. They'll only stay to see the ship move off on the water, may be till it is out of sight, but that won't be long, then back he'll be comin'."

By the time Saul arrived he found the two very impatiently awaiting his return. He had spent more time viewing the coast, and visiting places of interest inside the city limits, than they had supposed he would, and they expressed their disappointment at not seeing him sooner.

"If I have caused unpleasantness on your part, I am very sorry for it," said Saul. "I will make no further delay, but get you immediately into Kingumton. In order to get through without too much waiting in consequence of the changes to be made, we can if you wish, leave here to-night on the 12:30 train."

"All right," said Sophia, "I don't want to wait till frost comes."

"To start when the sign is right is best, I always think," said Aunt Sabrina.

Whilst it was absolutely necessary that Saul should indulge in a few days' rest, in order to be better prepared for a second journey, he was obliged to sacrifice his own feeling to gratify Sophia's wild ambition. Much to Sophia's delight it was soon decided that they should take the night train, which they did,

with Aunt Sabrina to accompany them to the depot, to see that they got off all right, as she said, with her face as bright as a sunflower. She had a multitude of messages to be carried on tongue's end, and delivered by word of mouth to Uncle Sammy Smith, and a vast number of other relatives very dear to her, most of whom she had not seen for thirty years. As the train neared the depot, a copious flood of tears gushed from her eyes, and with half choked utterance she tried to say: "I hope to hear good news and happiness, fare you well," as nearly as could be understood.

"Saul, why have you so dull and stupefied an appearance?" asked Sophia, as the train was speeding along.

"I am exceedingly tired, not having had rest enough to refresh me for the past two weeks," he replied.

"I am awful sorry for you, but then I expect they have good beds in Kingumton."

Saul's sleepy mood discomfited Sophia. She was afraid he was not going to do justice to himself by putting on so drowsy a look.

"To have done justice to myself," responded Saul, "I should not have been on this train; I suffer this unpleasantness to please you."

"For one to suffer for the well-being of a friend is renowned friendship," said Sophia.

"That is just such friendship as I have for you. Were it otherwise, I should not have taken you to Kingumton; and my sincere wish is that your going may benefit you."

"It will, Saul, I feel it in my bones, mother does too."

“Did she dream it?” asked Saul.

“It was that or an indication.”

“Fortunate for you, perhaps, that you have a mother who well knows how to dream and interpret.”

When the space of time required to complete the journey had passed, they were safe in Kingumton. As there were several families in the place by the name of Smith, it was necessary they should have some way to distinguish them. Not having been familiar with either, they took the bend of their inclination, agreeable to the suggestions made prior to leaving home, and found Uncle Sammy's first. There they were received with all the warmth and enthusiasm that hospitality could cover, until Sophia really felt she had arrived at that point where the gates of bliss were about to open to her. Uncle Sammy Smith was rather a jolly old joker. As soon as he could conveniently change his position, he squared himself around face foremost to Sophia, and said, “Well, Sophie, that is what they call you, I believe, does your father keep up pretty well now-a-days? I haven't seen Jeremiah in a good many years.”

“Yes, father is very well, indeed.”

“I'm glad to hear it, I have had pretty good health generally speaking, but of late, I get somehow a good deal out of kilter. We are ever so glad to see you. You must stay awhile with us, to see how you like your relations up in this part of the country. We have of our own a house full of boys and girls, and they are noisy enough sometimes. Besides we have any amount of them in the town. Some of them we are glad to have, and others we would not care if they fled to some unknown part. But we have

one little chap here that's about right, we all think; and Sophie, you might set your cap for him. It might be you could catch him, if you could only hold onto him after getting hold. Sometimes these little fellows are as slippery as eels. With this one, I don't know how it would be. He is about as large as a common sized lap-dog, but a good deal more entertaining. He was raised just a little way out of town, I've always knowed him, and I used to look upon him as a small sample, but I don't know, he bids fair to make the tallest man among us."

"What is he? What does he do?" asked Sophia.

"Why, he's what they call a minister. He can interest a congregation and hold them untired listeners the longest of any mortal man I ever saw grace a pulpit. I have always believed in the doctrine of election, I set my stake to believe when I was quite a young boy, that, if God had loved me well enough to have made me one of His elect I would be saved, and if he hadn't I wouldn't. With this settled belief, I just fold up my arms and rest myself contentedly. It will all come out right in the end, there is no question about that. But this little Elder Sylvester, as we all call him here at home, is a pretty sharp, witty fellow. And the other Sunday he came pretty near upsetting me. If my way of thinking is wrong, and that little fellow should set me right, it would be a blessed good thing for both of us.

"But Sophia, I am in earnest; I'll just speak to my boys, and have them bring the little chap around here. It is a lot better to have a small-sized man well compounded, than to have one of those heavy, broad-breasted fellows intellectually as flat as a cockle. We happened to have one such not long

ago. His first appearance was well enough, but when you come to hear him tangle his nouns up with conjunctions and shovel them out with emphasis you would think to emphasize was the science and substance of preaching. Anyway that was all I could see in it, and I watched as close as I could, but I couldn't find the first item that looked to me like anything saturated with God's ichor, and I don't believe there was a drop in his whole sermon. But you put this little Sylvester on the stand, and you will find him brilliant, easy and persuasive; he will fill you with theology the soundest of the sound. He will

“ ‘ Prove his doctrine from Paul to Moses,
Then down to Calvin ere his sermon closes.’ ”

“ Such differences are striking representations of the great truth, that it is not the bulk that constitutes the important part of man, but the genuineness of the spirit that dwells in man.”

The last sentence had no sooner fallen from the lips of Uncle Sammy, than Saul entered and told them he had received a telegram to return immediately and should be obliged to take the first train that night for home. With much sorrow and many regrets on the side of both Saul and Uncle Sammy, Aunt Tabbathy hurriedly made ready a good meal, which he heartily partook, to refresh himself for another night's travel.

CHAPTER XXV.

Near Kingumton lived Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan Kinkade in a very neat, respectable, ^{very} old-fashioned one story and a half house, ~~painted red~~, wide spread and roomy on the first floor, with a veranda on two sides, with their heavy plank benches, here and there a wooden peg for halter straps, horse-shoes and cow-bells. At one corner in the rear was a large cobblestone milk room with a covered projecting porch which connected it with the main building, and where was universally seen the old flat-wheeled dog-churn. Their motives were apparently so based upon accumulation, and so extensive were their efforts and success, that it was commonly remarked by the neighbors, "That there was but little Aunt Susan laid her hands on, that she could not call her own." The great multiplication consisted not only in an immense farm stock of every grade and nature, but the household population increased to the number of thirteen sons and daughters.

"Not one too many," said Uncle Joe, "I think, Susan, with prudent economy, if we keep our health to continue working on our old way, we can muster thirteen hundred acres clear from debt 'gin one year from next fall."

"Yes, I guess so too, I don't want the children to get scattered away off around where a body can't look after them. We want to keep them all close around home."

It was therefore agreed to exercise all the wisdom possible in order to clear the last addition to the farm, that each one of the children might have their own especially allotted one hundred acres, and be, as Aunt Susan would say, "Where we can keep an eye to 'em."

Previous to the date of which we speak many were the individuals who cast a covetous glance over the broad acres, and to appease their selfishness would expose the sentiments of their minds by a slightly tinged slur, which was oftentimes repeated in reference to Uncle Joe,

"That though he was aptly straightforward and fleet,
The bulk of his bounty lay under his feet."

It was not particularly cared for, however, as Uncle Joe had a religious creed of his own, and a law by which he squared and leveled his plans of operation. Whatever the proposition might be, or new turn to be taken, if it only suited the mind of Aunt Susan, it was quite as satisfactory with Uncle Joe as though it had been the decision of a grand jury, and even more so, as there was complicated self-interest involved.

The mind and opinion of the public was to them ever like a castle builded upon a mountain of quicksand, and quite as unreliable. Their own law or method was exercised with freedom, so much so, that whoever remarked unwisely in reference to their prosperity, or mode of doing, the gifted and the popular, it made no difference, it was regarded with the same territorial limit as though it had issued from the lips of a shallow-headed demagogue.

According to tradition, it must be expected that in a family of thirteen, sure there would be one either

a subject of dishonor, oddity or deformity, an unfortunate of some grade or nature. In the family of Mr. Kinkade, Sylvester was the so-considered unfortunate one, not having reached the measure of the stature of a man at the age of twenty.

He was well formed, pretty faced, with wavy locks that bordered a beautiful brow, bright, energetic, but he was so tiny, it was not expected he could go from under the supervision of his parents, who ever nurtured him like a house-plant.

Sylvester's natural disposition was to acquire knowledge. He read every book upon which he could get his hand, and of what he read, he understood, and generally held a considerable portion on tongue's end. He had great taste for mental philosophy and theology, which laid the foundation for faith in divine revelation, devotion and the fruits of piety. He being inferior in size, there was never anything heavy or laborious required of him. He usually performed such duties as poultry feeding, gathering in the eggs, giving due attention to the churn dogs, etc. During these hours in which he was not engaged in the lower branches of business, called his waste hours, he very strictly attended to the cultivation of his mind. With this attention to study and assiduity of mind, so unremitting, his mental faculties increased with the spirit of grace growing in his young heart, until he felt called to preach the gospel.

This introduced into the mind of his parents an altogether new theory. They had not thought it possible even for one moment that Sylvester could go from under the parental roof. For him to think of being a minister was as impossible to them as the thought of his fording the Atlantic. "It is nothing

but credulity," said the parents, "he has read too much, and it has made him unluckily wise. He had better have been taught to ride the horses and guide them before the plow, than to have gotten his head full of things clear out of his reach. Not only so, but for him to attempt a thing of that kind would add largely to our annual expenses and would greatly interfere with the year's payment on the last addition to the farm."

"It will never do. We don't want to be severe, but we must reason with him," said Aunt Susan, "likely he can be bought. Best try first the easier way. We must anyway somehow get his mind changed around right again. Maybe it can be shook off by making light of his calling. I don't suppose he has even thought how he would look to be a preacher. No, no! he don't stop to think; and ~~law~~ law! if he should be a preacher he would be away off where a body couldn't see him more than once in a whole long year."

"Yes, yes, that is so; it would be hard," said Uncle Joe. "Here is the homestead with one hundred acres clear from debt, where he can live well enough, and that is all he ever need try to do, if he can only be made to see things that way."

"Sylvester," said Aunt Susan, as he came in sight, "did you ever stop to think how smart it would look for a little man like you to walk up into a pulpit to preach? Law! the folks would all laugh at you. I want to know if you don't think you would be scared almost to death?"

"Certainly not, I am not man-fearing."

"Well, I think I should be any way, for as Lucas says, you would look like a toad on a horse's back."

Little Frankie who had been an attentive listener, after heartily laughing, said, "When Vestie wants to preach we will give him the cuckoo's house."

"I guess, Sylvester, that would do," said Aunt Susan.

"Oh, mother, mother," sighed Sylvester, "small birds are the sweeter singers, do you not know. While I am but a small pattern, God has favored me with a heart and a mind. A work has He given me to do. How shall it be accomplished, and where unto shall I be sent, are the daily questions of my life."

This trouble of mind in regard to Sylvester was the greatest burden that had ever come upon Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan. It was to them actual suffering. They knew not how to endure the first thought of having him go from home, away beyond the reach of their watchfulness and superintending care. It was a grief to them to cross his feelings and crush his sensitive heart. From the Christian ministry it was found to be impossible to turn his ambition. He was unmovable, utterly so. To use authority, and say you shall not, they could not, dared not do. To deal with him in a trifling way, speak lightly, taunt, deride him, he would droop like blighted foliage, and steal away weeping, and be overheard to repeat from the depth of his heart, words found in Jeremiah 13: 17, 21, "If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive." "What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?"

It therefore occurred to the mind of his parents, that it would be a wise plan to have a delegation of

ministers assemble at their house for special discussion. It was their united opinion that he would be at once overcome; that the influence of those his senior, and so greatly his superior, would do more in a short time to change his mind from this freak of fanaticism, as they called it, to that more fit aptitude founded upon the surer basis of home life, than they could to reason with him an age.

Much to their surprise, on notifying him of what they proposed doing, he joyfully clapped his hands saying: "Thank you. The Lord is able to open up the way, and he will, for he has said, 'At an acceptable time I harkened unto thee, and in a day of salvation did I succor thee.'"

At the language and appearance of Sylvester the parents bowed their heads and wept in silence. When a favorable opportunity presented itself Uncle Joe said, "Susan, wife, I am discouraged; I believe we shall lose our boy."

"Yes, I just expect it will be that way, unless by bringing in some ministers that will come right straight out and tell him plainly that it will never do; that he cannot be a preacher; that they will not give him license—you know, Joe, to preach they must have license—and in that way hold him back."

"But it would be like holding him in with a gag rein," said Uncle Joe. "If he'd only give up, and be willing to stay home along with the rest of us, we would just give him the whole of that forty-acre fallow field next below the orchard. He should have every sheaf of wheat that grew on it. And it would bring him a good comfortable sum of money."

“I guess so, too; but I don't suppose it would do an atom of good to say one word about it. To have him made discouraged in some reasonable way that has got some more power in it, will be the most likely. And when you are over in town this evening—~~law~~! if I don't think you had best have it understood.”

“I think that way myself, Susan;” then, after squaring himself before the mirror, running his fingers through his silvered locks and smoothing them down, adjusting his collar and neckerchief and thoughtfully taking a general look at himself for a few minutes, he ambitiously advanced to a rear apartment and called out, “Ed! saddle that ar' horse and bring him up for me.” Then rapidly, as though from some sudden flash of surprise, he turned and said, “Susan, wife, I'm going now.”

“I am glad of it,” said Aunt Susan, “I don't know as it would be anything worth while to wait.”

In the efforts attending the circumstantial affairs in human life how often does the operation of the Spirit's influence hurry the individual hastily onward when, according to the ordinary turn of mind, he might quite as well move more leisurely with the belief that time will bring every purpose into action and in this way allow hope to anchor on the well being of to-morrow. When the truth often found is that the object in view calls for notice in the sunlight of an unquestionable to-day. In the case of which we now speak Mr. Kinkade was suddenly and forcibly impressed to accept the time being, in which, agreeable to the expression in its old time way, “He hit the nail square on the head.”

It so happened that several of the most eminent

divines from different localities had met in Kingumton for a special religious purpose, and were more than glad to listen to Mr. Kinkade's earnest entreaty in behalf of his son, that they might be the means of turning his half bewildered mind from this strange freak of fanaticism to a more reasonable acceptance of private life. It afforded Mr. Kinkade great satisfaction when he was assured that, though time with them was limited, they would be at his house to spend an hour at least that afternoon before train time. To accomplish this the reverend gentlemen were obliged to exercise skill in order to fulfill the requirement. They therefore, made every effort in their power, and at the hour specified they were at Mr. Kinkade's, comfortably seated in a neat, but plain, old-fashioned parlor.

Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan were the first to interest the guests, by pouring into their ears their own fears and apprehensions in regard to Sylvester's condition of mind, and in tones so truly affecting, that if possible, would have turned noonday into midnight. As soon as they had made an end of freely speaking their mind, which was calculated to be the preface to the investigation, the children were all brought in and separately introduced.

When the eye of the elders rested upon Sylvester they were surprised beyond measure. Their opinion at first sight of him varied widely from that which they had formed from listening to the preceding illustration given them in reference to him. At a suitable moment Sylvester took his stand before them like one endowed with wisdom and power from on high, and in language eloquently beautiful he related to them his Christian experience, his ardent desire,



“At a suitable moment Sylvester took his stand before them.”

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and explained to them his reason. It did not require any particular length of time for those gifted men to consider the matter, and decide definitely in his behalf. They were at once satisfied that he possessed the rudiments of Christian faith, and it was their candid belief that he was one chosen of God, elect and precious. That to intrude upon his God-given right, to make tardy his progress, to burden his soul with any misgiving, or in any way lay a hindrance in the path before him, would be a sin.

They kindly recommended Mr. and Mrs. Kinkade to prayerfully lean upon the strong arm of the Lord for their support, and cheerfully surrender up their son to Him who had called him to His service, and would kindly care for him. They assured them, that while he was dearly beloved by them, he was much more dearly beloved by his heavenly Master, whose claim had a far better title than their own. They gave special advice as to what course would be the more advantageous for his speedy advancement into the ministry, and spoke of a future when they might look upon that son, and feel that he was a much greater gift than to-day. Then turning to Sylvester, spoke of his high calling in Christ Jesus, and of his becoming a living epistle to scatter the incense of praise, and to be one known and read of all men.

But, oh, how dreadful it seemed for Mr. and Mrs. Kinkade to hear that which was so unreconcilable to their own views. The advice given was exactly opposite to that which they had supposed it would be. As soon as possible after hearing them bid Sylvester God-speed and a general good-bye to each of them, their heavy, over-burdened hearts would not allow

them to look after the sundry every-day duties, but they stole away to a private room for consultation.

"I ~~for~~," said Aunt Susan; "we are a great deal worse off now than before."

"Yes, a hundred per cent," said Uncle Joe. "I see no way but to let him go and be a man if he can be, so long as he has had help to think it all right he should."

"But, Joe, how is this all going to be brought around, do you suppose. There is no telling any thing about what it is all going to cost, I don't know how a body is ever going to see through it."

"Why, we shall have to count the cost for one year, and then calculate to meet the expense."

"But we don't want to lose any part of the farm."

"No, no, we couldn't afford that for he will be one of us just the same to want things. But if he must go to college, likely we can take a little from here and there, of this and that, and in time raise the sum. It will, you see, only be gradually required. The poultry will amount to considerable this season, for I guess there are more turkeys, ducks and chickens over to the further barn than one man would want to count in a whole day. I don't know but we could spare that white-face cow this fall."

"I think you are right, Joe, and I don't know as we would miss that old crooked horned brindle."

"Not very much, I guess, Susan. When all things are once reckoned we'd find the means could be mustered together without disturbing us much. The worst part is to trust him off among strangers."

"Hadn't we best call him in to hear what he will say, once more?"

“I think it would be well, Susan.”

Sylvester was then summoned to appear before his sorrowing parents, who had wept until their eyes were swollen, and with hearts palpitating tried first in an affectionate manner to alienate his mind from the hard lot of parish pleasing to that of pleasurable retirement. Failing in that they turned to find appalling influence, such as was calculated to pierce his heart and fill him with fear and overwhelming discouragements, but it was all in vain. He straightened himself before them with an air of dove-like meekness and rehearsed to them that portion of scripture which reads: “The Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.” “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”

“Susan, wife, our boy is too much for us. He plays with a high hand.”

“I see, Joe, he don’t use any common weapon; law, we’ll have to give him up.”

“If you say so, we will then calculate that way,” and reaching forward Mr. Kinkade took his wife’s hand in his, saying, “what is done must be unitedly done.”

For a moment heart answered to heart, whilst Sylvester stood looking hopefully and prayerfully on. When the response was uttered, “He shall go,” Sylvester, as quick as thought, rushed forward,

clasped the hands that were still joined, saying, "God bless you!" and lovingly kissed them.

Then, as though in answer to Him who said, "Peace, be still," they quieted down with a calm serenity, strange in its nature, but clear in its conception. The wheel had turned, the revolution was made.

During those days of preparation in which he was being fitted for college life, and whilst their hearts were willing, still before them was the parting hour like a dread calamity.

"Dear mother," said Sylvester one day, as she was looking tearfully forward to the last farewell, "were we to know that at that time I was to be taken to eternity's shore, you could the more reasonably dread, but as it is, we are only to be parted for a time, we hope to meet again. It can justly be compared to the laborer who goes forth in the morning to his daily toil, to return in the evening, bringing with him his gotten gain. In like manner I expect to go, and return, bringing with me rich fruits wrought by labor, having my father and you to help me, subsequently to share with me in the joys of a toil-gathered harvest." With his eyes still affectionately raised to his mother, he reminded her of Him who after having been sought and found by His parents, in reply to them said, "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?"

"Mother, my Master's call must be obeyed, that I may say with peace, He called me, and I followed on."

The days rapidly passed. The last thing to be done was finished. The large well-packed trunk was filled with every necessary article that could be

thought of as being in any way useful to him, and he patiently awaited the last dawning for a season in his old familiar home.

It came, and he was up among the first at the crowing of the cock, beautiful in appearance as the dew-laden lily. How differently he felt from others of the family as Aunt Susan said, "Instead of Sylvester being down-hearted and doubting like, he is as full and as fresh as a morning glory." That sweet glow upon his face continued with now and then a word suitably spoken to assure them of his fortitude and fervency, until the little square-box lumber wagon was drawn up before the door by two heavy horses. When the trunk had been thrown aboard and Sylvester had shaken hands and kissed each one good-bye, and after having taken his seat in the wagon he raised his hat and cheerfully said, "Blessed is every one who feareth the Lord, who walketh in His way."

As the wheels turned and hurried him away, Aunt Susan and the girls stood watching with their aprons to their faces, wiping the fast falling tears, and the boys using their shirt sleeves, until he could no longer be seen in the distance. Through the special agency of Rev. E. Finley, Sylvester's home during his college course had been previously secured, at no limited sum, in the family of one of the leading members of the faculty.

CHAPTER XXVI.

To follow Sylvester we find him in a state of tranquillity, hopefully awaiting the progress that was hastening him onward to his new home in a stranger's house.

The journey required no particular length of time to accomplish it, if exempt from mishaps and casualties, and as nothing of the kind occurred the train soon reached the depot, in sight of the college grounds and magnificent buildings.

Unknown to Sylvester the Rev. E. Finley had forwarded to the professor a photograph by which he would be recognized as soon as he appeared on the platform at the car door, and as the picture was an excellent resemblance, together with the written description, Sylvester was caught almost before he could alight from the train with such warmth and separable distinction that for a moment he felt seriously alarmed for his personal safety, thinking he had fallen into the hands of a kidnapper.

"Ho, ho, gentleman, you are too fast," cried Sylvester in an excited tone, "do you think to blind me by your affection? I have my allotted destination assigned me, and beg you to release me," meanwhile eagerly wrenching himself free from the grasp by which he was being held.

"Pardon me," said the kind-hearted professor. "I have no impure motive, but must acknowledge I departed from the rules of decorum, not from the effect of failures in my ordinary practice, or will-

fully done, but from an over-charged sensibility in reference to you particularly. I take you for Mr. Kinkade of Kingumton," meantime taking from the side pocket of his coat a photograph which he presented him, with an air of dignity and politeness.

Sylvester could scarcely believe his eyes when he beheld a photograph of himself. After looking at it for a moment, he raised his eyes inquiringly, and in an undertone asked, "Then are you Professor Gregnal, to whom I have been introduced by letter? And was this picture forwarded to you by Rev. Bro. Finley? I had no knowledge of his having any thing of the kind in his possession."

"I believe he was an active agent in having it placed in my hands, that I might not mistake you on your arrival. I am the Professor Gregnal whom you wish to find. And since receiving the photograph and reading the historical details as they were given me of you, I have been constantly reaching out after you with enthusiasm. I had been impatiently awaiting your arrival, and as soon as I caught sight of you, I was assured in my own mind that you were Sylvester as they call you. And it was this ardent desire to seize you that made the attempt on my part alarming to you."

