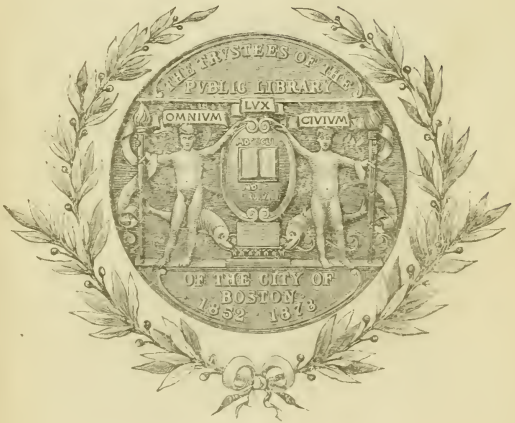

The Homestead FRONT.

DR. DEANE'S WAY,

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

FAYE HUNTINGTON AND PANSY.

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DR. DEANE'S WAY.

CHAPTER I.

"A LITTLE FIRE."

"I THINK, Lois, you'd better not."

"Why can't I, I should like to know?"

"Your father won't like it."

"He never likes anything!"

"Lois!"

"Well, it's so! I can't do this, and I can't have that. I can't go there, and I can't stir here at home, because father *won't like it!* I'm just sick of hearing that same old story."

Lois Deane sat by the stove, swinging her

hood by one string while she thumped her heels impatiently against the legs of her chair. Mrs. Deane was stirring Graham gems in the pantry. As she sifted the coarse, grayish meal through her fingers, she expostulated:

"But, my child, your father certainly knows what is right and proper for you; and as a physician he is the best judge of what is healthful, and of course he has a right to regulate your expenses."

"Health and economy! I've heard those two words until I fairly hate them," and the rapid thumps of the heavy winter boots gave decided emphasis to Lois's words. "I'd gladly be sick and extravagant for the sake of *once* being and doing like other folks. One thing is settled,—I sha'n't have my lessons to-morrow if I have to sit in this room all the evening with father and Professor McDown; and I don't care a snap! I'd just like to know what is the use of having a stove in my room if there is never a fire put in it? I don't think it is a very ornamental piece

of furniture. I 'll sell it and buy something to eat besides Graham gems."

Mrs. Deane whisked the batter spoon about, passed it carefully around the sides of the yellow earthenware dish and began to pour out her dough, but made no reply, partly because she was used to Lois's outbursts, and partly because she sympathized with her.

"Hi! What 's up now, Miss Pout?"

The speaker was Tom Deane, who now appeared in the door-way, laden with school books and skates.

"I guess you 'll be *Master* Pout when I tell you," replied Lois, shortly. "Old McDown is coming to talk politics and such stuff to-night, and we are so terribly poor that we can't have another fire; so you and I will have to study in the sitting-room, and not dare to breathe for fear they will be disturbed! *That 's* what 's up. And another thing, for fear you 'll be a dyspeptic, you 've got to eat *bran* all the days of your life! Nice, is n't it?"

"Lois!" interposed her mother as she deposited the despised bran cakes in the oven, "you are getting unwarrantably excited and bitter. You will probably be sorry someday for what you 're saying."

"No I won't! It is every word true. I do n't like the way we live, and I may as well say so. Tom! do come in or go out, and shut that door. We can't afford to warm two rooms, much less all out doors."

Tom whistled good-humoredly as he hung his skates in the closet and put away his books before attending to his evening chores. There were no idlers allowed in the Deane family, and Lois had her own work to do, so she started up as Tom went out, and took her wraps to the closet. Tom had some way made a mistake and appropriated her hook for his skates. Now one of Lois's great trials was that she was not allowed to skate. Dr. Deane did not think it proper for girls to skate, and the sight of Tom's new pair made her angry. Had it been any

other article out of place she would doubtless have removed it, and so ended the matter, but she went to the door and called:

"Tom! Tom! Come in right away!" Tom was busy feeding and petting Black Jenny, but supposing it to be an important matter, he obeyed the summons at once.

"What 's wanted! Anybody *kilt?*"

"Take your old skates off my hook! I want to hang up my rubbers," was the ungracious command.

"Well, now! I 'll give up. My lady has lost the use of her hands! How long since you were taken? Mother, got any what you call it — liniment cure-all, or something? Better have them attended to before they get bad," and the thoroughly good-natured boy whistled himself away.

"Lois Deane! I think that was a real mean thing to do! I would n't have done it."

It was Kitty Deane who uttered this exclamation. Like her brother and sister she had just

come in from school,—as usual a little behind them.