By this time Sylvester felt perfectly satisfied that he had met with the right one, and after a hearty shaking of hands, he was escorted by the professor to his new home, where the incident was related, and many times afterward, with great merriment. Mrs. Gregnal was equally as well pleased with the looks and appearance of their new guest as her husband. "He seems to possess as much wisdom as the wise," she feelingly remarked.

“Yes,” was the reply, “he does certainly possess a very peculiar charm. His manner of expression is eloquent for one of his years; we have reason to feel thankful that it is our privilege to know him, and have him with us. We will favor him with one of our best rooms and make him in every way as comfortable as we can.”

“As I judge him from sight and hearing there will be nothing left undone that I can do,” added Mrs. Gregnal forcibly. Then after a little planning and a few changes were made, Sylvester was invited to his room. As he was about to cross the threshold he halted with a look of surprise and astonishment. “This is not to be my room?” said he.

“Does it please you?” asked Mrs. Gregnal.

“Please me! this is more than pleasing. It delights me, I am almost afraid I shall lose myself and become indolent if I am indulged in such comforts as this,” pointing down to a beautiful cushioned self-rocker.

“That is for your tired hours,” said Mrs. Gregnal, when you shall need relaxation from study. We give you for your comfort a variety. This one,” said she, as she neared it, “you can adjust to suit whatever position you choose. It can be made a very desirable seat at the desk, or otherwise as you like.”

After giving him such instructions as were necessary and assuring him that they felt for him an ardent attachment, and that they should expect him to share with them in their enjoyments as one equal with themselves, and whatever his want or wish might be, to feel at liberty to make it known to them, as unto his own parents, they bade him good

evening and left the room. Immediately after having been left alone Sylvester amused himself by taking a general survey of his apartment, viewing the different ornaments with great admiration; the beautiful carpet with its rich colors, the handsome bedstead, all the equipment for convenience and enjoyment, which was to him far beyond anything his young eyes had ever seen, or his imagination conceived. Then, with a great amount of genuine satisfaction he settled himself to pen a descriptive view of his room and its contents to his parents. He gave them a full account of his journey and what he saw by the way; the incident at the depot that marked his arrival with special amusement. He dwelt largely upon the necessity of a well calculated arrangement always, and the priceless value of a photograph. He spoke in high terms of Professor Gregnal as one whom he believed to be eminently useful, and one who would be to him a constant and confiding friend. Of Mrs. Gregnal he said, "Mother, I think she has a heart like yours."

In conclusion he said his reasons for gratitude were innumerable since Providence had marked out for him so happy a lot.

"Make me assured of your kind remembrance of me, by your oft-repeated communications," etc., after which he folded the sheets, enclosed them in an envelope and retired for the night.

At early dawn he awoke, and remembered that there were several little duties to which he should turn his attention. A review of his letter was necessary; a few additions were yet to be made, and without fail it must be at the postoffice in time to

go out in the first mail. There was, as he saw, no time to lose, and at the breakfast hour his first letter home had been mailed, and he was as nearly as possible in readiness to accompany the professor to the college where he was interested by being shown the different departments of which the library was the one best suited to his taste. It afforded him great satisfaction on being told that he could take his choice and read whichever book was most interesting to him, and if any work was found, which he could not comprehend, it would be explained to him as a cheerful privilege, rather than a formal duty.

How beneficially the first week passed away. He could turn to where he already had noted in his diary some important facts such as he should be pleased to look back upon in later years. He had thought much of the incidents that might happen during his College course and had prepared himself for them, perhaps as much so, if not more, than most persons would who were about to take a trip around the world. One thing of particular moment to him was the differences he had so soon to learn in human nature. He had not cast a glance into the future with a single thought that there would be an embarrassment of any kind with which to struggle after he had overcome the home difficulties, and become permanently settled to pursue his study for the ministry. But, alas! he soon found it to be no uncommon thing for Satan to dwell in structures made with hands. That upon one common level, and under the same banner of Christian influence with those whose hearts were devotedly attached to the cause of honor and religious integrity, were

those too, whose hearts were apparently petrified, whom he was destined to meet, and into whose society he was frequently thrown, even to the depths of their unwise heroism, so much so that he had to battle with reason and repeated temptations which were to him a trial of his faith, and he was glad to knowingly remember that on

“The stem on which the thorns were grown
The sweet and beauteous rose had blown.”

In a conversation with Professor Gregnal, he said, “I exceedingly fear and tremble lest I be destroyed by the destroyer. Doubtless I should be, were it not that I have ‘steadfastly set my face to go to Jerusalem.’”

The Professor with serious tone and winning smile, gently laid one hand upon his shoulder with the encouragement, “The all-wise, abiding One gave us an assurance when he said, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’”

After the lapse of a few days, on his return from recitation, he found in the postoffice a letter of more than ordinary size, and recognizing the handwriting, he rapidly made his way to his room with a heart palpitating with joyful expectation of home news.

First, on unfolding the sheet he found various and many pressed flowers, such as he recognized as having grown in the old familiar yard, each with a small attached slip of paper, with the name of the sister or brother who had selected and pressed it with care. Also, a few words lovingly penned in a neat fine hand. As he looked them over piece by piece, how he wept, but those tears were tears of

gratitude for the manifestation of their kind brotherly and sisterly love. Before reading his eyes rested upon the print of a hand written across it, "Mother's hand," "Mother's hand!" he exclaimed aloud, almost terrified, then, after a few moments' consideration he quieted down and read:

MY DEAR BOY SYLVESTER:

Your letter came right straight through, and all of us was almost tickled to death, but when I came to read it out loud so they could all hear, ^y~~l~~aw, I choked and had to hand it over to Katie Ann. In a little while she was as bad as myself, and passed it over to Lucas and he finished reading it all through. What a blessed thing it was that I had Elder Finley send up that photograph. ^Ila, I thought of some just such things that might happen you. There is no safety in being off on the cars alone, or stopping off among strangers. Oh, I am so thankful that man had that picture, and now you are there all right; if they can only seem like good warm friends, what a blessed good thing it will be. If there is any thing you want, you must let a body know it. You needn't be afraid to spend money, your father and I have been talking it over, that if there should be any lack, we can part with a yoke of oxen, as there will be about thirty young head to break this winter. Oh, my dear boy, you are near enough my heart to lay my hand on you every day, and so I thought I would just mark it down. All of us will fix a little flower for you out of that old flower bed you used to fuss with so much. We are all of us as well as when you went away. Now I'll leave off writing. Write home often as you can have time, and be sure to come as soon as school is out.

My precious child, good-bye,

MOTHER.

P. S. Father says he thinks of you every hour in the day.

Few persons aside from those under the same circumstances could realize the value of this letter to Sylvester. The slip of paper upon which Aunt Susan had stamped the print of her hand was to

Sylvester of great prize, so much so that ever after those who visited his room could see fastened to the glass on the inside of the book-case the paper upon which was the imprint of a hand, with the words, "Mother's hand." Also, all the little pressed flowers were carefully kept in a neat basket given him by Mrs. Gregnal for that purpose.

Among the many various incidents that tend to either make glad or gloom the student's heart, there are, at least but few calculated to particularly interest the mind of the reading public. It is therefore unnecessary that we should closely follow Sylvester through his college course, but simply say his home during his entire stay was in the family of Professor Gregnal, whose attachment to him became very strong. He was the favorite among his classmates, and so universally esteemed and respected that he was looked upon as a monument of purity and perfection. During the few years that were required to get possession of that knowledge by which he was to become established upon the grounds of ministerial usefulness, he visited his beloved kindred as frequently and surely as one vacation followed the other. As he would say, the pleasure he derived in going home could have no equal. It would be pleasing to relate the many interesting events connected with his visits home that we shall be obliged to omit. There is, however, one in particular that we cannot pass unnoticed. Some two years previous to the one in which he graduated, whilst on a visit home, he was expected to fill the pulpit in the old home church in Kingumton.

The arrangement had been made between Sylvester and Rev. E. Finley unknown to any other indi-

vidual until the time came. When the first mention was made to Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan it threw them into a sad state of excitement. He would break down they were sure, and for a while felt they could not, dare not go to hear him for fear they should see him make some unearthly blunder that would mortify them almost to death.

Said Aunt Susan, "You have not got to be a preacher yet, Sylvester; you know you have not got near through with all there is for you to learn. You had best wait until you get a little older and stronger, I think, and more used to standing up before people, and having them all staring right at you."

Sylvester turned with a smile and said, "Mother, were I to fall, one man could pick me up."

"Yes, but then I should feel so 'shamed, I think, Sylvester, that I will stay at home."

"No, no, mother! You must go. Should there be anything that would cause me to faint, it would be because my parents desert me. Your fear is your lack of faith. It is written, 'by faith ye stand.'"

It was at length decided that the entire family should go. The seats were free in the old Kingumton church, and according to the ordinary practice, members of one family would be scattered here and there in the audience room wherever they happened to get. Aunt Susan's fears and apprehensions were such that she wanted her little band near together, as she said, "We must get a place for all our children close by, and you, Joe, 'long beside of me."

At the regular hour for service, the church was filled to its utmost capacity. Special care had been taken to secure seats, such as were the most desirable for the family of Mr. Kinkade, and where, in

due time they were snugly seated, with an unnatural look, which manifested itself still more and more, when their eyes followed Sylvester as he passed down the aisle in company with Elder Finley, and up the pulpit steps.

A broad foot-stool had been prepared for him, and as he took his stand upon it, it could not have been said of him, "you are an inferior little mortal."

Far from it, every eye was charmed, and every heart was made tender to the touch of words. He stood before them in appearance not otherwise than as one tempered with the spirit of grace. He chose as the foundation of his remarks words found in Revelation 20: 12. "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works."

He spoke in very tender and touching language of that day as described in the text, which completes the termination and seals the unchangeable condition of man. He spoke largely on the incarnation of the Son of God, His special love and labor for fallen man, and clearly presented the plan of salvation. He referred back to the antediluvian age of the world, and spoke of the different tribes and their genealogies, the historical books of scripture, and the books of God that were being kept, the record of man. He dwelt largely upon the Book of Life, the beauties of heaven, the dwelling place of the most high God, the prince of peace; also, the sure abiding place for the lovers of God. He told them it was the lovers of God whose names were

written in the Book of Life, those who had become justified by faith, and were heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. He dwelt long upon the sad condition of the unconverted, and the dismal fate of being shut out away from the lamp of God, and the light of heaven. He spoke of the depravity of the human heart, and the subtilty of Satan in winning man to conciliate with him, and wander far from the path of rectitude; but he told them that Christ, the great Pattern, had marked out a sure and living way, and His desire for man was, that they should allow Him to be a lamp to their feet and a light to their path. He reminded them in tender accents that each one must stand or fall for himself. That each one must answer at the bar of God for the deeds done in the body, and be judged as the text says, "Out of the things which were written in the books according to their works."

In conclusion, he referred the minds of his hearers, those who were in Christ, to look forward to that great and notable day of the Lord as one much to be desired, as it was that one in which they were to be permanently crowned with immortal glory and made to walk the golden streets of the new Jerusalem.

With a desire to still further interest and instruct he described the material of which the wall of the City was made, giving to his hearers the color, beauty and durability of each of the twelve species of stone; also the dimensions of the City.

"We read," said he, "he that spoke with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the City, and he measured the City with the reed 12,000 furlongs.' Twelve thousand furlongs are equal to 1,500 miles,

making the City cover 2,250,000 square miles of the earth's surface. Being equal in height must have been 1,500 miles high, which would give 3,375,000,000 cubic miles which the City contained. Then each building in the City would allow 480,000 stories, each one rod high. Such is the vastness of the City of our God. 'Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life and may enter in by the gates into the City.' "

When Sylvester had done speaking the whole congregation seemed awe-stricken and amazed. Rev. Finley arose and pronounced the benediction, immediately after which Sylvester was thronged by the multitude with greeting and shaking of hands. So highly was he appreciated by his hearers, and so affectionately did they cling to him that it was not the privilege of his parents to have him accompany them home until after the evening service.

By the family of Mr. Kinkade there was scarcely a word spoken until after they reached their destination, then much to the gratification of all present, Uncle Joe straightened himself up with his peculiar air, and said: "Susan, wife, what I have heard our boy say to-day is worth more to me than all the wheat I gathered off the forty-acre fallow field."

"Yes, I guess so too," said Aunt Susan. "I *bet*! if I don't think Sylvester is going to make a right down smart little minister." The children joined in having a word to say in his behalf, having been, as they were, delighted with his appearance in the pulpit for the first time in their home church. During the evening, soon after they had returned from service, while Sylvester was engaged in reading, and

Aunt Susan was attending to some necessary duties in the kitchen, she began to think over something she had heard at church, very seriously. She at length turned and walked through the rooms near to where Sylvester was sitting, and with one corner of her apron in her hand she halted with a stern considerate look for a moment, then spoke out very meaningly, "you know, Sylvester, what you said about the size of Jerusalem."

"Certainly."

"Now do you suppose you got that all ciphered out exactly right?"

"Oh yes, mother, that was ciphered before my day."

"Ho, ho," shouted Frankie, "that was what I was watchin' to hear."

"What we learn is that which others have known before us," Sylvester meekly replied.

It was an indisputable fact that his growth in knowledge was far beyond the most sanguine expectation. He not only surprised, but greatly surpassed those his senior in years.

His predominant influence as a Christian, his amiability of character, his intellectual qualifications, all combined to make him one of the first in the sphere of eminence; and he graduated with honor.

CHAPTER XXVII.

While we should dearly love to cling closely to Sylvester and follow him on through his first ecclesiastical duties as pastor, we are obliged to leave him for the time being and return to where we left Sophia at Uncle Sammy Smith's.

"Saul, I really feel anxious. Do you have any idea why you are sent for so immediately?"

"I can form no definite conclusion. I judge it, however, to be something of importance."

As there was no time to lose, he was obliged to eat rapidly and hasten to the depot. It was plain to all eyes that some terrible burden was weighing heavily upon the mind of Sophia. Not feeling at liberty to ask for an explanation, but if possible to interest her, Uncle Sammy resumed his conversation.

"Then Saul is a double-fisted lawyer, is he? I am sorry he had to go so soon, I should like to have seen more of him."

"Yes, Saul is number one in Copperville."

"I should judge so, to look at him. Most likely holds a good deal of power."

"He is very influential, indeed. He has done more business, and made more friends since he has been in Copperville than most persons would in five times as long."

"Must be pretty honorable then, I guess."

"Why, he believes if a person wishes to become successful in the world, they must possess religious

integrity. He says that is the only sure ground upon which can be planted all that is fruit bearing."

"Then he's more than likely a church member."

"Yes, indeed, he is alive in the church, you would soon have learned that, had he remained. He is one of the so-called seed sowers."

"I want to know! His father was a great orthodox man, but I've not seen him in a good many years, not since Saul was a little shaver. I am glad to know he makes a worthy, wise and witty man. He is a smart looking fellow, any one can see at once he has the genuine metal in him. I expect then had he staid, he would have been for trying to change my views, but I tell you, Sophia, I am pretty well set on this predestination question, or election as I sometimes speak, it's all the same thing. I will tell you how I look at it. Moses was found in the bulrushes, now if God had not foreordained that he should be saved by being placed there, he would not have been. In that one place we have a very plain figure of predestination, and there are lots of just such in the Bible.

Then beside that, I set my mark on a good many close around home. Not long ago a man died, they told me he was a church member away back, but I never see anything like it in all the years I knowed him. When that man came to die the neighbors said he died a triumphant death, and if he did, there could be nothing any surer than that he was one of the elect. Right on the other hand, I have knowed folks who lived right in the heart of a meeting house, but when they came to die, they died mourning because they hadn't been better, and it proved to my mind that they had not happened to be members of

the elect body; so it made no difference with them, they were lost at last after having lived a self denying life.”

At this point in the conversation Aunt Tabbathy put in a word by saying she believed in just such doctrine as young Elder Kinkade preached, and that is, faith in Christ. “According to that then, faith does the whole thing, and that is why some folks die such triumphant deaths. It’s because they had an internal faith that no one could see.”

“No, that is not as he says, but plainly declares that faith without works is dead. The Bible says it. It must be both faith and works; then, as I see it, if some folks have, and others have not faith, it is because faith is given to some and not to others.”

“I think,” said Aunt Tabbathy, “that faith is given to those who have a desire for it and who will take pleasure in asking for it of Him who giveth.”

“I can explain it, father,” said a ten year old boy. “Just look here,” holding up a short piece of tin pipe, “Can you see me through this ’ere pipe?”

“Yes, Thaddie, I can see you plainly.”

Then wadding up one end, he said again: “Can you see me now?”

“No, for you have stopped up one end of it.”

“Well, that is just how you do, you can’t see through the pipe of Christianity to the great center of truth because you stop up one end with the wad of your unbelief.”

After a short pause, said Uncle Sammy: “Well, Sophia, I have lived to see the day that my boys get ahead of me. That boy is one of Elder Kinkade’s converts. He baptized him. We would not have allowed him to handle one of the other boys,

but Thaddie is a slender light little fellow. What, Sophia, do you think about these things?"

"I don't think anything about them. I never bother my brain with such matters. I expect, like all others, to die some time, but I put that a great ways ahead. I don't believe in this thinking and talking all the time about dying."

"Then you are not a church member?"

"No, nor do I expect to be. I am as good outside as others are in it."

"How do you and Saul agree, then?"

"We do not, we always disagree in almost everything. We are friends but scarcely ever see alike."

"If that is so, I am most afraid you will stand a poor chance with this little Elder Kinkade of whom I have been telling you. He is a great favorite with everyone here. We believe there have been several additions to the church on his account. He has only been pastor a short time, but has gained the good will of the rich and poor, the high and low, of every rank and position. We can't help but note the difference. He used to be talked about as little, small, tiny, etc., but of late you only hear him spoken of as short or low of stature; as I see it, the thing shows for itself, that there are any amount of ladies whose heads overtop his by far who would to-day feel proud could they have the privilege of becoming Mrs. Kinkade. I recommend that you keep middling smooth, Sophia, you may like the looks of him, and to get him you would have to be pretty fair, I will assure you of that."

Sophia had grown dull. Her heart was in Copperville. She could not enjoy the conversation, neither could she hide her feelings, although she tried hard.

When the first invitation was given for retirement, she readily accepted it, and immediately after having been left alone, she hastily penned a short letter to her mother, and asked for a speedy reply.

Early the next morning Sophia with Cousin Fanny walked to the postoffice with the letter, to be sure it went out the first mail, then they walked as far around town as the length of time would admit and returned at the breakfast hour. What she saw was so refreshing to her that she felt in a much happier mood than she had been the previous evening.

“We will give you your choice,” said Aunt Tabbathy, “ride or rest this forenoon. This afternoon there will be many in to call on you, mostly relatives. It is pretty generally known that you are here, and all feel anxious to see you. We often speak of our Copperville friends, and we consider it quite a treat to have the privilege of knowing them. We shall endeavor to do all in our power to make your stay pleasant. We do not want you to return with regrets for having been with us.”

“I shall have justice done me, I am quite sure of that, but must acknowledge I have not so far done justice to myself; I did really feel discomfited in consequence of Saul’s unlooked-for dispatch.”

Why Sophia should feel particularly disturbed in consequence of Saul’s business was a question, and one discussed only between Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy.

As Sophia preferred to ride it gave them an excellent opportunity to work festal preparations unknown to her. She having been so low-spirited, it was their united opinion that a surprise might have a favorable effect, and for this reason they took the

greater pleasure in so doing. It was secretly arranged that the drive should be long enough to occupy considerable time, and that they should stop at the home of one of the relatives for dinner, who lived in the furthestmost district, that their return might be at the general assembling of the guests, and but a little prior to the banqueting hour.

It was a lovely morning. The wind blew a gentle gale; the air was fragrant with sweet brier, spearmint and pennyroyal that grew in clusters along the highway and thickets, when Guy Smith, with his new cousin, for politeness' sake chose the most romantic line of drive known in the vicinity. It led through dense woodlands, around huge hills with their rocky sides and precipices, over sluice-ways and log built wagon roads, with scarcely a dwelling house for miles to be seen, and but few fields of stubble or ripened corn. Guy could not have chosen a better plan to have elevated his cousin's mind and stamped upon her memory a brighter spot than this one. To Sophia the new wild romantic scenery overwhelmed those unpleasant reflections and drove them from her mind.

But a surprise was yet to come. As they turned the last hillside, they came in sight of a magnificent dwelling, whose occupants were of those who helped fill out the long line of relationship.

"Heaven bless me!" she exclaimed. "How truly grand! Guy, is there as much style in the house as is to be seen outside?"

"Wait just a minute and you shall see," was his reply, as he snapped the whip and drove with speed to the horse block.

The friendly greeting, the cheerful faces, the

beautiful rooms with their rich carpets and costly furniture all helped increase the glow that had kindled in her eye. Sophia was overjoyed; she was sure of a pleasant stay there, and no doubt that is as it would have proved, had it not happened that she caught a whisper of something being planned that was not told to her. This caused a little disquiet on her part, but she did not allow herself to interrogate in the matter. She was, however, highly pleased with the looks and appearance of her new relatives, and at the appointed hour, with the promise of seeing them again soon, bade them good day.

She did see them again the same afternoon, but where, at what point, or turn in the road she and Cousin Guy had been passed and left in the rear was a question. But there they were, the very faces of those she had bidden good day only an hour previous, among the first to be seen awaiting their arrival near the gate at Uncle Sammy's.

The surprise was wonderful, and so must be supposed the secret which had produced a feeling of disquiet was at once openly presented, and more especially so, as she entered the hall in sight of the many others whom she had not before seen, and caught a slight glimpse of the extensive table setting. She rapidly hastened to her room in company with Fanny, who soon made her acquainted with their object, as being one calculated to promote her happiness and increase her acquaintance. Sophia was highly pleased, and with this sensation at heart, she was soon tastefully dressed and in ample readiness to go down into the parlor, where she had the gratification of being introduced to a vast number of uncles, aunts and cousins, some few of whom were

first, second and others even third in the rank of relationship.

Sophia understood perfectly well that she was being looked upon with superiority, such as she was not accustomed to ordinarily. To be truthful, according to the common mode of speaking, "they all took a shine," and with this glow of estimation in her behalf, she received many compliments which combined with her already egotistical self-esteem, and aided largely in bringing around that which might be referred to by those more familiar with her, as one of her sunny-faced days, for the reason that she ever had a peculiar habit of showing outright the presiding sentiment of her mind, whether joy or sorrow. A few minutes prior to being seated at the table, Sophia caught a distinct view of some one strikingly beautiful to her, and without pausing to consider she exclaimed aloud, and said, "Why, what sweet-faced little boy is that, is he a cousin, too?" Almost before the syllables had died upon her lips, Uncle Sammy turned around, and with an air of joy advanced toward the incoming one and cordially invited him to walk in, after which the introduction of Rev. Sylvester Kinkade to Miss Sophia Brown ensued. Even a minute description of all that was pleasing and engaging during the short stay of about two hours at Uncle Sammy's would fill no small space in the history of our story. But we must leave it unnoticed, only giving the mere sketch as an occasion suitably compared to a holiday festival. So greatly was the occasion appreciated by Sophia that she enquired, "If such was the beginning, what was she to expect the ending would be."

"I have it ciphered out in my mind," said Uncle

Sammy. "You will return with more than you brought. In my opinion, you have made a very favorable impression. I don't believe there is another one in one hundred miles that could have produced the same sensation you have. Why, you didn't even go to the postoffice without being noticed and enquired about. I tell you, Sophia, your coming here is going to be a dangerous thing for you."

Uncle Sammy had not the most remote idea of the depth his language fathomed. To Sophia the conversation was like striking off a match. Her mind went whirling back to the day Saul entered her sick room only a short time prior to their departure for Kingumton. She reconsidered his remark that "there was sunshine all over the world," and her own silly way of turning his well intended meaning into frivolity.

"What the termination will be," she silently said to herself "I can not distinctly see. This little Elder Kinkade is a sweet looking fellow, but it would be woeful to have him for a husband." With the belief that mother's dreams were indicative, and that there was being held in the future a golden goblet that she must sometime, and before long, hold in her own hand, the fountain of her expectation seemed deepened and she became more and more brilliant. The first few days were principally spent riding, receiving calls, making new acquaintances, with nothing of moment to speak of after the banquet until Sophia received her first letter from home. Whilst we cannot copy it entire we must necessarily communicate a portion of its contents.

Aunt Sabrina had been pleased with Sophia's note,

so timely written and more especially as it agreed with Saul's narrative after his return. She assured Sophia that it would be useless to think of Dr. Green as a friend, that she guessed he had tried to have for specials, every one whom he had looked upon with admiration, until there were several to whom he had been engaged, and three he was to have married in "flowery June." She told her old Mrs. Joel Amos had been over with her thousand troubles, and that it was the truth, their Nancy had gone crazy. That the people were determined to find Green and bring him to justice, and that was why Saul had to be sent for right away, as nothing could be done without him.

Sophia was urged not to speak of Dr. Green, at all events, not to have any one know he had been her friend. She told her it was true that Tom had accepted a position in the First National Bank, and that Aunt Delilah had been provided for handsomely, and that the family conferred upon her the honor of being called Mother. She instructed Sophia to confide in her above all others, and reassured her of her constancy as a friend and mother. Said she had reason to believe her going to Kingumton would be to her a success as she still continued to dream that which denoted good luck and happiness.

While the letter afforded Sophia some degree of satisfaction, it also contained much she could not relish. She would have heard anything else of Aunt Delilah than that she had been fortunately favored by the revered gentleman to whom she had been married. The thought of Tom's success and elevation was to her as irritating as a mustard plaster and more painful by far. The thought of surrendering

up all hope of ever becoming Mrs. Green, caused an irritability of mind, and she resolved to make a strike and accomplish something that would result in good fortune to her before leaving Kingumton.

The change in Sophia's looks and deportment together with her reluctant disposition to allow Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy the privilege of knowing any news the letter contained, not even in regard to Saul, of whom they so much cared to hear, in connection with a short notice in the "Daily News," gave them to understand the changes to which Sophia was so soon seen to be subject, had a meaning, as well as that her amiability of character had not the soundness they had hoped for in the beginning. They were not willing, however, that a word should be spoken, or an insinuation dropped that would tend to eclipse her prosperity, but in every possible way endeavor to cheerfully encourage her onward with the belief, that, whatever the ill might be, there was always room for improvement. At Uncle Sammy's during the week there was a continual coming and going, similar to that of a public inn. In this particular Sophia was much delighted, as it gave her a chance to see many she would not otherwise have seen. Not only so, but she came in possession of all the leading topics current in the town.

"You are having friends from afar," said a clever-spoken lady one day.

"Yes, Cousin Sophia," replied Aunt Tabbathy, pointing toward her.

"And husband?"

"She is not married."

"Excuse me," said the lady, "I merely formed

that idea by seeing a stranger this morning on the walk with your husband.”

The crimson hue deeply tinted Sophia's face in one moment, and without stopping to think twice, she sprang hastily from her seat and in a few minutes she was on the walk near the hotel buildings, and on to the depot where she remained until train time, confidently assured in her own mind that the stranger was no other than Dr. Green in quest of her, but to her astonishment caught sight of one whom she recognized as an officer from Dunberry. Sinking down sorrowfully, she remembered the statement as given her by her mother and it was her solemn impression that instead of Dr. Green being in quest of her, he was the one being sought by a Dunberry detective. With the hope that no notice had been taken of her by the officer she speedily retraced her steps homeward, making a short call in one of the business houses to procure a few articles as an excuse to cover her “thoughtless move,” as she termed it; but fortunate or contrariwise as the case may be considered, the keen, observing eye of the detective had been set upon her critically while on the walk before reaching the depot. And just as sure as that stars shine in a moonlight night, just so sure he studied out her destination, and before leaving town confidentially put a flea in Uncle Sammy's ear. This information tended to confirm their previous suspicion. They believed there had been a mishap of some kind, but whatever it might be, it would be wise in them to keep prudently still, with the hope that her visit might have a happy termination. It was also their opinion that the story might have been heightened in its representation,

the truth of which would be known when Saul came to accompany her home.

It so happened through a roundabout communication that Saul became acquainted with the report that one of Dr. Green's favorites who was stopping in Kingumton had been judged from her appearance to be on the lookout for him. This aroused the feelings of Saul to an almost indescribable extent, but after considering the matter carefully, he wrote Sophia kindly and affectionately, sent a copy of the report and sincerely commended her to cheerfulness and stability of mind, also giving her the assurance that she would never again see the face of Dr. Green. At this time also he addressed a confidential letter to Aunt Tabbathy, giving her an idea of Sophia's general turn of mind, and his desire to promote her well-being. He revealed to her the partiality with which she had regarded one, who had introduced himself into Copperville as Dr. Green, and to whom she had been betrothed, and to whom her affections had become so permanently riveted that they were apparently inseparable. He gave her his established opinion of Dr. Green, as one too deeply dyed with villainy to even dare remain on the ground of the American Continent. This statement at first sadly harrowed the feelings of Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy, but after much private conversation, they both determined to persevere in well doing, and if possible, be instrumental in officiating in her behalf; hoping a change might take place agreeable to Saul's judgment.

The days of the week came and went and among the different family connections Sophia was kept tossed about, but not permitted to be long away

from under the light of Aunt Tabbathy's eye. In time, it was observed that Sophia appeared quite willing to accompany her cousin to church and Sabbath school, not only as one going simply for company's sake, but she began to take part as one having become deeply interested. Her act of attending the sacred service was encouraging to Aunt Tabbathy, who was an ardent lover of Christianity. She therefore addressed a letter to Saul, saying she thought it would be utterly wrong to remove Sophia from Kingumton, that the influence she was under seemed to be having a glorious effect.

Saul, delighted with the report, was more than glad to have her remain, and congratulated Aunt Tabbathy for her motherly success and guardianship. Sophia became so interested and active in every point of duty, that Elder Kinkade's calls were more frequently made than usual, apparently from a sense of his obligation to his Maker as an instructor, and so closely were his remarks confined to generalities that even the most severe critic could not have seen any distinction made in her favor.

As Aunt Tabbathy said later, she never discovered wherein Elder Kinkade spoke three more words to Sophia than to her own daughters, and in no perceivable way whatever was manifested the least intimation of a forthcoming relationship, and she was sure their mutual understanding must have grown from that silent language which glides unremitting from eye to eye, and heart to heart. But let it be whichever way it may, ere they were aware the fibers of good-will, and social friendship had twined together into one indissoluble knot.

At the period in which the fact was made known

in the family, Uncle Sammy shook his sides with laughter. "Upon my life," said he, "I never would have believed it. I admit I was honest in saying she had made a favorable impression. I believed that, but I supposed the sensation would die out like a flying spark."

As must be supposed, when their affection for each other became known, their mutuality was considered no longer a privacy. When Elder Kinkade called, there was no further need of restraint between the two, and he spent much time in her presence.

While Sophia exhibited no small degree of affection, it was seriously questioned by those who had become familiar with her history. Had Aunt Tabbathy felt more at liberty to express her opinion at the time of the announcement of their engagement, she would have said there was a misrepresentation on the part of Sophia, and that Elder Kinkade was being led blindfolded into that which would sooner or later overthrow his happiness, if not his usefulness. She believed that he was truly enamored with her, but on her part he was simply a makeshift. She distinctly remembered Sophia's remarks the first day of her being with them, and she had no reason to think her particularly changed, but under their influence had hoped she would become so. As she was sure she was not, it was an affliction to Aunt Tabbathy to think Elder Kinkade, the pride and admiration of the parish, should select for a mate one in no way his equal.

It very luckily happened one morning, when Sophia was absent that Elder Kinkade called, and apparently was desirous of consulting Aunt Tabbathy in regard to his future plans. This gave her

a favorable opportunity of ascertaining the very fact she wished to learn. In their conversation she took the privilege to inquire if he felt confident of having made a wise choice, with the assurance that she was very anxious in his behalf.

“Oh yes, yes!” he unhesitatingly replied. “First I found her in a good place. Her looks and appearance charmed me the moment I set my eyes upon her, besides I find her to be all heart.”

“Whilst I would not oppose,” said Aunt Tabba-thy, “I have fears for the reason that I have no proof of her being one suitable for you.”

“In what sense,” he inquired.

“In the confirmation of Christian faith.”

“Oh, but she has become confirmed in the faith, and though she has not yet made a public profession, she is the next thing to it. She is now prepared to take the last step. You know there are those who do sometimes present a thoughtlessness, when it is not their treasured sentiment. She has not been long with you, and she may not have expressed herself to you in a way to have you understand the true worth of her character from a spiritual point of view; but to me, when alone, she has unfolded her whole bosom. You feel, perhaps, as mother does; she thinks because I am short, that I should have a short, chubby wife. I think she appreciates Sophia’s value, judging more from family connection than personal acquaintance, but is not so well pleased for the reason that she is so tall. Height is admirable to me. Sophia possesses some rare beauties, of which that is one. If she can condescend to accept me with my so-called deformity, I have the greater reason to appreciate her.”

While Rev. Sylvester Kinkade was as true in his love and admiration for Sophia as a mother for her off-spring, Aunt Tabbathy's wisdom and previous knowledge was all that was needed to know the depth of her piety. She had reason to believe the rise and progress of her religion was based upon the man rather than his Maker. A cloud of impending sorrow hung over her mind, and she wondered why it should be permitted, that one so void of genuine religious integrity should become joined to and under the same seal with him, that beloved servant of Christ in his Apostleship.

According to the best of her belief it could not be expected a change of feeling would take place on the part of Elder Kinkade; and though it was a tangled mystery, it was the opinion of all interested that it was one destined long to remain. As it was predicted the trip to Kingumton would be a success to her, very truly ere the autumn had died into winter Sophia returned home to have made ready all that was necessary for her marriage, and whether happy or otherwise we will not say beyond that the oncoming holiday she was again in Kingumton the wedded wife of Rev. Sylvester Kinkade.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Strange to say, upon that lovely Christmas morning when the early incoming train brought Rev. Sylvester Kinkade and his newly wedded bride into Kingumton, there were no hearts ready at Father Kinkade's to exclaim, "Hail, glorious morn!"

Though Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan had a deep melancholy sensation at heart, they had purposed for Sylvester's sake to spare no pains whatever, but make every preparation in their power for a pleasant reception, which they did by inviting in as many of their friends as they could possibly accommodate. At an early hour the guests began to assemble with greetings and congratulations, most of whom presented rich, rare and beautiful gifts. As far as could be understood from appearances all were happy-hearted, and as must be supposed there were those who felt extremely so in consequence of the peculiarity of the match which was to many a curiosity. Whilst Rev. Sylvester was dearly beloved, honored and respected, looked upon as a precious little jewel, the sight of him as husband by the side of one as tall as Sophia was rather remarkable, as many expressed it.

The day merrily passed. Mirth and the sound of music was heard. The tables with their choice luxuries and dainties were enjoyed, and no one seemed happier, and more to appreciate the festivity than Sylvester. Late in the afternoon, when Aunt Tab-



“At an early hour the guests began to assemble.”

bathy thought no one was within hearing, she cautiously said to her husband: "This is a delightful entertainment, but to me there is no harmony in the music."

Aunt Susan, who was standing a little back, hidden by a folding door, advanced, saying: "I ~~do~~! if I don't feel exactly that way." That which was current in the mind of Aunt Tabbathy was luckily unknown to Aunt Susan. According to the general belief of the knowing public, the difference in their stature was the only distinction of moment, and that they felt should be all right, if right with them. It was referred to by one of the leading members, that they now had reached a point in the history of the church, in which must be expected a general growth. Mrs. Kinkade, having but so recently become confirmed in the Christian faith, was the better calculated to influence the younger minds, as well as to be a pattern for the older ones, and would without doubt, associate herself with her husband in doing much for the prosperity of Zion. They, having in her all imaginable confidence, and with the belief that there was nothing unlikely or forbidding, but that Elder Kinkade was still to be the same, if not more than ever before, the joy of the parish, the guests, at a suitable hour, bade them good evening with every good wish for their future happiness, that could be expressed.

The first few weeks came and fled away into the past with nothing particular said upon any one subject. Sophia kneeled in prayer, and accompanied her husband to the sanctuary, while he looked upon her with unbroken confidence, true love and admiration. He knew no sorrow, and saw nothing that

foreshadowed regret. Aunt Susan had set in order one of her favorite rooms for their accommodation, and there was nothing left undone to produce quiet or comfort; but on the contrary, everything had been carefully planned to promote their happiness and well being. But ere the winter winds had been kissed by the spring breezes, one lovely Sabbath morning, Sophia arose and with a slight tint dyed upon her cheek said to Sylvester, with an unusual glow in her eyes: "I am very sorry indeed, but it is my duty to say to you that I have not been so absolutely confirmed as to care to live inside the walls of a church all the time. I have never been in the habit of attending church every Sabbath, and shall not expect to any more for having become your wife."

Sylvester arose and stood deathly pale before her; "Were you not expecting to become a living member of the church militant with me, and a co-worker in the service of our heavenly Master? Did you not tell me you had experienced a change of heart?" he asked.

"Yes, but you did not quite get my meaning. I experienced a change of heart when I agreed with you."

"Is it possible," he cried, "did I so misunderstand you? Oh, no, it cannot be! You are but joking. Will you not accompany me to the house of worship to-day? How can I go without you?"

"I may as well tell you to-day as to-morrow, I could, but do not wish to go, and so long as I do not enjoy going I shall not expect to be drawn into it simply to please another, not even my husband. I have ached to tell you this a long time, almost

ever since I first came, but I did hate to. It has really been a dread upon my mind, but I knew it would have to come. We can be happy all the same, if you will allow me the independence I ask, which is, to do or not, as I please."

Rev. Sylvester Kinkade, with his heart lacerated with the keen edge of unremitting misfortune, passed out, and to his parents remarked that he should prefer to walk to the church that morning.

Why he should prefer to walk and his wife remain at home was a question, particularly so, as there had been no complaint of ill-health. Supposing it perfectly correct Aunt Susan looked into Sophia's room to know if she was ill that morning, and the reply was enough to convince her that there was dissatisfaction at heart from some cause. Not wishing to become entangled in any unknown wrong, Aunt Susan left the room with a report to be delivered to Uncle Joe.

After it had been delivered, with a deep sigh he replied, "We must keep back and be careful. By a little looking on we can tell, for we know our boy."

Not feeling the Sabbath was the day to discuss business matters, Rev. Sylvester (as he was more frequently called) devoted his entire attention to reading sacred works, during the intervals in which he was destined to be at home throughout the remainder of the day, leaving Sophia to her own enjoyment, which she seemed to be taking with her pen. Very early the following morning he arose, apparently in deep thought. After breakfast he took Sophia by the hand and asked her to return with him to their room, which she did with an air of dignity.

After being seated, Sylvester said, "If I have

been so mistaken in your representation, it is your duty to explain to me in a way that I may distinctly understand the true sentiment of your mind."

To which she added without hesitancy, "I told you but yesterday, I assure you I have not been converted to Christianity. Neither have I any expectations of ever being. I only went to church while at Uncle Sammy's because they all went. I took part for fun, and to produce excitement."

"Please tell me correctly, what did you wish me to understand your change of heart to be?"

"Why, I changed it from another to you."

"Then you have had a special friend before me?"

"Certainly, friends."

"Such as this is truly heart-rending," said Sylvester. "I have so dearly loved you, I have in no way deceived you. My deformity is visible, no one can mistake me; I had looked upon you as true to me, I had set my heart upon you, my very soul was sealed to you. I had looked upon you as my friend and helpmate, but as I am made to know, I must ever go and come from the sanctuary alone. This will be sad news to communicate to the church. How can I endure it?" said he, and bitterly wept.

"It will not be necessary to speak of me unless they interfere with my business, and should they, the talking I will do. I overheard an old gentleman counting largely on what I was going to be to the church here, the first day, but I said to myself, 'it will not be, until there has come a change in me.' I am honest in what I say. It is just here, I never could endure to hear this eternity question continually discussed. I know I have married you, a minister, and that I am willing you should be, and preach

all you want to, to those who wish to hear you, but when with me, I want you to tuck your religion in your pocket. Besides, here are things that discomfort me, I do not feel satisfied to remain, I did not expect to live in this old-style way. You know, I have always been used to living in town, I cannot be contented to live off out in the country. It could not be expected, where I can see nothing but herds of cattle, grain barns, hay stacks, and every other thing that belongs to a farm home."

"Just look out yonder!" pointing out around to either side of the front yard, "There are about five acres of ground, bordered with tall poplars, and ornamented with ribbon grass, poppies and peonies. Did you ever for one moment suppose such scenery would be enjoyable to me? That which is rich and beautiful, I love much the best."

"We do have most beautiful flowers, and a great variety of them. You could not expect to see flowers in winter."

"Old fashioned ones, I'm told."

Those cruel words! They could not be compared to anything less than the pangs of torture, and beneath their sorrowing weight, Rev. Sylvester bowed, wept and sought a solitary place for thought, spiritual instruction and consolation, to bind up his broken heart. After having remained a considerable length of time by himself, and having a dread to open so sad a subject to his parents, and as his mind was more especially directed to Aunt Tabbathy, he sought her, and unfolded to her the burden of his heart. While she did not think it advisable to reveal to him the indisputable knowledge she had of Sophia, she deeply sympathized with him, and advised

him as best she knew, one thing of which was, for the good of the family, to leave his father's house, and live as retired as was possible for him to do in town, if that would be more pleasing to her. After talking with Aunt Tabbathy for some time, his spirit brightened as one with renewed hope, and he returned home. But all this was no news. Aunt Tabbathy was not surprised. It was no more than she was expecting to hear. She had not only had a foretaste of Sophia for her own satisfaction, but after she had left for Copperville to prepare for her marriage, and a second return to Kingumton, in clearing up the room she had occupied, found several letters written by Aunt Sabrina, which betrayed the depth of her dissimulation. Sylvester was so well understood by his parents that they saw something was not exactly right. They could not mistake it, and not being willing to have the matter hidden, took the privilege of enquiring into it. Sylvester did not think it best to give a full statement, but told them she was not happy in her new country home; that farm scenes were not pleasing to her, and that it was her wish to reside in town. He told them he had called on Aunt Tabbathy, and they had talked the matter over, and it was her opinion that he had better procure rooms in town, and gratify her with a village home.

Aunt Susan could not hide the tears that gathered in her eyes, "My dear child," she exclaimed, "this is a hard beginning, but it may be the best way for you to move off by yourself. You will not be so far off but that you can come home awhile every day. It is plain enough to see she is not satisfied somehow, for when she parades through the house, and around

where the work is being done, a body would think she was lord of the soil, and law! if I know how to stand her."

It took no particular length of time, on the part of the parents, to decide that a change should soon be made without consulting Sophia as to what street or which location would be the most pleasing to her. Indeed, it was but shortly after when they selected according to their own judgment, which was agreeable to that of Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy, a neat cottage but a few doors from the church, and ere Sophia was aware she was invited to gather up her movables and accept a transfer to a more desirable home. This produced on the part of Sophia quite a set-back. She had presumed to hold power, and had considered herself one to be looked up to, even by her husband.

"I supposed," she said, "that you were going to build, Sylvester, and we were to have a home of our own to beautify and arrange to suit ourselves."

"I do not purpose to do any thing of the kind ; I have no means with which to buy or build. My home is to be wherever the Lord calls me to go," was his reply.

"Yes, but aren't you to have a share in all this vast estate, and have your portion, since you are married, in your own hand, so you are sure of it, and have property secured to me?"

"My parents have educated me, and I am under obligation to them for that. I shall expect to leave the property question to them, exclusively."

The conversation between Sophia and her husband was listened to, unknown to her, and immediately after discussed between Sylvester and his parents.

It was believed the property had been her only object in becoming Mrs. Kinkade, and for the reason that she had made an unfavorable beginning she would stand but a poor chance to ever command any portion of it.

“Though my lot may be hard and uncomfortable,” said Sylvester, “since she is my wife, it is my duty to be kind and tender with her, and move along as smoothly as is possible for me. She may feel much happier when we once get settled by ourselves; at all events, I shall try to do my part, and what I hope is, that it may be well done.”

The whole matter was settled ere the conversation ended, and at an early hour of the day appointed for the move, it was made. It greatly disturbed Sophia's peace to think whatever was decided upon at Father Kinkade's was done. She had supposed it mere talk to startle her, and rather than lose Sylvester from home, they would gratify her wish in whatever she exacted; on the contrary, she found herself disappointed, and destined to live in a small house but plainly furnished. The day after their removal, as she gazed about with a ruffled spirit, she said to Aunt Susan, she could see no reason why she should be narrowed down to live the life that ministers' wives commonly do, especially as she had married a pocket-piece; to which Aunt Susan made no reply, but immediately after performing such duties as she felt pleased to for Sylvester's sake, bade her good day.

It so happened Sylvester was that day obliged to look after matters pertaining to the church, consequently Sophia was, for a while, left entirely to herself, during which time she determined to have a

talk with Uncle Sammy, which determination she immediately carried into effect. It required but little time to get there, as the distance between the houses was but a few steps, and, as she was fortunate in finding him at home, with her excitable disposition, no time was lost, but she boldly presented her expectations, wants and wishes, in a way to be distinctly understood.

She told him she was one of too much aspiration to be contented in so humble a home, and if Father Kinkade had not pride enough to tastefully furnish the house for them, it should be done by the church, and it was his duty as a friend and relative to see that it was done. Between Sophia and Uncle Sammy there was no conformity of feeling. He, as well as Aunt Tabbathy, felt she merited no special favor, and they did not feel like putting themselves out of the way to accommodate her. She was plainly told, if she did well, she should be dealt well with, and if not, she would not be. Suspicion led Sophia to believe there was an understanding between them and Sylvester; but just how that was, she could not distinctly see. One thing was certain, she told them, if they were not going to be friends, to befriend her in whatever place she needed them, she should not long remain in Kingumton. Aunt Tabbathy assured her that she had not made a fair beginning for a minister's wife. She told her the church expected something of her, for which she would receive returns with gladness; also that she had done unwisely in showing dissatisfied feelings at Mr. Kinkade's, and renewed to her her own knowledge of the family, having known them for a number of years; that she had gotten their displeasure by her actions, when

she could as well have had their good will, and esteem. This was talk altogether too plain for Sophia, who at once inquired what reason they had for being so prejudiced against her.

Aunt Tabbathy was feeling too deeply grieved to smooth or conciliate matters in the least, but in a clear unmistakable way, presented to Sophia's mind her understanding of her, and the truth that she did not at all acquiesce with her, in her mode of doing. She thought, when a lady was more than willing to accept the hand of a gentleman head and neck shorter than herself, she should be very careful, ever after, how she expressed herself in reference to him; especially when she had done a large part by deceiving him, in order to get possession of his affections. "Which thing, Sophia, you did; since then, you have been heard to speak slightingly of him, and apologize for having made so great a stoop. Such is enough to assure any ready mind that there must have been a cause for it or you would not so have done."