"Of course you would n't! But then you are perfect and I am not. That 's the difference between us."

"But, child," said Mrs. Deane, "it was not kind."

"I know it! But the sight of Tom's skates makes me feel ugly. Just as if girls did n't want to have a good time as well as boys. There is going to be a skating party Saturday afternoon, and tea at Libby Kimball's; but, as usual, I have to be left out."

For answer Mrs. Deane only sighed as she placed the chairs at the supper table. She had long ago given up pretending to have a way of her own. A quiet, meek-faced little woman, she was spending herself for her family, sometimes sorely puzzled as to the ways and means of gratifying her children without crossing the prejudices of her husband. As a young girl she had indulged in dreams and aspirations which had

died out in the cold, unsympathetic atmosphere in which she lived, and she thought of them sadly as she looked into the faces of her young daughters and wondered if all the sweetness and innocence, the longings and cravings for a different sort of a life would be quite crushed out.

There were great possibilities in Lois Deane's character; but oh, how much she needed wise and loving guidance. Had Mrs. Deane possessed a stronger character she might have gained her children's confidence, and, working for the mental and moral needs as earnestly as she did for their physical, kept them from follies that brought wretchedness in their train. The town in which the Deane family lived was not large; indeed it was so small that you might know your next-door neighbor sufficiently well to lend her your last magazine or send her a dish of strawberries from your garden, and borrow her napkins and china when you gave a tea-party. The Deanes lived in a plain, comfortable-looking house on a quiet and thoroughly respectable

street. Dr. Deane had taken care to put three blocks between his house and the public school lest his quiet should be disturbed by the shouts of happy children who had not yet learned the art of repression. He hated noise, as his own children early learned; and his home-coming was the signal for putting away noisy plays.

There was a sort of a subdued air about the people who lived on Elm Avenue.

"Boisterous shout and song"

were seldom heard. The children rolled their hoops and trundled their carts quietly until they reached the corner of Elm and Main Streets, where a new atmosphere seemed to await them, and they were quickly transformed into the noisy, rollicking and sometimes rude beings that are the especial torment of nervous people. If everybody had been trained according to Dr. Deane's idea, a very different sort of people would have inhabited this world. Very little variety of taste and habit would have been allowed; but everything and everybody would

have been gotten up in a correct and proper style, moving on in straight lines, no jarring or chafing, not even a thumping of elbows. Things being very different from his views, he thought the world all wrong, and he meant that the little part which he had the control of should be set going right; but he found that the material he had to work upon was none too pliable. Theirs was a very plain matter-of-fact way of li Work to earn your bread, eat your brea sustain life, live — for what? Ah! I think was where Dr. Deane failed. If he could l taught his children the secret of *true living!* As it was, he succeeded in making life somewhat hard for them.

Truth was, the doctor was a dyspeptic — nothing agreed with him, either physically or mentally, except the very plainest of food both for body and mind. He had dyspeptic patients whose views of life were equally somber; and not content with prescribing for these and himself a rigidly plain diet, he insisted that the ac-

tive, vigorous natures, the eager, expanding minds of his children should be sustained, grow and develop upon the same food. He forgot that people can not and will not all follow in the same groove, and that, unless there is a chance for them to diverge naturally and easily, there is danger that they may break over in perilous ways and places.

Professor McDown was an old college friend, and when he came to take charge of the academy, Dr. Deane seemed to throw aside his cloak of reserve and warmed into something quite like geniality toward the professor. It may be that in spirit he was carried back to the days of early manhood, before he had met with the reverses of fortune and suffered from the falsity of others, things which had helped to sour his temper and darken his life.

Tea being over, — I mistake, the beverage was not used in the Deane family, — the evening repast being over the center-table was wheeled a little nearer the fire, and Dr. Deane and his

guest sat down with the chess-board spread out between them. Chess-playing was the doctor's sole pastime; but, mind you, he did not call it pastime, — he played for the sake of the intellectual discipline it afforded. On this particular evening the game seemed to lose its interest, and the two fell to talking over old times.

Tom and Lois were eager listeners. The large lamp on the table did not light up their corner very well. Tom could n't find the cities and rivers on the map in the dimness, and Lois "did n't care whether she had lessons or not," so both fell to listening. Ah! better had it been to let those old-time follies remain buried. Had Dr. Deane once looked toward that corner, he would have seen two pair of eyes filled with wonder and excitement. Could their father, grave and taciturn even to sternness, as they had always known him, and stately Professor McDown, have been the heroes of those exploits, wild and fantastic as they were?