Sophia at once angrily arose and dashed out into the street.

"When she gets Brussels carpet and sofa furniture it will have to come from home," said Uncle Sammy, coolly.

"I can see no reason why she should not have things from home, if they are as able as she represents."

"I doubt their being very able. In my opinion a good deal too much goes in finery."

After the lapse of a few days, the report was current that Elder Kinkade was expecting to resign, for the reason that the church was not willing to give him a comfortable support. When notice was taken

of it by the church, it was found to be Mrs. Kinkade, and that she would not consent to remain unless her wishes could be granted her. After much had been said in regard to the propriety of furnishing rooms at a heavy expense, it was left for Elder Kinkade to try to reconcile her mind to remain for what they could consistently do, and do the best they could. He assured them that he would strive for them, as for himself, and he considered it desirable to make a satisfactory effort to remain. He told them they were the people of his choice, that with them had been his home since his earliest recollections; for him to leave them, and his kindred relatives, would almost break his heart, unless he could see the hand of God in it, and knew the Lord had need of him elsewhere. This kind sentiment as expressed by Elder Kinkade was very encouraging to his people and they were sure they were not to lose him. They had not yet learned Mrs. Kinkade. They could not think of her as altogether unreasonable having formed a high and exalted opinion of her.

But in this they were deceived, and strange as it appeared, Elder Kinkade was obliged to say to them soon after that words were unavailing. That his wife's decision was made, and there was but the two ways, he must either leave or be left.

Sophia's unyielding disposition produced the most poignant sensation and she was looked upon with numberless regrets for having come among them. The heart of every member of the church and society bled under the weight of their misfortune. And with Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan it produced an almost indescribable suffering. It is not for us to say what course they may have pursued, as they were

strongly tempted, if money would hold Sophia that she should be held, rather than not have Sylvester near them, had it not been for Aunt Tabbathy's timely interference. She had for instruction addressed a letter to Saul, relating Sophia's unwise doings, and in due time had received his reply, which she communicated to them, also to the leading members of the church. He had advised Aunt Tabbathy not to allow the church to conform to that which was not reasonable, simply to please Sophia, for if they did in one thing, they would soon have it to do in another—that her greatest fault was her want of principle. The more a person was willing to do for her, the more she would exact. That she had naturally an extravagant taste and one that was rarely ever satisfied, and expressed his regret for her having married one whom she could not appreciate.

When Aunt Susan had listened to the report, she said, "If that is so then, there is no use trying, Sylvester has braved a monstrous sight, and after getting all ready to do well, I lay if he is n't at last swallowed up."

Sophia's deportment was remarkable at this point in the history of events. The deeper the sorrow she could inflict, and the more regrets she could listen to the happier she felt, more especially so for the reason she had failed in accomplishing her object. Her stubborn disposition had not caused Father Kinkade to relax his tension and deed to Sylvester his allotted one hundred acres to secure their stay. The day they were to leave Kingumton for a new parish, a distance of but few miles, she remarked to a lady that she was almost sorry she had overturned

things. Said she had expected property would be deeded to them, and that they were to have a nice new house, well furnished, and that it would be secured to her. "Had they done so," she continued, "this turn would not have been taken, for I should have felt at home and well satisfied, but I guess there is no moving those old people; they are as stubborn as mules."

No doubt there was in Sophia's heart a feeling of regret at leaving Kingumton. If not just at that time there certainly was soon after, for with her haughty spirit it could not well have been otherwise, when she found herself destined to live in a house much less in size, and more inferior than the one she was leaving; also a poor church edifice and limited salary to what the people of Kingumton were willing to give. While there were those in the church who were rich in faith, co-workers with their heavenly Master, they were financially poor. But this was in no way detrimental to the mind of Elder Sylvester. He was perfectly contented to settle and remain with them, trusting that though it was but a small branch, it might become a great and powerful one. His efforts being founded upon Christian faith, he had all confidence for a time to believe he should see that portion of God's heritage bud and blossom as the rose.

He took great pains to court Sophia's favor and reasoned kindly with her, urging her to, at least in some degree, associate herself with him, as much so as to accompany him, if at no other time, on the Lord's day. He told her he did not wish to have his people made acquainted with the differences between them in a spiritual sense. He tried to assure

her it would be for her good, as well as for the prosperity of Zion to be yielding, even if she had no heart to enjoy, and please him in those things most dear and sacred to him, and in what he believed to be above all things most essential.

With a sneer she replied, "that she was capable of judging for herself."

Shortly after they had become permanently settled, and as had been remarked hopefully so, an old lady called to know "if Mrs. Kinkade was from the owld country."

"I from the old country! From where did you get such as that?"

"Shure and they 've towld me."

"What is it that you wish to know about it?"

"Faith, but to know if you're a Catholic like meself."

"I a Roman Catholic? Who dared tell such a falsehood as that on me?"—during which time she raised her voice to so high a pitch as to be distinctly understood next door, and falling into a freak of desperation, she called, "Sylvester!" with all the strength of her lungs.

"What? What?" he exclaimed as he hastened toward her, "Tell me quickly, what is it?"

"Why! why!" sobbed Sophia, "s-h-e she,"—pointing to the old lady, who had reached the doorway, and stood looking back, half terrified.

Turning to the old lady, said Sylvester mildly, "Please tell me what did happen." Meanwhile Sophia sunk down upon a chair and leaned her head upon her husband's shoulder.

"Faith, sir, and I but asked if she was from the owld country, and a Catholic like meself."

Rev. Sylvester asserted that his wife was no conformer to any ceremonial observance, meantime biting deeply his lips with his teeth.

With a bewildered look the old lady immediately left, after which, said Sylvester, "you see your influence,—people will talk; what she said was without doubt, truth, and I presume she was happy with the hope of finding you one of her own creed."

This so maddened Sophia that she blazed it about in so severe a way for a minister's wife that the sisters of the church thought it advisable that they should labor with her. It would indeed be difficult to relate the particulars of a circumstance of this kind.

The good ladies had no sooner assembled and made known their mission of love, than the sparks began to fly, and the more the well meaning sisters tried to labor, the higher the flames run.

The effort was a poor one. They were soon impressed to believe, and shortly after confessed to Rev. Sylvester their regret for having made the attempt, also acknowledged to him, that the report had been current, that he had been greatly deceived by his wife, and had unknowingly married one of Catholic faith. While all connected with the parish were pleased with Rev. Sylvester Kinkade, as a pastor, and looked upon him with marked feeling of sympathy and respect, it was definitely understood that his usefulness was at an end in consequence of his wife, to whom they had formed many dislikes. So sad and unfortunate was his lot that in less than three months from the time he accepted the pastorate, he preached his farewell sermon.

"Where will you go next?" asked Sophia, after

a little hesitation ; and having been decidedly better prepared for the question than she was aware, said :

“ You might return to your mother.”

“ Where would you go ?”

“ The Lord will provide me with a place.”

“ Wouldn't you go with me ?”

“ Were I to, some one might see me.”

“ And hear you too ; it is better for some to be heard than seen.”

Those words as they fell from her lips, struck his heart like a thorn ; the teardrops sparkled in his eyes ; the expression of his countenance changed and had he surrendered to his feelings, he would have said, “ Words are too heavy for me.”

But they were in no position to remain inactive. They were obliged to form some definite conclusion. He therefore kindly insisted that she should return home to her mother, until he could again become, he knew not where or how soon, permanently settled. Sophia was not too blind to see there had sprung up in the mind of her husband, something unharmonious in its nature. She believed it, and with an air of indignation, arranged herself for a speedy departure, leaving her husband with the care of all household arrangements.

When peace and comfort marks the way
The hourly toil seems light and gay.

And thus it was with Rev. Sylvester. When once alone, his heart grew lighter, and he could with ease and activity gather up their wares, fold, box and have them shipped back to Kingumton, the happy home of his boyhood.

On reaching Kingumton, he felt more than at any time before, the weight of his misfortune. The sun

had sunken beneath the horizon; the fleecy clouds obstructed the serene light of the pale moon; but few stars shone in the azure blue, when the strong pang of dismay was keenly realized. A feeling of lethargy stole over him, and he sunk down beneath his burden of sorrow, and silently said to himself:

“ I hate to meet the gaze of men
But weep where none can see.”

When suddenly his feelings changed and he exclaimed aloud, “ Angel of mercy sent to bring.” A hand had gently fallen upon his shoulder, and a voice that he quickly recognized spoke, saying, “ I am so glad to see you. I caught sight of you before you left the train. Go home with me to-night.”

“ Yes, Aunt Tabbathy, I will go; you are the very one I wished first to see. I have a greater burden to unload now than at any previous time. My pockets as well as my heart are full.”

“ We are in sympathy with you, brother,” and after reaching home it was soon understood by the family that there was to be a discussion upon some subject that belonged principally to the leading members.

Rev. Sylvester related the particulars of his overthrow at Brighton Center, to Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy, after which he presented the letters he had picked up, written by Mother Brown.

Aunt Tabbathy read aloud, and after reading, assured him that they corresponded with those written prior to their marriage. Whilst we will not attempt to copy the entire letters, we cannot fail to give an idea of their contents.

Aunt Sabrina had tried to comfort Sophia. She

said, "I don't think you need, after all, to feel so 'shamed of Sylvester. There 's lots of short men in the world; after a while, when he grows older, he may kind a spread out like, and if he should he will look a good deal more manlike. But it's just as you say, you should be rewarded for bein' wife to sich a man. I once heard tell of a man who paid his wife \$20,000 just because he had a strange deformity. Then here's Dave Wheeler, he gave to his wife \$10,000 only because he was middlin' old. I think it would be no more than right for Sylvester's father to deed that one hundred acres to you, so you would be sure of your part. Then live right there where everybody knows him and as you say they all seem to like him. There is no use grievin'. It's best to try to be hopeful and happy. There'll come a turnin' pint after awhile. You know the sayin' is true, the young may die, but the old must. So there'll come a time bimeby that you can have somethin' to call your own to give us, if you can't right away. Any way that is as I think, for I keep dreamin' all the while of light and brightness, it's the same as good luck and happiness."

The foregoing is a sufficient portion of the written matter to know the tenor of Aunt Sabrina's mind, as well as that of Sophia's. "I could not have believed," said Sylvester, "when Sophia carefully placed the written page upon a page in the Bible and gave me to read her in this room, and in the presence of others, that her heart was far from me."

"It has ever been a question in my mind," said Aunt Tabbathy, "how your acquaintance became so extended."

Sylvester clasped his hands firmly, and with a strong expression of earnestness, said "From my very soul, I looked upon her with admiration. I reasoned it in my mind, that if her heart was as pure as the vestment that surrounded it, I loved her. She seemed to understand my heart. She read its imprinted column, and while I was feeling no liberty whatever to approach her, she, holding the Bible in one hand, drew near to me, opened to a page whereon lay one written with her own hand. I read it with delight and surprise. If those were her sentiments, they were mine. I returned a reply in the same manner. It was in this way that our friendship was introduced, and unobservedly carried on until our hearts' love became too exuberant to remain longer a secret."

"Then we are now to understand that which we had supposed would long remain a mystery."

"I am indeed sorry it should not. I greatly fear its influence should it come before the public. You know we are told that 'Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor, so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor.' When I came as an instructor, to teach Bible lessons, I should not have carried my love card. It was not my intention, but was overtaken in it. I deeply regret that I did not have the wisdom I should have had, and at the commencement appointed a suitable time for our love matters. It would have been much more becoming."

"I can't see," said Uncle Sammy, "any particular wrong in it, according to the adage, all is well that ends well, but I am a good deal afraid it will end in

a divorce suit. Divorced men and women are as plenty these days as clover blossoms in the month of June."

"Almighty God forbid!" exclaimed Sylvester. I could better bear any other thing. Should such ever be, it will be done on her part, not mine. I think, in all probability, she will accept her mother's advice as is given on those pages, and live with me, hopefully looking forward to the time when she shall have received the portion for which she married. It is very truly calculated to embitter my life, and spoil my temporal happiness, and there may be times when I shall feel sunken much as I did this evening. I felt for a few minutes a desire to be hidden from the face of men. I reproach myself for having surrendered to my feelings to so great a degree. I know not how long they may have remained with me, had it not been just at that moment I felt the touch of your gentle, loving hand upon my shoulder."

"I am so thankful that I was there to be a comfort to you, I know not how to express my gratitude," said Aunt Tabbathy, "it was almost a miracle that I happened at the depot this evening. But there is this one thing sure, there is an unseen hand ever near, and will give the victory to those that are his, who have been blindly led into captivity."

"That is ever so true, Aunt Tabbathy. The Psalmist says, 'They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever.' 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.'"

CHAPTER XXIX.

“Law! Joe, I’ll not sleep one wink to-night. I should have thought when he got off the cars, that he would have come right straight home. I do wonder now if they were sure it was him.”

“Oh, yes; the boys said it was Sylvester, but it being middling dark they lost sight of him.”

“I am thinking, may be he has gone to Tabbathy’s, and we may well know there is something more that’s not quite right if he has.”

“If he is not here ’gin nine o’clock, I think I best throw on the gears and we’ll ride over.”

“I think that way myself, Joe,” and at precisely nine o’clock Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan started on their drive for Kingumton. When the rolling of wheels and prancing of horses was heard nearing the porch at Uncle Sammy’s the door was hurriedly opened with joyful exclamations.

“The room is never full until after father and mother are in,” said Sylvester.

“I thought in all probabilities the boys from the east farm caught sight of him, and would be likely to mention it to you, in which case, if he was not home in due time, you would be in quest of him,” said Aunt Tabbathy.

“Susan thought she couldn’t sleep and I felt a good deal that way myself, so I just hitched on and we drove over, but I’m glad we find him all right,” continued Uncle Joe.

“But I think we haven’t yet had time to

know all about that," said Aunt Susan. "I have so many times told Joe, there is not much telling about Sylvester, for ^{law}! he will hunt a verse somewheres out of the Bible to comfort him, let come what will."

"That is so, truthfully, Aunt Susan; he was just repeating from the Psalms as I heard you driving up to the porch."

"Well, you have then just come up on a visit?"

"I have just moved up, mother."

"Just moved up! I want to know! That then is about as I expected, I believe we should find something at the bottom. And now Sylvester, you must tell us all about it."

"Why, my wife still continues to indorse the same principles as you have heretofore known. She has shown considerable regard for my feelings, but of course there cannot be that unity between us that is necessary to promote happiness as long as godliness is so distasteful to her. She cannot bear the slightest hint of religion. It will excite her to anger in one moment. She has an extreme passion for gayety and grandeur. Could I but satisfy her in those things, perhaps she would feel much better contented. She seems to think that I can preach Christ, faith and repentance and she, meantime, cast her influence according to her belief and practice, which is in no way harmonious with my teachings. I tell her such can only be compared to one knitting, and the other raveling out. I do not know, but in some way it became rumored that she was of Catholic faith," and he proceeded to relate the circumstance which resulted in his final overthrow.

“I thought it advisable to have her return to her parents, and I would have the goods shipped back to Kingumton to await some new turn.” Sylvester continued by saying, “I presume had I a handsome property she would feel satisfied, looking upon my ministry as an honorable profession; that is she would not so much regret it could she be partitioned off on one side. But my dear friends, behind the partition would she be petitioned for, ever and anon, and that she could not forbid me. I may not live to see the day, but my request is, that it may come, when she will see with discerning eyes, and confess to God with unfeigned lips.”

“I am hopeful,” said Aunt Tabbathy, “for we are told that, ‘the supplication of a righteous man availeth much.’”

“I ~~am~~, if I could only know she would be contented and satisfied to live with Sylvester, and make him happy, now since she has got him, by having a home of their own, I should want them to have it.”

“Yes, I should be willing to that myself, Susan, we could square it right off to them, and it may be the better way.”

“No! no!” exclaimed Uncle Sammy, swiftly, Aunt Tabbathy joining with him, “If she can not appreciate Sylvester well enough to treat him respectfully without your property, she would not with it. She would feel none the better satisfied were you to deed a farm to him. It would have to be in her name, I am aware of that fact, and the way she would handle it would not be as you have ever done. We advise that you keep the loaf under your own arm.”

“I believe that the better way,” said Sylvester.

“We cannot tell. There may come a time when I shall need your assistance more than at present.”

The conversation continued until a late hour, when Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan returned home, leaving Sylvester to walk over early the next morning. Aunt Tabbathy had a few choice ideas to impart, which were reserved until she could have the privilege of impressing Sylvester's mind with them when undisturbed by others. This she did after his parents left, and as she was a woman of strong mind and good judgment, one in whom Sylvester placed the utmost confidence, her purposes were very readily indorsed. It so happened that there was an empty pulpit about ten miles from Kingumton, in a pleasant part of a country town, thickly settled with clever, well-to-do farmers, and where Aunt Tabbathy had any amount of generous friends, a few of whom were her kindred.

Through her influence an appointment was made, and on the second Sabbath after his return from Brighton Center he preached a rousing sermon in the old country church. The aged patriarchs laughed as they shook the hand of the little man with great warmth and approbation. The sermon had suited them to a letter, and to them it was wonderful that one so small could hold so much.

“You seem to have more of the oil of fatness than myself,” said one whose weight was a trifle over three hundred. “I should like to have you stay along with us. I want to see and hear you some more.”

The requests were so many, and urgently pressed that Sylvester determined to remain among them for a few days ; during which time he preached for them,

mingled with them in their evening prayer meetings, attended their social societies and lastly was one with them at their yearly Sabbath-school picnic. The attachment became so fervent on the part of both Rev. Sylvester and the people of the parish, that without the other, each felt they were afflicted. On meeting with Aunt Tabbathy, immediately after his return to Kingumton, he said: "How can I refuse a people whose hearts are so strongly inclined to me, and for whom I have the most tender regard? Our attachment seems as firm as though it had resulted from the growth of years."

"Your duty is where the Lord places you," said Aunt Tabbathy.

"I believe that, but what would my wife say to a country home? I should dread the first introduction of it."

"I can see no reason why she should refuse so pleasant a home as the parsonage at Burkshire. It is a lovely site, and so near the church, good buildings in handsome repair, with every convenience that anyone could desire. It should be considered far preferable to a village home, where everyone understands his neighbor's business, and loses no time telling it."

"Whilst it would please my heart to accept the charge of the Burkshire church, and know not how I can say no, to them, if she should not consent what would I do?"

"If she cannot be consistently wise, I think it would be wisdom with her inconsistency to throw her away," said Aunt Tabbathy with an excited air,

"I could not throw her away. I feel it my duty to

strive for her, to try to please her, win her if possible by being lovingly kind to her, that I may have a conscience void of offense. When I look back, as I must sometimes with regret, and reconsider the way in which I allowed beauty to charm me and was led by feigned lips, I feel to reproach myself. Then again I look at it, by the light of God's love and feel that had it not been for my good, perhaps her's, He would not have suffered it to be. Thus dwelling upon it, I see in it a purpose, which is, that I must needs daily walk in the spirit, that I may without contradiction be as a lamp in a dark place, by which she, as may many others, see the light, and turn 'before He cause darkness, and before their feet stumble upon the dark mountains.' There is also this truth, which should encourage every worker in religious fields,—the work of grace, as it is written, 'let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.' "

The last sentence had no sooner fallen from the lips of Sylvester than Aunt Tabbathy was interrupted by Uncle Sammy who had entered with a letter addressed to her from Saul. When she had broken the seal, and hastily glanced over the pages, it was readily seen that her feelings were agitated, and the frown which settled upon her brow was an index of vexation. The exhibition of troublesome thought was such that neither Uncle Sammy or Sylvester dared to utter a word and for some minutes silence held a triumphant reign. Aunt Tabbathy had deposited the sheet back into the envelope and snugly folding her arms, sat looking steadfastly downward, as much so as though she was trying to

study out the language of some flower woven in the carpet.

“Hurrah,” shouted Thaddie at this moment as he came in sight of Rev. Sylvester. “Are you going to live in Burkshire? If you do I’ll have to go there too. They’re real rich. Up there is lots of milk and honey.”

Guy, who had happened at the doorway, was much amused at Thaddie’s remark, and at once setting his hat on the back part of his head, hitching his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, advanced zig-zag near to where Sylvester was sitting. Then with a sudden stop he folded his hands, palm to palm, and assuming a deaconish look, said “Yes sir, and so will I; you will need occasionally to have me take your wife on a drive to Uncle Jason’s by the way of Barefoot Glen.”

Guy was a good-hearted, well meaning boy, but a regular rattle-head. He could not forget his first ride with Sophia, and ever after spoke of it as having merited a professorship.

“It would indeed make a very suitable place for Rev. Sylvester,” said Aunt Tabbathy.

“I am impatiently waiting,” said Uncle Sammy, “to know something of the substance of that letter. It seems to contain matter of moment.”

Relaxing her folded arms and raising one hand to her head, she replied, “I feel like one lost in the dark mine of insensibility. I cannot think of a more accurate way to express myself,” and willingly handed the letter over to her husband.

After having read it, and considering earnestly for a little time, said he, “I was just going to say that we need the wisdom of Solomon, but I guess I

had better say the wisdom of the Almighty. Tabbathy, I can see no better way than to have Sylvester made acquainted with these statements, and we will try to help him as best we can. Here are facts, such as he will have to know, and those not so absolutely necessary he should, he may as well hear."

At the sound of which Sylvester arose to his feet, the pale tint upon his cheeks changed to a deep crimson, saying, "What is it?"

"Sit down, brother," said Aunt Tabbathy, "and let us reason together. Have you heard from Sophia since she left you?"

"Once, she penned but a short letter, told me she had a pleasant car ride, was very well and wished me to send her some money."

"Whilst we do have for you, as you know, the deepest feeling of sympathy and respect, and would not report one word to wound your feelings, neither would Saul communicate to us otherwise than for the best, but as things are being conducted at Uncle Jeremiah's, he thought it advisable to have us know and we think it right that you should, that you may calculate accordingly. He says she often speaks of her husband's heirship, and offers it as an apology for having become Mrs. Kinkade. He tells us she has been making large purchases, but he does not know the full amount of bills. The new chair placed in the parlor for Uncle Jeremiah is said to be worth forty dollars, and he should think it not less. Aunt Sabrina has a rich new silk and her brothers a velocipede, besides parlor ornaments and other things, all of which she is expecting her husband to settle for."

Sylvester again arose, wringing his hands, saying,

“What shall I do? How am I to settle them? Our expenses have run far beyond our income, and my people have had to support us mostly, as she knows. Should I ask my people to supply me with means to pay for comforts for her’s, such as they have not afforded for themselves?”

“No! No! you will not! Now hear. Don’t let this excite you too much. We will carefully look this matter over for a moment. ‘Where there is a will there is a way,’” and after a little considering Uncle Sammy said, “I think I see it already. First go and accept the charge of the church at Burkshire; make sure of that. Have your goods all taken to the parsonage. Make everything as nearly ready as you can. Then go to Copperville with just money enough to pay your expenses both ways. Make no mention of anything having been communicated. When bills are presented just say to those who do, that you are not prepared to meet them. That since your wife has contracted such debts, you feel it your duty to pay and as soon as possible will. Then try and save it out of your yearly compensation.”

Sylvester, after attentively listening, clasped together firmly his hands, saying, “I thank you. You have helped open up a way through which I can see. I have great reason to bless God that there is a pulpit ready for me and that the church is able and willing to do well by me. I think I can save up enough in one year to cover the indebtedness and bring no reproach upon my wife. Under the circumstances, I must accept the chance at hand, and I think she will consider me excusable if she is not consulted in the matter.”

It was Aunt Tabbathy's opinion that he should immediately return home to prepare for the coming Sabbath, and if permitted they would drive that way and carry him over to Burkshire on Saturday to remain there until every necessary transaction was completed. Which plan was adopted and carried into execution. So that in less than one week from the day Saul's letter was received Rev. Sylvester Kinkade was elected pastor of the old country church, with an extra endowment of fifty dollars given him in advance of his yearly recompense.

CHAPTER XXX.

Friendship, when not riveted with hypocrisy, nor accompanied with those dusky fibers with which it is so frequently webbed, is conjugal, and is based upon concordant harmony and mutual esteem. Humanity was with Uncle Sammy a predominant characteristic, therefore he was well calculated to co-operate with Aunt Tabbathy in her effort to promote the well being of Sylvester. There was no time lost after their return from the old country parish, in ciphering out the probabilities connected with their last issue, and a hasty preparation to meet the emergency of whatever name or kind. A letter was addressed to Saul relating Sylvester's fortunate acceptance as pastor in Burkshire township, also a request that he should be, if possible, at the depot at the time specified to meet him, unknown to any other, not even Sophia, in order to defeat the plan as had been devised by the low grades of Copperville, who were expecting to form a sporting club the day of his arrival and sketch his outline by the side of Sophia, one for whom they had but an insignificant regard. They had considered it an object of moment to get possession of a photographic view of Sophia by the side of her puny husband, as they termed him.

As Aunt Tabbathy was accompanying Sylvester to the depot the evening he was to take the train for Copperville, he said to her, "In the midst of all

these afflicting strokes that come upon me—and we cannot tell how humiliating some of them may be, that I shall yet meet—I have a hope that is ‘an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast, and entering into that which is within the veil,’ for beyond this lower sphere, this sorrowing world, where I shall be no more a subject of curiosity. I was thinking to-day as I was contemplating my prospects in Copperville that I could say with the poet:

“I yearn for realms where fancy shall be filled, and the ecstasies of freedom shall be felt,
And the soul reign gloriously, risen to its royal destinies.’”

Aunt Tabbathy was too deeply affected to reply on the public street, but simply said, “Don’t fail to write as soon as is possible for you, after your arrival in Copperville.”

With his heart exceedingly solemnized he went aboard the train, and devoted himself to the study of text searching, noting important ideas and arranging his mind, that in case he was asked to fill the pulpit that he might speak to edification. The following day he was safely in Copperville, where he found Saul awaiting his arrival.

Saul thought it advisable to first take him to his office, where they could alone spend some time talking over those things which he was to meet most assuredly. It was time profitably spent, after which Saul accompanied him to the house, to meet those to whom his arrival was so unlooked for, that it produced no small degree of surprise. To speak from appearance his reception was rather pleasing. And in time to go out on the first mail he had ready for Aunt Tabbathy a short note, which read:

I have had no presentiment of any thing particularly unfavorable to this date. I am inclined to feel encouraged, as Mother Brown has introduced me to her friends as her son-in-law, the minister, Mr. Kinkade. I have been solicited to speak on next Lord's day.

Adieu till we meet,

SYLVESTER.

He fortunately having been made acquainted with his financial position to some degree, unknown to the family, it was no difficult matter for him to decipher the looks and appearance of Mother Brown and Sophia, also their often-repeated remarks, which he believed were made to produce from him an interrogation that would lead to an open consultation. Consequently when Sophia pointed to the chair saying, "Is not that beautiful?" he simply replied, "very beautiful."

Not having an idea of such a thing as even being possible that a pulpit could be in readiness for her husband, she was free to cast out her insinuations, that there would be no place for them she guessed but in Kingumton, and that Father Kinkade would be obliged to furnish means for their support. "And I will do the handling of it, they will find," slipped out at one time when she thought Sylvester too far away to hear her.

"Yes," replied Aunt Sabrina, "there's always some way to keep carryin' things 'long. I guess he'll have to unstrap his pocket-book, it's no ways likely Sylvester can find a place to preach, he is sich a little poodle."

To which Sylvester returned a reply, saying, "He who has called me to His service, will supply me with a pulpit." It was not his wish to keep his wife in darkness, but he was fully aware, were he to name

his acceptance as pastor and where, what would follow, and he did not wish to have his mind unreasonably disturbed with business matters prior to the Sabbath. In consequence of which Saul was exceedingly careful to claim a good share of his attention. When Sabbath morning came, Sophia refused to accompany her husband to church. She knew of the many remarks that had been made, also, of the sporting club, and felt diffident to be seen by the side of one so much her inferior, and excused herself by complaining of having headache. She walked, however, as far as the door with him, and at parting said, "I hope you will win hearts to-day." To which he thanked her and walked on.

Sophia then returned to the parlor, where she comfortably seated herself to read the "Daily News," after which she soon fell asleep, and so continued until aroused by her mother who suddenly threw open the door with an almost bewildered look of surprise.

"Why, my sakes!" she exclaimed. "It does beat everything. Sylvester is a smart little man, I jist wish you'd been there. That meetin' house was packed full as it could hold, it was surprisin' to hear him. He preached and preached till first I see, they was all 'round wipin' their eyes. Then I turned myself 'round this way and that, and I do believe everybody was cryin' in the whole house."

"That is exactly why I do not like to hear him. He always carries terror on his tongue. He is enough to scare some people to death. He thinks no one should live in any other way, than as though they were standing beside their open grave, and I wonder what happiness can be found in living

that way. I like to have some fun as I go along and I believe the more we laugh, the longer we shall live, for fun and liveliness are the life of living. They have an enlivening property, they season life and preserve it, and I know it. And there are lots of ministers who feel that way. They are jolly and will joke. You never see them with long faces except when they go into the pulpit, and then they have to, of course."

"Well, I do myself feel most dreadful sorry he isn't a little different, more like yourself. But we must be careful about talkin', you know he heard me yesterday, but I don't think he did you."

"He will not be here yet for awhile, he will hang back till the doors are locked, you'd better believe."

"I was thinkin' yesterday, that it's a pity you married him."

"He has a sweet face, mother, and that placid smile is always seen on it, with all he is so serious, and as I say, carries terror on his tongue."

"I don't see for my part how he makes it work, for we do know that happiness and gloominess ain't any alike."

"He does not think them alike, but he lives expecting to see a great amount of happiness in the next world. He is just like Saul, they both think alike, both continually study to find the safest and surest way to glory. I have heard him say, if the different lines in life were alike paralleled before him, bearing their own separate inscription, 'The World,' 'The Synagogue of Satan,' 'Morality,' 'Christianity,' and he knew that each one was to empty into the same eternity of glory, he would take the one bearing the characteristics of Christ, 'for in him dwelleth all the

fullness of the God-head bodily.' And that in him he has peace, 'Who is the head of all principality and power.'"

"Then if that is the way he talks, I guess he is steadfast."

"Yonder they are, they're coming. I dread what will be to-morrow, likely enough."

"Ain't you told him yet about the things?"

"No. Whilst I dread it, he will have it to find out that I calculate to have a word to say. I didn't marry him for nothing. I tell you, it would make you open your eyes were you to get sight of Father Kinkade's grain barns."

"I expect so, and it would be a likely story if you couldn't have the privilege of any of it when you're Sylvester's wife."

"I hardly think he will dare cross me. He knows I have my calculations made to strike for our share."

By this time all parties were within hearing, and the conversation ceased.

"Are you feeling better?" asked Sylvester; then turning side-wise to Saul, said, "my wife usually feels better in the after-part of the day." After which he was very silent, and spent the remainder of the day in his usual way, reading sacred history. Very unexpectedly, late in the afternoon, Robbie came dashing in, saying, "Soph, I've been eaves dropping, I've been hearing what they say about Sylvester."

"Goody, Robbie, what did they say?"

Some of them said "he's head and shoulders taller than his wife," then one said, "he gave us a buster to-day," another one said, "he made slaughtering work."

“What did they mean by that?”

“Why you see a great lot went to make fun, but he knocked it all out of them. There won't now be any clubs, so you needn't be afraid any more, nor ashamed.”

It had been previously arranged that at an early hour on Monday, Rev Sylvester in company with Father Brown was to appear at the law office to remain until all bills were presented.

“I do not know,” said Mr. Brown, “what has been taken into the house, beyond the things I have seen, but whatever the wrong may be, to make it right is what I am willing to do.”

When the different bills had been presented the sum total amounted to the sum of four hundred and forty dollars and some cents.

Mr. Brown appeared perfectly panic-stricken, but as soon as he could recover himself, he said, “I will go and see what my wife says about these things,” and started for the house, followed by Saul and Sylvester.

When the subject was first introduced Aunt Sabrina appeared excited, but when Sophia began to argue her rightful privilege, she was sustained by her mother, and though they reasoned well as could be expected by parties void of wisdom and humanity, they were, after having been allowed to know the extent of their meaning, put to silence by Saul, who addressed them with as much force as though he was defending a plaintiff at the bar.

He made expressly plain to Sophia her duty to her husband, also reassured her of his high position as a man among men, and his standing as an earnest minister of the gospel. Lastly he told her, since

she with her mother had been guilty of so great a wrong as to throw upon her husband a needless embarrassment, at what could be termed the outset of his ministry, he would hold himself responsible for the debt by taking a mortgage on her father's home.

At the sound of which Aunt Sabrina raised both hands, loudly exclaiming, "Ain't Sylvester's father able to pay the debt without our havin' it hangin' on us?"

"He will not,—I mean he shall not!" said Saul, with emphasis.

Aunt Sabrina was too full of indignation to remain longer in the room, and went dashing back to the kitchen with threats, groans and heavy sobs. Sophia closely followed with the comforting words, "Mother, mother, don't feel so badly, I'll throw it back, that I will."

Rev. Sylvester was deeply grieved. He had not been used to such troublesome scenes, and turning to Saul said, "it would be better perhaps for me to stand for the debt, and as soon as I can make it possible, pay it."

"I cannot suffer it," replied Saul. "Parties guilty of so gross an act should suffer the penalty."

As Aunt Sabrina and Sophia would not either of them condescend to present the articles of trade beyond those things to which their attention had been previously turned, and after all had been said that was necessary the gentlemen returned to the office to have made complete the remnant of business.

At midday Sylvester sought an opportunity to learn of Sophia if she was ready to return home with

him, and told her he had taken charge of a church and could not be long away.

“Church! I wonder where.”

“In Burkshire township.”

“Where is that?”

“It is about ten miles from Kingumton.”

“Is it in the country?”

“It is, but please do not condemn it until you shall have seen it. It is a beautiful place. I think you cannot be otherwise than pleased. Our goods are there and I am desirous of getting quieted down.”

“I suppose I can go but if I do not like it I won't stay.”

“You can act your pleasure about going. It shall be your privilege to do whichever way suits you the best. But remember, should you prefer to remain with your parents, you are to be in no way detrimental to me.”

“Would you not expect to pay my board?”

“Not when under the circumstance of choice simply. When you accepted my hand, you also did my home. That wherever my lot was cast there yours would be. I prefer to take the night train, unless it should particularly inconvenience you, in which case I should be willing to wait over a day or even two days if a necessity.”

“Sophia remained silent for some minutes, then called for her mother to whom she in a very complaining way, said, “I suppose I must pack my trunk for the woods. Believe me, our goods are there and Sylvester has pronounced the benediction.”

“Well, we do know its most beggarly mean, sich a way of doin'. He sent you home. I didn't expect,” turning to Sylvester, “you was goin' to

send her here to live on us for nothin'. If she had come to visit it would have been another thing, but to come to stay I was calculatin' on a compensation. I was expectin' to apply her board money on these debts that has been fussed over. I hold to woman's rights."

"Mother Brown, I am sorry to say it, but it is truth,—through the influence of my wife I have already been twice overthrown. I did advise her to return to her mother and supposed you would be pleased to have her until I could be again settled. Whatever the sum is that you think right from the time she came to this date, I will pay, but not hereafter."

Then turning to Sophia he said, "I shall expect you to return with me. We will take the 12:30 train to-night." He then took his hat and walked back to the office.

Sophia and her mother reasoned for a while, and lastly concluded, if Sylvester was not going to be man enough to pay his wife's board, she had better return with him. By so doing she could perhaps accumulate means to a good advantage, and should she have success she was to forward the money to her mother through the postoffice.

With every arrangement neatly planned, she became active in making ready, and as had been proposed, left on the night train for Kingumton.

It is hardly possible to suppose that she felt at home at Uncle Sammy's, as she was met with an unusual degree of formality, so much so that she became impatient "to get to what she could call her own," and on the second day after their arrival did.

As beautiful as was the scenery, and as pleased

and happy as were those of their friends who called upon them, each one bringing with them some needful table supply, her every expression denoted dissatisfaction, and as Aunt Tabbathy remarked, "there was no knowing what she may have said, had it not been that she accidentally parboiled her tongue and had to hold it."

During Rev. Sylvester's pastorate of some two and a half years in Burkshire could all that was vexing and sorrowful be told, through which Sophia led her husband, that devoted servant of God, if written it would indeed be an invidious work, with many a dark uncomely page.

It was no uncommon thing for her to object to morning and evening prayer, and in such a way as to drive him to a private apartment to worship alone. Sometimes she would say to him, "if you want to you can pray here, if you won't go all over the Andes."

She took great delight in game playing and if at any time she could have an associate to engage with her, and manage to be overtaken in the act by her husband it was very gratifying to her, and there was no place so suitable to hide her sporting implements as in the study, even to the "accidental dropping" of the gambling card upon the table, purposely to grieve him; all of which he carried to the Throne of Grace.

It did not require any particular length of time for the citizens of Burkshire to understand the ruling sentiment of Sophia's mind, and while it was with sadness they soon learned there could be no lovable unity, no growth of harmony, no endearing friendship, yet they were glad to bear with her, and

humor her peculiar disposition for his sake. The better the church and society became acquainted with Rev. Sylvester, and the more they learned of him, the more highly he was prized, and the more ardently they became attached to him, for which reason they were the more indulgent and painstaking with Sophia in order to move along smoothly, and await "the interposition of Providence," as would be frequently said. When those veterans of the cross became acquainted with some new despicable freak, as they many times did, they would sighingly bow their heads and with a lamentable tone utter with sadness the old adage that "it's a long lane that has no turn."

Among the many whom Sophia was destined to meet, and with whom she was obliged to form an acquaintanceship, there were none who felt for her that tender regard as did her husband. With all her imperfections and deeds of injustice, he had for her the deepest sympathy, and looked forward in faith, believing the time of her restoration would come. Few hearts could have braved the upheaving upon the voyage of life equal to that little man of God.

At times when their expenditures were being considered, so great was her ambition for worldliness and money, wherewith to gratify her extravagant passion, and aid her own people, that the handsome compensation with which her husband was being rewarded for his ministerial services was too far beneath her requirements to satisfy her demands without an augmentation which was beyond reason. It really seemed fortunate and wisely ordered that Rev. Sylvester should have been introduced to the

people of Burkshire, where the majority were so financially able, especially among those of the parish, and too, so well calculated to tame one of Sophia's disposition, and in a way so praiseworthy and commendable, even though it sometimes cost a sacrifice.

It was very soon observed that a favor or present of any kind if only intended expressly for her, was very acceptable, and she would evince any amount of gratification. Consequently when there was anything of moment to be conducted or accomplished, if it must necessarily extend within the limits of the parsonage, it became their habitual practice to arrange something to be especially conferred upon Sophia, in order to get possession of her sunny side, that it might be carried into effect without producing an unharmonious sensation, a thing so detrimental to Rev. Sylvester.

It was an unfailing practice for the different religious denominations of that vicinity to unitedly observe the first day of the year as a day of fasting and prayer for the universal spread of the gospel.

Rev. Sylvester having been known to have previously suffered great embarrassment, on those occasions in consequence of his wife's distaste for anything in harmony with Christianity, it was considered advisable by the sisters of the church to bring together all that was possible that was pleasing, from the useful to the beautiful, and on the anniversary three years from the day of her reception as daughter in the family of Mr. Kinkade, make her happily surprised, which they did, with the hope that the luster that kindled in her eye on that merry Christmas day might not soon die, and that their effort would produce on the part of Sophia a mutual

tendency, that would aid largely in promoting the happiness of her husband on the coming fast-day. They were confident she could not be otherwise than in harmony with them after having been made the recipient of much that was so enjoyable to her, and to which she manifested the highest exhibition of delight and appreciation.

With this to encourage them, they were sure of having adopted a wise plan to expel the gloom that so universally draped the mind of their beloved pastor, on every religious occasion, especially if it was beyond the ordinary weekly meetings and they were, as they felt, properly prepared to look forward with high hopes and happy anticipations to their annual communion with the King of Kings. Everything moved off peacefully at the parsonage during the week and on New Year's morning Rev. Sylvester and wife were seated at the breakfast table, apparently well pleased as persons are when in possession of health and happiness. It was understood that several of the clergymen, they knew not how many, would be in to spend an hour after the morning service which would continue until two o'clock.

It so happened that there were items of importance to be attended to more than usual that morning in the kitchen, as well as extra instructions to be given the nurse girl, which required considerable time; nevertheless Sophia was equipped in time to walk with her husband to the church, which was calculated to gladden his heart and encourage him. In consequence of the mass of people who had assembled in the hall, Rev. Sylvester soon lost sight of his wife.

The parsonage was but a few steps from the

church, and during the cold season the door opening into the sitting room was the one used as the main entrance. At two o'clock Rev. Sylvester with his ministerial brethren deliberately walked from the church to the house, happy-hearted, and up the steps to the door, where they were met by Sophia, who opened to them with a smile and courtesy and asked them to "please walk in," which they did; when to their astonishment they found themselves confronting a long table loaded with every choice luxury she could possibly have obtained. The roast turkey, oysters, vegetables steaming hot, and the hot coffee had been but just placed upon the table.

Those devoted men cast a glance over the table, and though Rev. Sylvester was struck almost senseless with surprise, the entire group moved slowly along into the parlor, where they remained speechless for a long time. The act of setting before those hungry men a table of delicious eatables was like throwing hot water in their faces. After a long continued silence, one of the members remarked, "that Mrs. Kinkade could not have understood that it was fast day."

"Is that probable, Brother Kinkade?" said another.

"Not at all," was his faint reply, while he sobbed as though his heart would break.

The brethren kneeled around him in prayer, after which they sang.

"Jesus, my all, to heaven has gone."

It so happened that one who differed in his views was scrupulously inclined to think Brother Kinkade might not be as well calculated to instruct, guide

and encourage his wife in the way of holiness as he should be and spoke rather chidingly. This was a blow to the meek and lowly hearted servant of God, oh, how severe! He arose and stood upright before him, with his eyes heavenward, and exclaimed, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

CHAPTER XXXI.

The imposition which Sophia had so skillfully brought about to afflict her husband and his associating brethren, presuming by the act that she could check the progress of Christianity, spread over the entire community like the shock of an earthquake. When the news reached Kingumton, through the influence of Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy a messenger was sent with a dispatch, urging Sylvester to comply with their request and immediately return to them. The dispatch was so forcibly written that, after a little consideration, he felt it his duty to return with the messenger, even though if left to himself, he would have chosen to have been lost in some strange wilderness in quest of solitude. He had a dread to meet face to face those dear familiar friends and rehearse to them, as would be expected, that which had been to him the most bitter pang his heart had ever known. But as the duty presented itself before him, he very prudently notified Sophia that he had been unexpectedly called to Kingumton and expressed his opinion in regard to going in the most tender language his lips could utter. To which she replied in her rude harsh way, as she frequently did when he was about to leave home against her will, "Go, but don't return soon." At this time she emphasized the sentence with still greater force and audacity, by saying, "Go, I hope you may not be permitted to return."

Rev. Sylvester had many times been overtaken with a strange feeling, on being spoken to in a similar way, but at this time there was a much stronger impression that forced itself upon his mind, that it might be their last parting. He felt confident it was her wish; he believed she would feel herself honorably liberated from one she did not love, and whose society she could not enjoy.

But it was a thought, oh, how piercing! His wife so unloving, unfeeling and unwise! His heart was more deeply crushed than ever, and he cried aloud, "O, Lemuel, Lemuel, my darling son Lemuel," and sunk back speechless upon a couch.

The kind-hearted messenger administered, and spoke encouragingly to him until in time his strength revived, and he extended his hand to Sophia, who relentlessly stood looking on, saying, "We know not what shall be on the morrow. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

"My dear wife, I love you, Jesus loves you, and should it be that I am not to again return, God grant that you may live to become acquainted with the truths as they are in Christ Jesus. I cannot give you up. I want, if no more here, to meet you in our heavenly Father's land, and if permitted, to greet you at the pearly gate."

It was an unusual thing for Sylvester's feelings to choke his utterance, but words were inexpressible and he could not speak. Then turning to their sleeping babe, he raised him up into his arms and snugly folded him to his bosom.

"Yes, now you've got that child awake to cry an hour. All right, I s'pose you think, so long as I am left behind to swing the cradle," said Sophia, angrily.

But Sylvester continued to soothe and caress him once and again, then gently laid him back upon his little bed, bending over him with the same pulsation at heart as though he knew it was to be for the last time. After which he hastily bowed and left with an expression of deepest sorrow stamped upon his countenance. The tender-hearted messenger hit him a lovable tap upon his shoulder as they were leaving the doorway, and at the end of the walk sang in an undertone, just loud enough for Sylvester's hearing ear to catch:

“The day is cold and dark, and dreary,
It rains and the winds are never weary,
The vines still cling to the mouldering wall,
At every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.”

“Be still, sad heart, and cease repining,
Behind the cloud is the sun still shining,
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.”

But soon the bells began to jingle and the high headed horses to prance and travel with speed over the snow-beaten track. Nothing for miles was heard, but the sound of bells, and the words, “Whoa, steady boys,” as the driver held a heavy rein with all the strength of his arms, and occasionally giving a whistle as if intended to interest his traveling companion and if possible change that unnatural look of sadness to that of original brightness. Apparently having become discouraged in that, he turned side-wise and throwing one arm around Sylvester, for whom his heart was in deepest sympathy, closely pressed and kissed him.

The action affected Sylvester much, and to present an interpretation of his mind, he sweetly sang:

“There is a world above
Where parting is unknown,
A long eternity of love
Formed for the good alone ;
And Faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that glorious sphere.”

After which he pleaded as far as circumstances would admit in behalf of his wife, and expressed his wish that the harder part should not, for his sake as well as her own, be too outspokenly mentioned. That she was a very careless thinker, and apt to say anything that first came in her mind, without weighing the dross or counting the grains of silver.

“Mighty few grains of silver could be counted,” responded the messenger as he reined the horses up to the porch at Uncle Sammy’s.

The family had taken their seats that mid-winter evening by the side of a good warm fire to await their coming, and were ready at the jingling of bells to welcome their special friend with not only a social but an affectionate greeting. To Rev. Sylvester it was like being transported to another hemisphere. “My heart is filled with joy when here I have but just entered,” he said.

The change of scenery, those cheerful, smiling faces and joyous greetings broke in upon him like the rays of a mid-summer’s sun, while Aunt Tab-bathy was hurriedly making ready a seat in a choice place by the fire.

As soon as an opportunity was presented, and he was not long waiting, said he, “My friends, your presence charms me so that the weight of sorrow

with which I was weighed down has died away to a speck, compared to what it was when I left home. I feel differently. I did have a dread to meet you, in consequence of that which would be said. I felt more as though I could not rest until I had spent much time upon my knees alone, where I could without molestation pour out my complaint into the ear of Almighty Justice. But you are friends, so dear that I feel I could almost lose myself in you, certain that I have in you the most implicit confidence. And this sense of your loving kindness has changed my heart from dread to one burning with desire. While I do not wish to make your hearts heavy with my distressing sorrows, I must tell you I am disappointed. I had looked forward to the joys of a well-ordered home, that I should with my smallness be allowed the privilege of much, but so bitter is made my life that I have prayed, 'Lord, give me patience that I may with willingness await Thy bidding.'"

He then gave them not only a history of the past few days, but of his married life, more fully than at any time before, and the pain he felt on leaving home oftentimes, especially that afternoon. He told them he felt seriously impressed that he should not be permitted to return. That he had, according to the nature of man, looked forward upon the field of life, desirous of living to accomplish a work, that at the end of his days he might go bearing his sheaves with him. "But," he continued, "should it be ordered otherwise, I am prepared, and am willing to enter into His rest. "There is but one especial tie—our sweet babe. How can I leave him before he has learned to lisp th ename of father? And what is

still more sad is the way he will be brought up and instructed."

"Brother," said Aunt Tabbathy, "God is in all things. He may not permit Sophia the privilege of training that child in the way of the world. Don't feel so badly. Her sinful wish will not mark out your boundary, or seal your doom. You may have a pleasant visit here among us, and return with more strength than was given you to come."

"Yes," said Uncle Sammy, "I guess so, too; but we do not blame you for feeling cut to the quick. Most any man would. But you must try and look on the bright side as much as you can. I can't quote Scripture with you and my wife, but then you have got enough of it in you to heal you, if it is what they say it is, always a sure balm."

"My spiritual enjoyment, Uncle Sammy, is not at all altered. My faith, my hope, my trust is the same. It is this lack of appreciation and the great hindrance my wife is to me; this pleasure she takes in undoing and overthrowing every religious enjoyment I could have that is in her power, and bar me from usefulness."

"It would be better for her, according to my opinion," remarked Aunt Tabbathy, "if a mill-stone should be hanged about her neck, and she should be sunk in the depth of the sea."

"My life," said Sylvester, "is so unlike anything I had thought could be," and he spoke of the peaceful, happy lives of his parents, and the influence it had upon his own mind.

"At Professor Gregnal's it was the same way. One always seemed happy with the other's society. Each lived for the other in word and deed, and here,

Aunt Tabbathy, in your home is always sunshine. These things led me to feel that if I could have a companion, it was all I needed to complete my happiness and labor of love. I felt I would be better prepared to accomplish greater good. In view of these happy prospects that I was looking forward to, after having met Sophia, and as I supposed we were mutually united, I could sit and sing to myself:

“ ‘Oh, if we are so happy here,
Amid our toils and pains,
With thronging cares and dangers near,
And marr'd by earthly stain,
How great must be the compass given
Our souls, to bear the bliss of heaven.’ ”

“Then I could dwell upon those words, and connect the present with the future, and seem to get a more correct view of that which is beyond.”

The evening was far spent with their confidential consultation, when Aunt Tabbathy suggested the idea of having prepared some tea, toast and sweet-meats, and after they had all partaken, for the good of Sylvester it was thought best to drop the conversation for that evening. He then commended each to the care of the Great Shepherd and retired for the night.

Immediately after he had left the room Aunt Tabbathy said, “My feelings are so stirred for that poor dear brother, I know not what to think, or how to have him go from under our roof. But he has loving parents whose hearts bleed for him daily, and we must not be selfish in keeping him from them.”

“I feel as you do about him,” said Uncle Sammy, “I dread to have him go out of my sight. The impressions he is having almost seem like a fore-

warning. I would not say to him, but as I have looked at him this evening, I have felt that Sophia may not have him long to torture. He is certainly in a very feeble state. I will not allow him to walk over home in the morning. I will drive that way and it may be, Tabbathy, you had better go 'long over with us. I was thinking he would speak for us again next Sabbath, but he looks so poorly I don't know as it would be right to even mention it."

"He may feel better by Sabbath, as there are yet two days for him to rest. I will speak to him about it in the morning, and see what he thinks. I would much rather hear him than any other minister I ever heard preach," continued Aunt Tabbathy.

"Yes, by far. He has got an essence bottle in him that mighty few ministers have, according to my mind," said Uncle Sammy.

"Had it not been for Sophia, he would have been our minister to-day, and the way she took possession of him is too bad. Then, to fill his cup with bitterness, I cannot think otherwise than that he is being led as a lamb to the slaughter."

"The hotter the blaze the sooner it dies," said Uncle Sammy. "I think we may look for a turning point not far ahead."

"But I do not want anything should befall Sylvester. It is commonly said 'the good die young.' I have looked upon him hopefully. He has been so successful in scattering much seed that has taken root and sprung up not to wither away, and yet there are waste places where the sower is needed to sow."

The exercise of mind kept the two busy until a late hour that night; and in the morning, agreeably to Sylvester's wish, he was taken home to his parents

by Uncle Sammy, with Aunt Tabbathy to accompany them.

He reminded them by the way, that he should keep from his parents the most severe trials of his life. That for them to know all there was to know would only be to them an unnecessary suffering and would in no way alleviate him. He told them he believed if he continued in faith he should have strength, for we read, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

The sight of Sylvester was no surprise. The news had been communicated and the whole house had been confused with clapping of hands and joyful exclamations until, as Aunt Susan said, "L~~h~~! if I didn't think well nigh everything in the house would be upset. I tell you, Sylvester, we are all of us so glad to see you. I told them if I didn't happen to get the first hold of you, I would hang on the longest. And now, Tabbathy, we want you should lay your things right off, and stay along with us through the whole day, for Joe is going to bring over some nice fat poultry from the south barn, and we want to have a right down good old-fashioned time of it, so Sylvester will know he has got around home again." And to Aunt Tabbathy she cautiously said, "It does tickle me so, to think that woman ain't with him, it makes me feel as light as a feather."

The excitement was such that it was some minutes before any notice was taken of that pale, wan, sickly hue upon his face, but as that died down and Aunt Susan began to take things more coolly, she suddenly stopped with a look of seriousness, saying, "Why Sylvester it 'pears to me you are looking most dreadful hollow-eyed. I want to know now if

you have come home sick," instantly laying her hand across his forehead.

"He is not feeling as well as usual," said Aunt Tabbathy, "but we want he should mend up, to be able to speak for us on the coming Sabbath."

"Well, I don't know about that; I think he should not preach any more just now for awhile."

"I am not sick, mother, only a little complaining; I think I shall be able to speak. I have a desire to, and if possible, must." Then turning his eyes sideways to Aunt Tabbathy who understood his meaning, and after waiting for an opportunity, he faintly whispered, "It may be for the last time. There are a few things I had hoped I might live to see, one of which is Uncle Sammy's conversion."

"I am inclined to think him nearing the path of rectitude," said Aunt Tabbathy. "You, brother, have convinced him of many things. I have faith to believe the time will come and at no distant day, when he shall have thrown away the shackles of unbelief. You have been an instrument in the hand of God in doing him great good, and that you may live to do him still greater good, is the prayer of my heart."

By this time Uncle Sammy was in sight, with the boys flocking around him like so many tame lambs, and frisking quite as playfully.

"Oh, don't go home yet," were the first words heard as their voices rang in the open air.

"That will have to be as Tabbathy says; we didn't come expecting to stay, only brought Sylvester over."

"I hardly think it advisable to remain," articulated Aunt Tabbathy, and as that was very much the

opinion of Uncle Sammy, they began to prepare for home. But Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan were so persistent, with the help of the re-enforcement of children, the day was spent, but not lost, for while they were in social conversation with the elder members of the family, they were also highly entertained with the buoyant sportings of boyhood, and the laughter of merry-hearted girls as they busied themselves making ready a full table of delicious eatables.

But there, in the midst of open sunshine on one hand, and on the other the sunshine of hope, they were frequently being made acquainted with some new and valuable expression, spoken by Sylvester as one whose mind was over-charged with more weighty matters, with now and then an ode which they presumed he wished should serve as a prospectus to present the rudiments of his mind to his hearing friends.

“While it is interesting to hear you, I am afraid you are over-tasking yourself by too close attention to study,” said Aunt Tabbathy.

“In my thoughtfulness, I am lifted above the world, and to-day (giving Aunt Tabbathy a look) feel more like one being led beside still waters and made to lie down in green pastures than otherwise. That which is of moment to me to-day is the wish that I might be able to leave behind me lasting impressions of divine love, for the good of my fellow beings, that could never be effaced.”

“There are those of us to-day who will never lose that which they have gained through your instrumentality. You are a jewel in the hand of your Maker.”

“Aunt Tabbathy has for me a kindred tie, she

counts the gold but not the dross," said Sylvester.

Before the last sentence had fallen from his lips, Uncle Joe came to the door, saying, "What do you think, Tabbathy! Susan and I have been talking it over, and we think we best send for the doctor. There is something not quite right about our boy. He wants a little mending up some way."

"It would be all well enough, I think," said Uncle Sammy, "a stitch in time saves nine, according to the old rule." While Aunt Tabbathy sat thoughtfully looking on, making no reply.

"Should the doctor come to see me he would give me some medicine, and I do not like that kind of food; I prefer to wait until after the Sabbath. I may feel better by Monday; if I do not, and you think best, I shall consent to a physician."

"Yes, but you may be clear down 'gin that time."

"My mother's hand has a pain-killing effect on me, it has already helped my head. I think I have felt better ever since her palm pressed my forehead. I should much rather live first under the influence of what she can do for me."

Sylvester's confidence in his mother's ability to cure settled the question, and with some sport on the part of the younger boys who, interested in what was being said, began to frolic and jump, and meanwhile sang out, "Mother's hand has cured us."

"Yes," said Aunt Susan, "and ^{my} ~~law~~, if I don't have to lay it on till it's well nigh blistered."

At a late hour in the day Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy began to prepare for home, feeling benefited for having remained with their cherished friend—the idol of their hearts. To their already enlightened minds he had still added new and valuable

selections of thought as given them for a long continued remembrance.

During the early part of the evening Uncle Joe interested Sylvester by explaining many particulars in regard to the improvements he had been making on the farms—such as new lanes with self-swinging gates, etc., which he considered very convenient, until one and another kept dropping in, and in time the whole family were seated around in the room. It was very animating to Sylvester to see their faces all turned to him, and their mouths drawn to a smile, just enough to show the pearl.

“You cage me round as though I was a bird of prey,” said Sylvester, cheerfully.

“We wish there was just one more little bird here for us to cage around,” said Frankie.

Sylvester was at once overcome. Frankie had unconsciously troubled a smothered thought that could no longer remain hidden, and the tears gushed like the breaking up of a fountain. As soon as he could govern his feelings he related as many of the particulars of his life with Sophia as he felt was prudent for his parents' sake, and made them acquainted with his wish in case of his death. He told them he felt impressed to accept the time being, a more favorable opportunity might not be presented.

With all the love of their hearts, those kind parents assured him that they would never forget nor forsake his precious babe, but would care for it, as they had for him, if permitted, and would have his portion of property secured to the child in a way that could not be exhausted by any, not even its mother.

Whilst we could relate much in regard to the arrangement made between Sylvester and his sor-

rowing parents in reference to their financial affairs, we will not pause to give it room, but hasten on to that point which was of still greater interest.

When Sylvester had received the desired satisfaction in regard to his little son, Lemuel, and not willing to trust any part to be said in the light of an unseen to-morrow, he gave them good advice, saying: "I may live to speak to you many times, and should I, it can do no harm if I now tell you of those things which I wish you to remember; and should I not live, you may be benefited by the hearing."

He then addressed his parents and each sister and brother separately, affectionately impressing their minds with the present fading beauties of this lower world, and compared it to a spacious garden, whose fruits, flowers and leaves are nipped by autumn's frost. He presented to their minds the justice in appreciating all the visible things of nature, and of looking with admiration upon the beauties of this great garden, which God had fashioned and planted for the benefit of man. He then compared this to the still greater garden of God grown beneath the celestial skies.

He endeavored to bring accurately to their understanding the important truth which is, if it be just that we should appreciate and admire these things given us that are fading, how much greater should be our love and appreciation of those things prepared for us which are unfading and undying.

After having been listened to for a long time he bade them good-night, with his mother to accompany him to his room, and during the night she several times visited his room. None but those

who know a mother's love can realize Aunt Susan's anxiety and motherly watch-care.

At the breakfast hour Saturday morning he was up and ready to appear at the table, where he found especially prepared for him some broiled chicken, jelly, etc., all of which he relished with satisfaction.

Immediately after breakfast he assured his people that he had an unyielding desire to speak for the hearing of his friends the coming Sabbath, and should like to remain as retired as he could conveniently, to prepare his mind for it.

Unwilling to consent, and not feeling at liberty to oppose, the reply was simply, "I'm so 'fraid, Sylvester."

Much to the surprise of the family, when Sabbath morning came he manifested his usual brightness, and with apparently a comfortable degree of energy he went forth to his Sabbath day's labor. Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy, as well as others, had been standing between fear and hope. They had not dared to insist upon his speaking for fear of conflicting right with wrong, but as the Sabbath opened upon them, and Sylvester was found upon the pulpit stand, their hearts overflowed with gratitude, and they were ready to exclaim, "Truly, the Lord is good." As he came forward and took his place upon the foot-stool, that serene beauty which was so natural to him was as visible as at any time previous, and as he looked abroad over the vast multitude that had assembled to hear him, his eyes sparkled like one whose heart is alive with animation. He chose for the foundation of his remarks words found in Acts xiii, 26: "Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that

fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth."

First, he laid particular stress upon the words, "those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent," and contrasted the difference between those who fear God and those who do not, and their unparalleled distinction. He told them those who had no fear of God had no love for him, and were forgetful of him. They were not afraid to sin; that they had no consciousness of the all-seeing Eye of an eternal Father.

He laid before them in plain language the complicated union between the vile sinner and one who was morally so. He told them the moral sinner might commit a sin that was exceedingly sinful in the sight of God, where the more vile sinner could have no influence to sin. Then, too, it might not be done with a desire to do a wrong, but from a lack of grace in the heart. Consequently, a moral sinner being out of Christ, who lives for himself and the world, is a subject of sin, and living under the power of sin has no more heirship to the heavenly inheritance than the vile one. It is clearly said, "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new."

He told them where there was no love or fear there was no obedience; that the Most High was to be both worshiped and obeyed, and that if in those things there was a default, there was also a void.

He reminded them that obedience to God was a sure evidence of a union with God; that no person could live in obedience to God and not be His, and

it is to those in obedience to whom the text alludes, for it says, "Those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth."

He continued by saying: "If God had chosen just a few, an elect body, a certain number to share in this salvation sent forth, there could have been no grounds for the text, but for the reason that God is a God that cannot lie, the truth of man's impartial redemption through Jesus Christ is vividly set forth in the text."

So well did Rev. Sylvester handle the words of divine truth, that ere he left the stand he had torn the web of predestination to threads, and in such a way as to remove the wad of unbelief that Uncle Sammy was ever after able to see through the pipe. From the aged who leaned upon his staff, to the rosy-cheeked child of anticipation, all were alike happy with the prospect of again being permitted the privilege of shaking hands with their dearly beloved ex-pastor, and no sooner had he left the pulpit than he was thronged to so great a degree that Uncle Sammy was obliged to interfere, and have the congregation called to order, after which Rev. Sylvester stepped upon the back of a seat where he was held whilst he addressed them in tones of deepest affection. He thanked them for their kind manifestation of love for him and reassured them of his sincere regard for them, and if permitted would meet with them again soon. He was then carried by his father and Uncle Sammy, in consequence of the thronging multitude, and placed to ride by the side of his mother.

During the hours of the afternoon he was urged to retire and try to rest up, for, as Aunt Susan said,

“Law! Sylvester, if you don’t look well-nigh tired to death.”

Not willing to disturb unnecessarily their already awakened feelings in regard to him, he strove to appear in every way natural, by occasionally speaking of some religious matter of importance which had fastened itself upon his mind, or the gratification it was to him to have been privileged to speak once more for the hearing of those friends so particularly dear to him. Just as the twilight hour was coming on he said: “My dear parents, I must confess to you that I feel like the tired harvest man who looks about to find a grassy bed beneath some pleasant shade to rest.”

“Yes, I guess so too, and law! if I don’t think you had best lie down, Sylvester.”

“I think so myself, Susan,” said Uncle Joe, and both immediately arose, but ere they had left the room a strange sinking sensation passed over him, which greatly differed from anything they had ever before known, and by those terrified parents he was quickly caught up and placed upon a couch.

When consciousness returned, he said to the physician who had been summoned to his bed-side, “I am confident of having passed beyond the trials of this life. I am fast nearing the eternal gate.”

When asked by him if he was having pain, he replied, “No, no pain.”

“Why,” said Aunt Susan, “don’t you feel any aches or pains anywhere, Sylvester?”

“No, not any, dear mother, I know no ache, no pain! None have come to disquiet me. No sable shadows have arisen to darken my upward flight; only a sweet peace, so serene, is all I realize. It

takes possession of me wholly, and I think as I lie here, soothed by the Hand Divine, how easy it is for Jesus to make a dying bed."

Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan having a desire to learn of the physician something more definite in regard to Sylvester's condition, beckoned him to another apartment, where, before time was given him to tender his opinion, Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy had arrived and were ready to join in the consultation.

In her haste Aunt Tabbathy said: "You are hopeful, aren't you, doctor?"

"If the remedies act as I wish to have them," he replied.

"I am thinking whether or no he has not had a good deal of fever," said Aunt Susan, "for he has been most dreadful dry."

"Not very much fever, Mrs. Kinkade. At present I could not name disease, but to my mind his state of debility more closely resembles an over-tax of mind, a too close application to study, perhaps. It is more that than physical derangement. He seems to have weakened until he has become perfectly debilitated."

Encouraged with the doctor's opinion, Uncle Joe straightened himself up and said, "Susan, wife, then if that is so, our boy will be better 'gin mornin'."

Not thinking it wise to either too openly confess or conceal, the physician remained silent, and Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan returned more hopeful to the bedside.

"I think," said Uncle Sammy, whose feelings had kindled to a flame, "that I could tell you something about it." Meantime reaching out one arm

and laying his hand upon the physician's shoulder, looking him sternly in the face, said: "He has been ground under the millstone of oppression, that is what is taking out his life."

"I am not altogether blind in this matter," said the physician. "It is sad we know, cruelly sad."

"But how can we give him up? It must be that he will again rally," said Aunt Tabbathy.

"We can but hope," replied the physician.

As they yet sat looking each other in the face with sad hearts, the physician said feelingly, "We as friends suffer the greater pain. Sylvester is easy, and, in my opinion, will sleep away."

"Must he, must it be?" said Aunt Tabbathy, wringing her hands and bursting into a flood of tears.

Uncle Sammy made an effort to soothe her, but could not express his feelings to be understood.

"It is necessary that we remain composed," spoke the physician, and passed back to his patient who seemed to be sweetly sleeping.

It was but a short time, however, ere he awoke, and seeing Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy, who were by that time standing near him, he extended his hand to them. "I am so glad to see you," he faintly whispered, and pointing upward he said: "The gates are opening for me."

"I am afraid to have you speak; don't try, brother," said Aunt Tabbathy.

"No, no," said Uncle Joe, Aunt Susan joining him. "You must not talk, don't hardly think, Sylvester, but just shut your eyes right up and sleep now. If you should only have a good night's sleep, and once get rested out, ^{law}! if I don't think by sunrise you might feel as bright as a lark."

Sylvester turned his thoughtful eyes to Aunt Tabbathy, and again pointing toward the Throne, he moved his lips, and said in silent syllables, "I'll be there."

The physician kindly advised as did his parents, and assured him that rest in his case was more essential than remedies. After which he soon fell asleep and passed several hours of unbroken rest. When he awoke he said aloud, "My friends, I yet am here, but in a little while and I shall be gone. I want you near me, I wish to see and speak to you once more."

The entire family quickly gathered around him, and with a look of love he said, "You are so dear to me, I love you more than I can tell, and before I leave you I must again say to you, remember those things which I have told you, and know also, that every hour is a leaf of time—every week, month and year a calendar of time. Some have given them but a few years, some many more, but my dear parent, sister, brother, friend, whichever way it may be with you, be sure of one thing, that every leaf of your life bears the inscription, 'Love to God.' Let every page be stereotyped with the breath of prayer. That you may bear the imprint of the most high God, the Prince of Peace, and be clothed with that garment of righteousness which is acceptable to God, of a sweet smelling savor."

Before he seemed to have made an end of speaking, his strength began to again leave him, but after having rested a few minutes, he revived and kissed them each good-bye. During the little time he yet remained he appeared insensible to anything around him, only as he occasionally would seem to have

been aroused, and opening his eyes widely would look about with apparent surprise, and be heard to say, "What, what is that, do you hear?"

When asked, "What is it that you hear?" He would knowingly reply, "Music, sweet music!"

"Sylvester, my dear child," said his mother, "do you hear sweet music?"

"Oh, yes, dear mother, my ear is charmed with sweetest strains of heavenly airs."

Close there, unseen, unheard by mortal ear, beside him were those dim but tuneful watchers waiting his appointed time.

Just when the early dawn had lost its suit of gray, and the morning sun, the "powerful king of day," had raised his yellow head above the eastern horizon and spread afar his gorgeous wing in glittering rays, Sylvester's sanctified spirit was borne on wings of love, and placed by angels' hands to rest, beneath the mellow golden rays of the Sun of Righteousness.



"Close there, unseen, unheard by mortal ear, beside him were those dim, but tuneful watchers, waiting his appointed time."

CHAPTER XXXII.

“Dead! Dead, did you say? Sylvester dead!”

“I did.”

“Well he has prayed himself to death. It is just as I believe. One who will always sit under the shadow of perpetual watchfulness will be sure to die. He has lived staring death in the face ever since I have known him, and long before, I suppose. What was the matter with him? Did he say anything about me before he died?”

“I could not say. He died suddenly.”

“He wasn’t killed, was he?”

“He was not,” said the messenger, who was almost dumbfounded at the heartlessness which she exhibited, and proceeded to relate the circumstance of his death as had been given him.

“My sakes, is that so! Aren’t they going to bring him home?”

“There had been no arrangements made when I left. They wished to first send for you, also to have me notify the people here of his sudden death.”

“Well” she said, as she arose and turned a few times round as though she was in a whirl. “The mercy knows how I am to see through. There is everything to be done, a dispatch must go to my people, some trading must be done, and I must have some money. You had better drive around as quickly as you can, call on a few of the best families, that will be enough, but be sure you see the deacons,

and don't forget to tell them that I must see them right away, for there will be no time to lose."

The messenger obeyed, and in a short time the entire neighborhood was made acquainted with the sad news, many of whom repaired at once to the parsonage, and among them were the good deacons agreeable to her request.

Sophia made known to them her wants. A suit of mourning must be had, and nothing would satisfy short of a bombazine suit heavily trimmed with crape, crape hat and veil, with every other necessary article to correspond. "It is a question in my mind," said one of the sisters, "how these things are all to be got done. Will there be time, think?"

"He can't be buried until I am ready to have him, but I do not yet know when his remains are to be brought up. Of course they'll come. The funeral won't be there, I reckon," she emphatically said.

"I presume it was expected for you to return with the messenger to have a voice in the arrangement," said one of the sisters.

"Here is where they are to be made."

The deacons exchanged a mechanical look, and then told her they should drive to Kingumton, and if she wished, she could ride down with them, also expressed their opinion in regard to it, as being the better way for her to do.

Not feeling disposed to accept their advice, Sophia was soon left with but few who remained simply for company's sake, while many did as they had purposed, rode to Kingumton.

When the messenger returned, others also from Berkshire had arrived, and Sophia's plans were

made known to Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy, who by this time, knowing the wish of the afflicted family, and feeling, as they did, that it would be unnecessary to have the remains carried to Berkshire for a few hours, to be transferred so immediately back, felt cut to the quick. With this fog of sorrow before them, through which must be made a pathway, Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy felt obliged, as friends, to officiate, even though on the part of Uncle Sammy it was doubly sad, as he was not only a mourner, but his heart was undergoing that change as is known only to those who enter upon a new life.

They therefore talked the matter over carefully between themselves, and having learned as they had Sophia's disposition, that her delight was always to be on the side opposite to reason, they concluded it would be necessary to send out some one who had a more correct idea of her, and would have an influence, by being exceedingly careful, in her behalf, in order to get her consent to have the funeral obsequies at the home church in Kingumton.

A plan was soon decided upon, but not wishing to assume any unnecessary responsibility, but have every arrangement in harmony with the family of Mr. Kinkade, Uncle Sammy and Aunt Tabbathy made it convenient to immediately see them.

The plan was a wise one on the part of the mourning family, who thought it altogether better that Uncle Sammy, who was more closely allied to Sophia, should accomplish the mission.

When the question was once settled, there was no time lost, but as soon as possible, which was at an early hour in the afternoon, he started on his errand,

and returned in due time, having met, as was supposed, with great success.

“Then you really have been successful, have you?” said Aunt Tabbathy.

“Oh yes, I managed in this way—said but little at first, warmed my fingers good by the fire, then turned to the baby and began to praise that. I told her I thought it looked like her; that was enough to make my judgment all right you see, and she very soon consented to have the funeral here, as has been arranged without any further talk, and I guess she will have some crape basted on one of her suits already made for the present, and be willing to wear a borrowed bonnet for once, as I said. Then, too, it pleased her when I told her a dispatch had gone to Copperville.”

“Does she manifest any feeling?”

“Mighty little, I guess. I see nothing like grief or tears, and I have not heard tell of any. She will not be down before Tuesday evening, she thinks, on account of the baby, and by that time her people will be here if they come, and that they will without doubt.”

“That will be in plenty of time for her. I may be wrong, don't doubt I am, but as yet I cannot feel to say, ‘I bless the Hand that blasts each rising hope of earthly bliss,’—the lot of that dear brother, and now to know he is gone, to be forever gone. How can we give him up?”

“Yes, Tabbathy, it is hard to give him up, but I feel thankful that we sent for him, and that it was our privilege to be with him in his last hours, which is what we should not have had, had it not been for his uncomfortable life at home, and, Tabbathy, the

way he was impressed tells me the hand of God was in it. He was prepared, and met a triumphant death, a glorious end. Nor is this all. I have a blessedness in my heart by his having spoken for us this last time, that had he not, I may never have had. Hard as it is that he is gone, he has left his light behind him, and we must be satisfied to live by that light which was in a life gone past."

As soon as Aunt Tabbathy could control her feelings, after having burst into a flood of tears afresh, she repeated to Uncle Sammy her conversation with Sylvester during his absence on the previous Friday, and said, "To-day, only to-day and the shackles are thrown away. Could he only have known it ere his spirit took its flight. It was one thing among the many he had hoped he might live to see."

"Yes, indeed, I am sorry he could not have. It would have been to him a great satisfaction."

"Mother," said little Thaddie, who was an attentive listener, "don't you remember what Elder Sylvester told us one time when he preached from the psalms where it says, 'Be still and know that I am God.' It helps me not to cry, but to want to keep in the King's highway, just where he was and follow on."

"That is it, my little son, never depart from the King's highway, for it is the way of holiness and leads directly to the Celestial City."

A little later and Lucas Kinkade was seen coming with hurried steps to the door, to tell them they had just received a line from Sophia, saying Sylvester should not be buried until Sabbath, that they need not expect her down before Saturday. She could

not any sooner be suitably prepared. Father and mother want to know what is best to do.

“Pay her no attention at all,” said Uncle Sammy. “I endorse it,” was Aunt Tabbathy’s quick reply.

“An opportunity was given her to have had a voice in the arrangement, but a new dress and a crape veil was as far as she could think. It would be very unwise to make any change on her account, and it might inconvenience those who come from a distance. It is now too late, tell them; also, that we will be back soon.”

They spent as much time as they possibly could with their afflicted friends, until train time on Tuesday, when the friends from Copperville arrived.

It was a great relief to Aunt Tabbathy when Aunt Sabrina expressed her unwillingness to remain over night without seeing Sophia. An opportunity was presented, and after a little rest and refreshment she was carried to Burkshire.

Uncle Sammy was much pleased to see Jeremiah, a double cousin, and one, too, who in other days had been his particular associate, and who had shared with him many times in the sports of boyhood, but one whom time and distance had separated from him for many a long year. Consequently, there was a long line of reminiscences that could be presented on either side to occupy the leisure moments.

Whilst they were in social conversation, deeply interested with each other’s welfare, there was no connecting thread to fasten their fellowship to that which was passing between Saul and Aunt Tabbathy. It is not probable to suppose, agreeable to her irresistible desire to impress Saul’s mind that there was much remaining untold, things that could not

be related until he should have gotten full possession of those unhappy events connected with the history of Sylvester's life as they had fallen from his own lips.

When Sophia was sent for at an early hour on Wednesday morning she evinced surprise, saying she had ordered a postponement, that she had been doing as rapidly as she could, but was nowhere near ready. She was plainly told that her change of mind was too late for a change in the arrangement, and that the funeral obsequies would occur at two o'clock that afternoon, and that the present would be her last opportunity.

After some little fretting had been done and a few peevish words spoken, with the help of Aunt Sabrina Sophia was at last equipped "in a distasteful way," as she said, and they were started on the road for Kingumton by the way of Clarence, which increased the distance several miles, to get the hat that had been ordered. Having fleet horses, they were conveyed around in time to be seated at the dinner table at Uncle Sammy's with the family. They had been seated at the table but a few minutes when Aunt Sabrina broke the silence by saying she felt most dreadful sorry to think the funeral couldn't been put off a little; that she did like to see some respect paid to the dead, to which there was no reply.

Immediately after dinner Sophia began to adjust her hat and arrange her veil before the mirror, first face view, then back and on either side, by the aid of a small hand-glass, and, after getting it as she thought properly arranged, she called out, "Aunt Tabbathy, do you not think this becoming?" taking

a step forward, then turning sidewise that she might have a more correct aspect.

“Not at all becoming, Sophia,” she said with a seriousness that turned Sophia’s friendly manner to an inflexible stiffness. Aunt Sabrina, whose heart was suddenly touched with sympathy in Sophia’s behalf, began with great pains to inspect the new hat, and gave it as her opinion that it looked as well if not better than anything she had ever before had on. Sophia continued to make herself ready with her lips turned to a pout, and at an early hour all were conveyed to the house of Mr. Kinkade.

For the first time, so far as was known, Sophia burst into a flood of tears as she neared the casket which incased all that remained of her afflicted husband, fainted and was carried from the room. Those unacquainted with the circumstances, of whom Professor Gregnal was one, approached her with sympathy, and with a voice mellowed with the sweet spirit of grace, he presented in soothing tones her husband’s death as unaccompanied by pain, throbs and heartaches, all of which had been spared him, as a boon of immortal love.

“’Tis true,” he said, “we grieve that the ‘silver cord’ which bound up so many high hopes and happy anticipations for greater usefulness should now be loosed—grieve, though that ‘cord’ find a fastening in the better land.”

He spoke of his close acquaintance with the deceased during his college course and his attachment to him whose attractive and engaging character was now made perfect in glory. In consequence of the strong tie that had bound Mr. and Mrs. Gregnal to Sylvester they were better prepared to sympathize

with Sophia, whose feeling had become of an overwhelming nature, and so pitiable were her deep sighs and heavy groans that even the heart of a myrmidon would have melted. Not having sufficient strength to support herself, it became the duty of two of masculine power to kindly care for her during the exercises, and as Professor Gregnal freely offered his service to officiate on one side, it fell to the lot of Uncle Sammy to fill the sphere of action on the other. While Aunt Tabbathy and Mrs. Gregnal locked arm in arm and kept in close proximity to administer the tonic when required.

In this fearful condition, while all that remained of Rev. Sylvester Kinkade was being borne to its last resting place, Sophia was led supported by the two, to the cemetery, where she saw the casket lowered in the grave and listened to the last requiem. There she saw left intrusted to the tomb his sacred remains to return, earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

We now see Sophia with an infant babe in her arms, and the mantle of widowhood thrown around her. The funeral obsequies had passed, the delegation dispersed, the financial affairs had been adjusted, and all was over, like a vessel safely moored in port, leaving the ruffled waters behind. But she, though unconscious of her position, stood like an elm in the midst of a sandy desert.

“Sophia,” said Aunt Sabrina, “what’s been goin’ on, do you know? I see a good deal of close whisperin’ right away after the funeral. Don’t you know what they are expectin’ to do?”

“No, I’ve not been told one word, neither have they offered me one cent, and here I am left with this baby.”

“It may be they think you have salary money enough to last you for awhile; ’tis n’t long yet since he was buried.”

“I have got to find out,” said Sophia, “I was not pleased with their pushing me back to the parsonage as soon as the casket was sunk in the grave.”

“I thought myself that was most a dreadful strange move, when, too, you was so faintin’ like. ’T was n’t doin’ as Christians ought to do, I did n’t think.”

“I had expected to have staid back long enough to have seen how things were to have been managed. Of course I shall expect Sylvester’s share of the property, and now they could not keep it away from

me, do you think they could? Is not baby Sylvester's heir, and I, too?"

"I don't understand the law myself, but I should n't suppose they could. I am sorry you did n't stay down when you were there, then maybe I could have had a chance to put in a word. As you are mine I have a right to a word. But here we both are off in Burkshire, givin' them a chance to take all the advantage."

Mr. Brown's home business demanded his attention, and being desirous of seeing his old friends, he with Aunt Sabrina to accompany him, drove round and made short calls on the different families with whom he was connected, on Thursday after the funeral, after which they were taken to Burkshire to spend a little time with Sophia, and he returned home on the Saturday evening train, leaving Aunt Sabrina to be society for Sophia for a few weeks, also to enjoy visiting those upon whom she had called, and whose acquaintance she desired.

Several days wore wearily away, and no one came from Kingumton, not even Saul, who had remained a guest at Uncle Sammy's. The deacons began to interest themselves, and thought it about time Mrs. Kinkade knew where she was going, as they were not willing to live without a pastor, and the parsonage was the only proper home for one.

"I do not think I shall move until provided for," said Sophia, triumphantly.

"We are willing you should remain until the house is needed; we would not crowd you out before, but that will be but a short time. There is a man now ready to settle with us, and will be here to fill the pulpit next Sabbath."

“I am greatly in need of some money,” said Sophia, “there is, I believe, some back salary.”

“Not one cent, madam. Your husband’s salary was kept paid in advance, and you are now ahead of us quite an amount, besides the extra expense for attire to attend your husband’s funeral.”

“Shocking,” said Sophia, “and Sylvester’s pockets forever empty. I can tell,” she continued, “I hold the papers,” and returning to the desk began to shuffle to find the proof that there was quite a sum due, which should be handed over to her.

“Argument is unnecessary in the case,” responded the deacons, “we were too well acquainted with your husband to suspicion the slightest default on his part, but we affirm that his reward was universally paid before due.”

Not wishing to contend with her, the good deacons arose with a smile upon their faces, and from their lips fell the words, which were caught as they left the doorway, “She’s got her last dollar.” It was understood that there was a possibility of being shoved aside, but to where was a question. “It ’s a truth,” said Sophia, “I shall have to go to Kingumton for a strike. Father and Mother Kinkade must be made to know they now have something to do.”

“Yes, I guess so, too, but you will have to be most dreadful careful that you don’t let too much slip out. You know you might get excited like. It wouldn’t be best for them to know you have a lump saved up.”

“I do not call that mine, it is yours. You know I told you I would throw it back, and so I have.”

“But then it ’s your’s if you need it.”

“Don’t fear, mother, it will not fall from my lips;

but I have been thinking, supposing Saul had got hold of it. If he has he will never leave Kingumton without telling it."

"I've always been careful about Saul's seein'. It would n't done, no how. I hardly think he knows anything about it. Then there is Tom, too. On his account I could n't be puttin' money in the bank, he's there so awful big. He'd be sure to suspicion somethin' wrong and tell it. I've had to be most dreadful careful, and keep a little bank of my own."

"You do not trust all that amount of money in the house, I hope."

"No, it is right there," placing her hand on that part of her person where it was concealed.

"Heaven bless me," exclaimed Sophia, "all that money there."

"Why, yes. I knowed a woman once who carried the price of a farm just so, several thousand dollars, and too, a good long while. You know you generally sent home pretty heavy bills. Then I've been a few times to Florenceburgh—up there don't anybody know me; there I'd get it changed into still larger bills. A thousand dollars ain't much bulk when you have a good many dollars in one bill."

"But that's not a safe way to do, though, I tell you. Supposing something should happen you."

"Oh, well, but then I'm hopeful and always countin' on the better, besides I can purty ginerally tell when anything is goin' to happen by my dreams. I'm feelin' a little bit scary now, my dream wasn't any the best last night. I was handlin' fresh beef, and seein' so many white clothes layin' round; I do wish Saul would go off home."

"He will not, he will hang close here at Uncle

Sammy's, and they are as thick with Father Kindade's people as two swarms of bees would be in one hive."

"I am most dreadful sorry I didn't try to find out something before comin' away off here again, but then, there wasn't much of any chance for it. It did beat all to hear the folks talk, it was the same thing everywhere we went, it was nothin' but Sylvester and his goodness, and what he had done in his short life and his triumphant death. When they come to that part, that was so, for we do know it seems good to die so happy, everybody wants to, but then, there isn't any use in goin' over with his perfections, for he wasn't anything but human, and had a human heart like all the rest of us. But it was talk, talk and cry, cry, till I got clear sick of it, I am glad you don't cry and sniffle all the time. I was scared the day of the funeral you took it so hard, but you seem to be gettin' over it right well, I see. It's no use, it never brings anybody back, I don't care how much a body may want them."

"I know Sylvester was well meaning, but I would never again marry a minister, and always be hearing myself prayed for every day. It did use to so madden me, that I, to retaliate, would sing for his hearing,

"I cannot love as I have loved,
And yet I know not why,
It is the one great woe of life
To feel all feeling die."

"Why, Sophia, did you sing that for him?"

"Of course I did, I felt it too, but likely I would not have sung it, had he not punished me with his

prayers. I did it to cool him—it did, too, he would shrink at the hearing of those words sooner than at any other thing I could say.”

Still day after day passed and no one came from Kingumton.

“It’s likely,” said Sophia, “if I have got to hire a conveyance to carry me, when Father Kinkade has a throng of boys and a drove of horses. Here, mother, you just take the baby, and I will cross over to the deacon’s.”

Ere she was ready to leave, the deacon was in sight making his way over with a slip of paper in his hand, which they were sure meant something. After having been seated a few minutes, he held up the paper, saying, “Here are the figures, this is the total amount rewarded your husband for pastoral labor. This sum—fifty—was an endowment to encourage him in the beginning. This here,” pointing to the lower edge of the paper, “is the overplus and your late expenditures.”

This threw Sophia into a fit of anger and many unnecessary declarations ensued. After some time had been spent in an unprofitable way, Aunt Sabrina put in a word by saying, it seemed like a shame that a minister’s wife should be so dependent. That Sophia was wantin’ to go to Kingumton on business, but hadn’t any way to go.

The honest-hearted deacon told her he never tired doing good as he had opportunity, that he had no errand of his own to town, but it would not hurt him if he drove down to accommodate. It was therefore hastily agreed upon, and at an early hour the following morning Sophia and her mother were taken to Father Kinkade’s.

It was a trying meeting. They were parties for whom Uncle Joe and Aunt Susan could feel no friendly relation, or present any token of fellowship.

But there was that sweet babe, the object of Sylvester's tender care, the pride of his young life. They loved the child for its father's sake, and were more than willing to take it to themselves, nurture and care for it as they had its father before it. To Sophia the coldness was rather paralyzing for a while, but in time the story book was opened, and she related her wants, necessities, and expectations, and with all freedom reminded them of their duty to her as a daughter-in-law.

Uncle Joe squared himself in his chair, adjusted his hands in his accustomed way when there was anything of moment to be said. His eyes were to the spectator a dictionary, and his lips and tongue were on a level.

He told Sophia with emphasis that he was governor over his household and his land, that Sylvester had been considerate for his child, and that they entered into an agreement for the child in case it lived to be twenty-one. Also, had agreed to receive the child and care for it as they had for him if it was their privilege to do so, which agreement was carried into execution immediately after his death."

"Did he not make provision for me?"

"He did not, and had it been his wish, it would not have been allowed. We do not wish to contend or recite history, but our poor boy's life was made such by you, that we not only discard but disown you."

Aunt Sabrina put in a few words by saying she thought it would look most dreadful queer for

Sophia, a minister's widow, to be turned off that way—poor and with nothing to help herself.

“Mrs. Brown, our boy was paid, during his stay in Burkshire over twenty-five hundred dollars, with free house rent, besides a great many presents. Susan and I never went without carrying supplies with us. The most of their bread and butter was a gift from home, and yet our poor boy's pockets were ever empty. If he needed a new book, or any little notion, he had to come home for the money. Why? Because his wife carried the reins. She had to have every dollar placed in her hands or there was no living. The question is, what did she do with it? We all understand it perfectly, and all that remains to say is in whatever place she cast it, there she can go and pick it up.”

“Father Kinkade, do you really mean that I am not to be provided with a home and daily supplies?”

“I mean you will not be. You cannot eat of my bread, but the child we would be glad to keep and will kindly care for it if left with us.”

Aunt Susan, who had taken it in her arms and was bearing it closely to her bosom, trying to look down upon it with tear-clouded eyes, said in broken accents that she should like to keep the child; that it would seem to her more like Sylvester than any other one ever could.

“You will not,” said Sophia angrily, “it shall never know a Kinkade. No, indeed, you will never again see it,” and instantly snatched him away. And as soon as she could gather up her wrappings she dashed out into the street followed by her mother.

But there was no conveyance. The good deacon

not having supposed it necessary to remain, had driven over to the town. What were they to do? As they were resting upon the horse-block, said Aunt Sabrina, "You didn't half talk for yourself."

"Mother, that old Father Kinkade has an iron-found will of his own. Just as soon as I saw him square himself, I knew well enough what was coming and whatever it was, it would be as unchangeable as the blue sea. The plain truth is, Sylvester has entered complaints against me, and has had his portion of property all secured to baby, and cut me off wholly."

"A man that would do sich a thing as that, I'd never wear mournin' for," said Aunt Sabrina.

"I put it on for looks and the effect I supposed it would produce, but on me the key has been turned."

"We can't stay out here; where are we goin'?"

"To the nearest place," said Sophia, and started to walk on. They had walked but a little distance when they were overtaken by Uncle Joe who kindly offered to carry them over to Uncle Sammy's and though they disdained the thought, they were bound by the cord of necessity to accept the chance at hand. At Uncle Sammy's they were to brave another encounter. The looks of Sophia with her long crape veil was as distasteful to Aunt Tabbathy as a bitter almond, or even more so. It was indeed hard to welcome those for whom she had so little respect, nevertheless they were invited to remain to dinner.

"Has Saul gone home," asked Aunt Sabrina.

"He has gone on an excursion with my sons."

"When is he coming back?" and with a look of seriousness, continued by saying, she guessed some-

thin' would be done, there would be some findin' out.

Aunt Tabbathy was wise enough to allow Aunt Sabrina and Sophia the length of their chain until they had thoroughly sifted the Kinkade family and Sylvester's unprofitable life with Sophia—her many trials, present wants and destitution, also the way she was stripped of everything, together with the burden the child was going to be to them. For aught was known she would have to be taken home to be supported by her father the same as before she was married, with more to care for than she took away.

Aunt Tabbathy was plenty able to fill out the narrative on the opposite side of the question and did it to perfection, leaving no part dark or forgotten.

To Sophia it was a heart-grinding idea to think of Aunt Tabbathy having found and read those old letters. It still added a deeper sting when she was told the first step she took to encourage an advancement on the part of Sylvester. To know it was current that she had led her husband a hard life, and even wished he might not be permitted to return when he left her the last time was mortifying. And since it had pleased him to make a public exhibition of all that had passed between them, she would lay aside the crape.

“Tain't to be wondered at that you're cut off,” said Aunt Tabbathy. “I want to know, Sophia, if you did not make your last wish known in the presence of the messenger whom we sent to Berkshire to bring Sylvester to us. It can be proved, and enough to condemn you on every hand. And of the enormous salary paid him, you stripped him

of it, to consume whatever part you pleased to your own gratification, and sent the balance home to your mother."

"How did you find it out?"

"By the finger of God that sooner or later points out every ill."

"By the finger of Saul, you better have said."

"You need not feel you have a greater burden or care now than before you came. The child will be no expense or trouble to you if left with Aunt Susan."

"I would sooner bury it," said Sophia. "They shall never have the privilege of caring for my child."

"Be careful Sophia, the hearing ear is near, as Sylvester said to you, 'We know not what shall be on the morrow,' you may not have the privilege of carrying your purposes into effect."

They were at this point disturbed by a gentleman who had called with a telegram for Aunt Sabrina. Mr. Brown had been taken seriously ill and she was sent for to return immediately.

The news brought the two, Uncle Joe and Sammy, from an adjoining room, where they had been attentively listening to the preceding conversation.

After a few exclamations, and the lamentable cry, "What shall I do," rung out, it was suggested by Uncle Sammy that he should carry them immediately back to Berkshire where they could with haste pack their goods and take the train at Clarence for home. That they could get through just about as soon as to start from Kingumton. The proposition was considered a wise one by all interested, and in a short time they were riding, followed close by Uncle Joe in his long-boxed bobs.

In consequence of the sad news from Copperville,

the parties were less inclined to be watchful over each other, and by notifying the deacon, and having his assistance, also that of his family, the wearables were soon packed. Things were sifted and divided, those things which had been given to Sophia were speedily boxed, and whatever was claimed by Uncle Joe was loaded in his sleigh, and so fortunate were they in getting things ready for shipping, that in less than twenty-four hours from the time they had started with the good deacon for Kingumton, the parsonage was once more vacated, and Aunt Sabrina and Sophia were on board the train bound for Copperville.

As the morning star grew dim and sightless at the reappearing of the gray dawn, the clouds of thick smoke from the engine arose in mid-air, and drifted away on the floating breeze, watched by anxious eyes. The hearts of Aunt Sabrina and Sophia were meantime throbbing with an intense feeling of anxiety, fear and dread. The train that was speeding them onward ere noonday reached their destination, and they were soon once more at home, but only there in time to see the last moments of a life dear to them, and exchange a farewell token with the dying husband and father.

Alas, what an unlooked for event! A cloud of mourning was now hovering over them, caused by the loosening of that cord which had bound them together in life.

Experience taught them the language of a tear, they wept in sorrow. Their tears were those of most bitter grief. There was a thrill of agony that startled every nerve, a terror that naught could assuage. Sylvester's parting word came current

to the mind of Sophia, "We know not what shall be on the morrow," and fell heavily from her lips. She realized that which she had never before given a thought. Death enters here! Oh, cruel death!

It had previously been considered as possible, but not at all probable. It would come sometime, but that sometime had ever been placed a great way off at the furthest end of a long life. How natural, but how unwise! In the midst of their affliction they would cry, but their cries would not bring him back, neither could the application of the most soothing phrase prove an antidote to appease the touch of woe.

After looking long at the lifeless face they shrunk back and away hand in hand, to a lone apartment, closely followed by little Edd, who clung to his mother, trying to hide his face in the folds of her drapery.

They were as two who were about to enter upon an unbeaten path with none to lead the way.

"I don't see," said Aunt Sabrina, "but I shall have to take out one of these bills to pay the expenses, we sha'n't want to bury father poverty like. You know he hadn't anything laid up. He never could get ahead any, and here is this mortgage hangin' on us. Blessed thing you didn't throw away your mournin', for now you want it."

"Mother," said the lad, "father told us when he was sick, he was glad he had something laid up in the sky, and that is what he's gone to now. Father is rich up there."

"Child, that portion is what he gained by his religion, that's all for himself. It won't help us along any, here."

“Father couldn't lay up down here 'cause it took all his money to pay his debts.”

“You are a smart little boy,” said Sophia. “You seem to have gotten ahead a great ways.”

“He shall go right straight down stairs. I can't hear sich talk from my baby, when here I am crushed, almost crushed to death. What shall we do?” fell from her lips, followed by a wail.

“Oh, mother, we can't now plan for the future,” said Sophia, “but as you say, I see no other way but to use of that in your possession. In a few days, we will try and take things in consideration,” and with a shrug of the shoulders she continued, “long years to come without father. The very thought chills me, as I cast a glance over the prospects before us. If Saul was only here, but the dear knows when he will get around. May not be here yet in a whole week, and when he does come he will be so filled with lessons taught him by Aunt Tabbathy that he will not be himself.”

At this point they were summoned to meet those who were appointed to officiate, and make known their wishes, which were obeyed, and the sum required was drawn from the private savings bank to defray the necessary expenses, and every arrangement was made agreeable to the wish of the wife and daughter. Two days later and all that remained of Jeremiah Brown was hidden from mortal view.

Job says, “If a man die, shall he live again.”

Jesus Christ says, “I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

The occurrence was a sad unlooked for one by Saul who had ever felt deeply in behalf of his uncle,

and was ever ready at mercy's call to render him any assistance. He made no delay, but as soon as he learned of his illness hastened rapidly homeward, but in consequence of a mishap, the trains were not on time, which made tardy his progress, and he was only there in time to be allowed the privilege of a last look—a farewell leave with the family.

“Friend after friend departs,
Who hath not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts,
That finds not here an end.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The position that Sophia was now doomed to occupy was above all the most terrible to her. The vision of fame, the anticipated glories of some profession, the fascinating beauties of wealth had faded like the frost-bitten flowers in autumn. Once more she finds herself an occupant under the parental roof, pining under the circumstances of her humiliation. She reviews her better opportunities which have passed, and sighs over her self-wrought defeats. She would watch Mr. Harrison's return to and fro between the cottage and his place of business with admiration and regret.

She considered her union with Rev. Sylvester but an inconsistent step, and that her happiness had had no comparison with the yoke she had worn. Her father, whose pride and glory she had been, was taken away, and the thought of her becoming dependent upon her own exertions made life look to her like a long wearisome journey. The gloomy foreboding of the present appeared unalterable to her, and she grieved over the unfortunate lot to which fate had bound her.

"We can't tell, Sophia, it is n't best to be grievin' so. That child may come up and yet be a great comfort to you, and now we do know if he lives to be twenty-one he will have his father's portion, and have plenty of property, and it is a poor son that would n't take care of his mother."

“I do not count on such comforts,” said Sophia, “they are like pearls in the ocean, good if you could get them. I want none of this hoped for blessedness, I want something I can see—I want the bird in the hand. Just think, twenty years, long years, lie between this child and his portion of property. By that time I shall be worn to threads taking care of him, there will not be left of me a tittle. I have not had one comfortable night since Sylvester left me the last time.”

“Why! has he been so much worse?”

“I do not know, Sylvester always took the care of him nights. He loved so to do. It made no difference with him how much he worried and cried, he was the same little cherub. He never seemed to grow tired of baby, I don’t believe he knew what tired was, for I never heard him complain, I don’t care how busy he was kept. He would always help do the housework, and do it as well as I could, besides it did not hurt him as much, and had plenty time to study all he needed after the work was done. In every such thing he was really all I could ask. He never objected to my carrying the purse, but seemed willing as long as I did not refuse him money. Of course I considered myself competent of knowing what was needed. I always did the planning and kept all the bills, and such is woman’s rights. Now they have it to talk about, but I don’t care, what I wish is that I had more closely pinched, and sent more to you than I did, I could as well have saved twelve hundred. Now father dying, this you have had to be broken, and still more will have to be used.”

“I’ve been thinkin’,” said Aunt Sabrina, “maybe

we had best take up this mortgage and stop the interest, pay up all the 'rearages, there would likely be quite a little left, then keep boarders,—that I expect we could do."

"Keep boarders! Only to think what a life, always with my hands in the dishwater. I, a widow, a minister's widow, to become a waiter," and with her voice shrill and her hand trembling as she raised it, saying "God forbid."

He did; but how thoughtless the expression, and how quickly would she have swerved from it could she have heard the still voice whisper, "I will."

The poor straying child of nature, who had lived ignorant of immortal love, trusting to the world's fee, counting upon long years until she should have reached the brow of age, was destined to deeper dread, a more bitter disappointment.

Early, ere their financial affairs were settled, and whilst their future prospects for life were yet dimmed with perplexity, the hectic coloring was penciled upon her cheeks by the hand of God.

One day as Aunt Sabrina sat looking critically at Sophia's pallid face, she said "I don't think you need be worryin' about workin' to live, for I can stretch this private bank money a long ways, and likely it won't be long before something will turn up. as you are now you could n't help me, and I couldn't alone wait on a host of boarders if I had them, so jist be quiet as you can, you will all the sooner git well; there has always been a mornin' and evenin' star, and there always will be. Father's dyin' has come awful hard, that I know. 'Tis n't as if we had a fortune to lean on left us, but I think we will get along right after awhile. To help ourselves is a new

thing, it will come more natural in the course of time. A new wheel always runs best after it has been used, and that will be about the way with us."

"Mother, how much of that money is there left?"

"Why child there isn't so much less than a thousand dollars. There was quite a little bit over that. We haven't paid out so much, you see. Then it's Saul who holds the mortgage, he ain't like bein' a stranger, I should n't wonder if we had best let it alone as it is for awhile. To pay it would only open his eyes; I don't suppose he would ever crowd us. I did think one spell it would be better to pay it off, maybe, and clear our home from debt, but as things seem to work against us, I think we had best hold fast to the bird in the hand, and not trust to one in the bush."

The two still continued their planning for the future, and finally decided that they had a sufficient sum in their possession to last a long time without any particular effort on their part. And as Saul was kindly disposed, it was not thought he would allow them to want, and, there would come, in all probability a successful turn for them by patient waiting, if not otherwise through his influence.

Time jogged on more wearily than ever before. Sophia continued to grow more and more feeble day by day. Little Lemuel worried and cried as though he realized he was being cared for by new friends. Aunt Sabrina strove, toiled and tired, and at length, whether from over-exertion of body and mind, or actual disease, is not known, only to appearance she became seriously ill.

The good doctor administered according to his professional ability, and the ladies from all parts of

the town came flocking in like ministering angels to soothe, comfort and assist, and Satan came also among them.

It was very comforting to Aunt Sabrina to know she had so many friends. She had never seen the time when she felt better pleased with the ladies of Copperville. She really felt to reproach herself for not having before more highly prized them. In this state of appreciation she became strengthened, and the more fully she realized what her position had been, and the faithful attention given her the greater became her sense of gratification. It could well be compared to a volcanic eruption when two extremes meet, and in this case, what could be otherwise expected when Aunt Sabrina awoke to the fact that she had been defrauded by artful hands, and robbed of her hidden capital, but at what unconscious hour, or by whom she could not tell.

All alike had been faithfully kind as far as her judgment carried her, but to find her little bank (as she called it) in its proper place empty, threw her into perfect paroxysms.

Sophia at once awoke with suspicion, but before she could get a satisfactory answer to her inquiry, "What, mother?" she fell, and in a short time was to appearance in much the same condition. The physician, who was immediately summoned, stood for the first few minutes in earnest attention, then turning to Saul with a queer look, said, "Rather strange illness."

"Do you not call it spasmodic," asked Saul.

"There is an extreme inflammation in the vicinity of the heart," responded the doctor.

"But they are recoverable, are they not?"

After a long pause he cautiously whispered, "But faint hope, Saul."

"But faint hope! doctor, did you say?" startled with surprise.

Aunt Sabrina, whose ear had caught the whisper uttered with a shriek, "I thought you told me, doctor, the fever was all broke up, and I was 'risin' as fast as anybody could. You needn't be botherin' about me, in the future I'll take care of myself. If I had all the way through from the beginnin', I'd been better off than I now am, and Sophia would been in no sich condition as this either, poor child!"

After which, Saul who had been looking on with extreme anxiety was at once seriously impressed to believe that which had been told him, and looking the doctor earnestly in the face for a moment, then making a gesture with his hand walked through the hall and out on the veranda closely followed by the doctor, who without hesitation said, "My remedy was a good one, wan't it. It was my opinion to advance the idea that they were dying would bring them to life. There is trouble, do you understand the nature of it?"

"I was very suddenly impressed, immediately after Aunt Sabrina spoke."

"I recommend your influence in their behalf, it may assist in their recovery."

"I should not feel at liberty to look into their matters of business, unless solicited so to do. I have not at any time been made their confidential friend. If it is mere trouble at this point, they will in all probability wear through and come out right in the end."

"Mrs. Brown will, but—but mark my word—Mrs. Kinkade is on the decline."

“Do you really think that?”

“I am sorry to say I think it an undisputable fact, but it's the last thought she has.”

“Yes, indeed, she has ever set death and the grave ahead a great ways.”

“It would not be prudent to mention it to her it would only help hurry her out of the world. She may last several months, but I doubt her seeing the month of June. Her failure has been rapid since I was first called to see her mother.”

“It is for her undying soul that I should grieve, for unless she meets with a change of heart, she will go unprepared into the presence of her God.”

The doctor sighed, and shook his head. Aunt Sabrina's mind had become too deeply awakened to allow herself to quietly rest, and happening to turn her head sidewise on her pillow just at the time, she caught full sight of Saul's gesture in the looking-glass.

She was sure that meant something and determined if possible to know; she leaped from the bed and lightly followed on into the parlor. There taking a sitting position close to a window near where Saul and the doctor were standing, she could hear and understand distinctly their conversation.

Not willing they should overtake her in her effort to learn the extent of their meaning, and with her heart crushed with an almost deathly terror, she stumbled back, and carelessly throwing herself upon the bed, wept pitiably.

The attention of the two was at once arrested, and immediately returning to the bedside felt confident of her undertaking and success.

As their efforts to soothe her were unavailing the

doctor soon left, leaving Saul to administer according to his directions until his return.

“Doctors are turr’ble wise,” said Aunt Sabrina, as soon as she heard him walking away. “It seems they can tell what’s in a body’s heart without any trouble.”

Saul, who was tenderly touched with the appearance and circumstances, approached her kindly and bade her be consistently quiet, and try to get well again. “It is very necessary you should,” he said, “and quietude is essential in your case.”

“I guess I know all about that. Bring here that that chair, I’m goin’ to put on my clothes. I ain’t goin’ to have any more doctorin’ done. Where is Sophia, poor child?”

“Aunt Sabrina, you should be consistent with reason, and not be too venturesome. You have been quite sick, but this relapse is supposed to have originated from mental fatigue, which might again prostrate you. You are old enough to be wise for yourself.”

At this point Aunt Sabrina revealed to Saul her trouble, and led him into every particular in regard to it—what had been their practice, how and in what way it had been conducted, showed him the little bank and how it had been adjusted to her form, and the mysterious working to remove the bills from the thick sack firmly sewed, all of which Saul listened to with great earnestness, until he had learned the narrative from Aunt Sabrina’s own lips, which exactly corresponded with that intrusted to his keeping during his stay with Aunt Tabbathy, and in his old familiar way added, “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

“Yes, I s’pose so. That’s about what I expected to hear. I never in my life heard a man say he was in favor of woman’s rights.”

“I am greatly in favor of woman’s rights, Aunt Sabrina, but not in woman’s wrongs. Anything unjustly gotten is a heavy loss to an unfortunate gainer. Your accumulating means as you have, through Sophia, should have expected no better luck. No doubt the ones who drew the money from you felt they were doing no worse than you had. Not only so, but the very thought of your carrying such an amount of money about your person was unadvisable in the extreme. There are those in town who have believed this business was being carried on just as you have named, and those who have no care for honesty or honor, and who would be as likely as any to have an idea about it, would, if they had an opportunity, hunt for hidden money, and your sickness has afforded an ample one, especially to the night watchers. Had you advised with me you would have shunned many ills which you have had to meet. All I can now say in regard to the matter is keep still. Do not speak of it, you would be the more likely to get clew to it by so doing. Sophia may need it, and at present should have that which she has saved, but my regard for her is such that she shall not suffer.”

“God bless you, Saul,” said Aunt Sabrina, meantime throwing her arms around his neck, “I am so glad to hear you say that. I am willin’ myself to work, but with Sophia it always seemed so hard to her.”

“But I don’t believe what that doctor said about her though. She is bein’ pulled down takin’ care of

that child, that is what ails her. I wish she had left it in Kingumton. Maybe she would if it had n't been for their meddlin'. But you didn't tell me where she 'd gone."

"I think to her room, the boys are there."

The talk excited Sophia to make another effort to get to her mother's room, saying, as she entered, "I should not have thought I could creep out, but the doctor's imposition maddened me, and I ran."

Saul's magnitude of mind in skillfully turning words to his will, truly did in time alleviate the aggravated feelings of sorrow and disappointment in the minds of Aunt Sabrina and Sophia, so much so that they were able to look through the overhanging cloud with a susceptibility almost remarkable.

"It won't buy heaven for them, anyway," said Aunt Sabrina, "and accordin' to Saul's doctrin' it will fall back on them some day, whoever it is that's got it. I should n't wonder if we 'd find it out that way. Blessed thing if we should. Truth and honesty is what comes out ahead, I've made up my mind to that," and resting her chin on one hand, she gently closed her eyelids, and for some minutes sat as one seriously weighing a valuable thought. Soon after which, with a great degree of earnestness she spoke out, "Do you remember what Tabbathy said there the last day just before startin'."

"Indeed I do, and I am thinking what she would say again, and all the rest of them, were they to hear our luck. It would be, 'A just judgment upon them, for, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' I am, mother, so sorry you dared to carry it by you. Do you not recollect what I said

once, supposing something should happen to you?"

"Why, I was only sick in my own bed at home, and I do wonder who'd dare be meddlin' 'round me like that."

"A thief would, and did."

"Well, when I'm sick next time, I'll be enough for them, I'll warr'nt it. I'll keep my eyes open except when the key's turned."

To Sophia each day was a telling one. She continued to grow weaker and more emaciated, but still remained unconscious of the disease that was preying upon her until attacked with hemorrhage, which not only prostrated her, but revealed to her her own indisputable condition.

For many hours after she was unable to speak, but the look of her eye denoted the sorrow she was undergoing.

As soon as Saul thought it consistent, he inquired of her if she was aware that her physical nature was sinking under the weight of disease, to which she faintly answered, "How can that be? I love myself so well, and this beautiful world, how can I give it up for the dark and lonely grave?"

"But do you not know we cannot contend with the Almighty? We can only invoke and implore. We cannot say to disease and death, Stay back! They are God's messengers, He speaks and they obey. God called your husband, His voice was heard and he was taken—your father, and he went away. 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.' If God is pleased to reach forth for you, we cannot either of us stay His hand. But Sophia, I will do for you all I can, I will imploringly ask for you at the Throne of Grace, I will plead in

your behalf that He stays His hand until you shall have become reconciled to Him."

"Saul, ask Him to make me well to live the life I love. I do not want to die, I am afraid to die,

"And go we know not where,
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot."

"I will ask him to restore you, if it can be in any way consistent with His will, and above all, that a new heart may be given you, that if you leave us you may leave behind you an evidence of Divine favor." Then kneeling by her bedside he breathed forth a heartfelt and searching prayer. It reached the Throne."

Still she continued to lie day after day, longing for the joys of earth, and was unwilling to even think of exchanging the visible for the invisible world only as she was made obliged to by the progress of her disease. She could see herself only in the light of nature's grace, and all along the line of life could find no place where she had sinned against the Holy One and Just, and had lived a stranger to her Advocate.

There was nothing of which Saul could think that in any way would be likely to benefit her, that he did not try, encouraged by faith. He would often sing for her, and at one time he sang

"Within thy circling power I stand,
On every side I find thy hand,
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God."

after which she said "I wish I was like you, Saul."

He returned a smile and recommenced with the words:

“What love has done, sing earth around,
Angels prolong th’ eternal sound ;
Lo! Jesus bleeding on the tree,
There, there, the love of God I see.

“I look, I gaze—my rebel heart
Feels its own hardness soon depart,
Repenting tears begin to roll,
And love, in streams, flows through my soul.

“The cross I view—Oh, wondrous love,
My sins expire, my fears remove,
My wicked enmity is slain,
I’m reconciled—I’m born again.”

Tossing her handkerchief over her eyes she remained silent, but to Saul there came a flash of hope that the Spirit had commenced a work of grace in her heart 'long side her will.

He continued to prayerfully reason with her, and to enlighten her mind, by presenting the truth of her unregenerated nature and her need of repentance, and becoming justified by faith. Yet to Sophia, through all the long hours that lengthened into days was that gloomy grave before her, and she was afraid to enter. She had not awakened to the obligations she was under to God, or to realize her need of a Savior, or look into the truth of her unsanctified nature. She could be affected to tears, but that will was unsubdued.

Said Saul to her one day, when she was in great distress of mind over her fearful condition, “I have faith to believe you will, in answer to prayers offered in your behalf, see God as your father, and feel the loving kindness of a merciful Redeemer before you pass away. But God alone can do the work, and to him shall be all the glory.”

A few mornings later, and at an early hour she

asked her mother to call Saul to come quickly to her, which she immediately did.

She had just awakened from a frightful dream. She told him she had been standing upon the very brink of a terrible chasm, or river, she knew not what to call it. It was no wider than an ordinary river, but so long that she could not see the end from either way, and so dark. It was, she said, a thick impenetrable darkness, too dark to see below its surface, and upon the furthest edge she was standing so near that she would with the least jostle have fallen, to sink, to have been sunken irrecoverably into that dark river.

But upon the opposite shore she saw a fertile field, wide-spread like a beautiful landscape with its mounds and fountains, flowery lawns and groves dressed in living green, waving their leafy boughs in summer air beneath a sunny sky.

There too, she could see many moving about apparently in the sunshine of perpetual happiness. Among those she had recognized her husband who seemed to be caring for her, and was anxious she should cross over to him, but not from where she was standing, but he would beckon her to the right, just a little way to where the chasm was bridged.

She saw the bridge, it was but a little step from her—beautiful in its structure and handsomely lighted, and to this he lovingly beckoned her to try to get to the bridge, and cross over to him in safety.

She said whilst she could not hear his voice, she knew his meaning, and though she was afraid she would fall if she stepped, she did try, but she could not move her feet. In her agony trying to move, to get to the bridge, she awoke.

Saul, after attentively listening to the dream, clasped his hands firmly, saying, "Blessed be God, as I have before said, He can do the work. Sophia, He has in merciful loving kindness favored you with this vision in dream to show you your position and need of a Savior to light you through the valley of the shadow of death, and to the society of the just made perfect. From where you now are, away from the bridge of glory, you cannot reach the land of peace. But He, the Prince of life, is ready, waiting, wanting to throw around you his everlasting arm." He then sung for her:

"The vision of the tomb is past,
Beyond it who can tell
In what mysterious region cast,
Immortal spirits dwell?

"I know not, but I soon shall know
When life's sore conflicts cease,
When this desponding heart lies low
And I shall rest in peace."

"For see, on death's bewildering wave,
The rainbow hope arise,
A bridge of glory o'er the grave
That bends beyond the skies."

As the chime of bells disturb the tired sleeping ones to wakefulness, even so the dreamy vision awoke Sophia from her long slumber in sin's dark realm.

He conscience revealed to her that which she had not before known as having, a sinful heart—one unrenewed by Divine Grace. Her past life came up before her like a dense wilderness, through which there could come no gleam of light. She sorrowed over her sightlessness and her sins. She realized she had grieved her Maker in a thousand ways, and

dwelt much upon the root of enmity which had grown in her heart and born most bitter fruit. Those harsh inconsiderate expressions which had fallen from her lips oftentimes so inhumanly in reference to many, more especially Maria, were to her a pang of deepest woe, and she sighed to be forgiven. Her husband, the look of his placid countenance, his indulgence, his faithfulness, his fervent prayers, and her own unrighteousness all arose afresh, and swept over her like fiery flames from which she could feel no safety. She could now see with unfeigned eyes, and confess to God with unfeigned lips, but from her, one like her, he had turned away.

During those days of mental suffering she asked to have her poor helpless babe returned to those who loved him best, the only mention she made in reference to the world lying behind her. With this weight of sorrow and dismay, she sunk into a state of impenetrable darkness of mind, "Lost, lost," she would faintly whisper; no psalm, no hymn, no word of promise could find a tying place within her breast; no prayer could sooth her sorrowing soul. All was lost—her hope, her life, her heaven, were lost. Jesus was able, she believed it; but how could it be, He save such an one as she! she was sure of having passed beyond the boundary of His love. Like the doomed who fall in the arms of fate and bow beneath the rod, she faintly said again, as though it were the last, "I'm lost, but God is good."

Mr. Starky, who was standing near her bedside, said with emphasis "Lost! lost! because your sins are greater than Christ's love? far from it. It was the lost He died to save. To the thief on the cross He said, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'"

When he spoke she raised her eyes to him with a look of appreciation, then, after closing them for a few minutes apparently in silent prayer, she opened them heavenward, and raising her hands high, she exclaimed aloud "Glory! glory! I have gotten, I have gotten the victory!" and passed away to receive her crown, but starless.

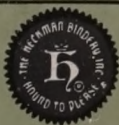
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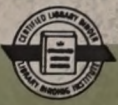




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