"Do you remember," said the Professor, "how

we confiscated old Jack's pears? And I don't believe there were ever pies like those you handed through Widow Stone's pantry window!"

"But the greatest game of all was when I passed you off as my sister! I tell you, Professor, you've lost your girlish looks." And the two old chums laughed heartily at the recalling of their pranks. Even Mrs. Deane smiled, pleased to see her husband in such unusual spirits.

Tom and Lois went to bed that night with ideas in their heads that they did not get between the covers of their school books. Months later, Lois exclaimed in her anger:

"If you had n't been so stingy as not to let me have a fire when I wanted it, I should never have got into such a scrape."

As Tom shivered his way into bed, he said to himself: "Whew! father was n't always such a sober stick. He did n't think it was such an awful thing to miss a recitation or go off on a lark. I'll take my share of fun after this."

Ah! if Dr. Deane had only been in his boy's confidence, that he might have said: "Tom, my boy, your father was a wild youth; he sowed his wild oats, and they brought a harvest of shame and sorrow."

As for Kitty, she curled herself up in a corner of the sofa and was fast asleep long before the interest in the game of chess began to flag.

Kitty Deane was very unlike Lois in many things. For one matter, she was not afraid of her father. She was never disobedient, for she did what she liked, went where she pleased, took what she wanted without so much as asking permission. If her father chanced to reprimand her, sometimes she pouted, sometimes she laughed, and always said, "I don't care." When the doctor was displeased he called her "Catharine," which vexed her. When a very little girl she would stamp her foot and exclaim, "Don't call me that." She didn't mind cold rooms, but as for Graham bread, she flatly refused it. Once, when she was nine years old, her father said,

"Catharine, you must eat brown bread or go without your supper," and she went without.

The next morning her father passed the bread; one look into his face told her that he was in earnest. She took a slice and swallowed it.

Then she said, pleasantly:

"Father, I ate that to please you."

"Did you?" he said, surprised.

"Yes, Sir. And now won't you please not to ask me to eat another piece? Anyway not for a great, great long time!"

For some reason best known to himself, Dr. Deane thought best not to press the matter, and thereafter Kitty ate her baked potato or her porridge, and drank her cup of milk contentedly.

Lois once passionately declared that Kitty was the favorite, which was her mistake. Kitty was not her father's favorite. Her ways did not please him; but upon the one or two occasions when he had undertaken to manage her, it had proved such a wearisome job that he gave it up and left the task almost entirely to Mrs. Deane.

only throwing in a stern rebuke now and then by way of doing his duty.

Truth to tell, Dr. Deane did not under[illegible] child-nature. He had outlived his own [illegible] hood, what little there was of it. He ha[illegible] sweet and tender memories of a loved and lo[illegible] childhood. There was stern discipline in the early home, and prompt obedience born more of fear than love. But as much could not be said of his own children. They grew up saucy and rebellious; at least this was true of the daughters (Tom was different), and Dr. Deane could not understand it. If Mrs. Deane understood it, she could not help it. She thought her husband too strict, and without knowing it she encouraged their waywardness. Though the ten commandments were early drilled into their memories, they had never been taught to "honor" father and mother in their lives. They never considered that because he was their father he had a right, God-given, to their respectful obedience in those things not contrary to God's requirements.

CHAPTER II.

"HOW GREAT A MATTER IT KINDLETH."

JENNY MATSON was a boarder at the seminary boarding-house, and she was Lois Deane's particular friend. Among school-girls that phrase means that they shared each other's secrets under the strictest promises "never to tell," shared each other's nuts and candies and all other school-girl treasures; met with loud expressions of delight after the separation of a night, and when school hours were over parted with lingering step and many farewells. They never missed any opportunity of being together, and ignored for the most part the existence of their school-mates. However,

there were four or five other couples which, standing in the same relation to each other, formed with these a sort of clique. Now, a set of school-girls made up in this way are capable of the most wonderful achievements. By their cunningness and keenness, their ingenuity and audacity, their sauciness and their sweetness and simplicity, they carry their points. By some of these means they manage their superiors, and really nobody seems to know that they are being wheedled and coaxed into some absurdity.

Lois and her friends were assembled in Jenny's room during the long recess discussing plans, a "committee of ways and means."

"I'll tell you," said Lois, "what to do. Let 's have a masquerade party! Some night I 'll stay here with Jenny, and we 'll get together after the nine o'clock bell and fix up in all sorts of costumes."

"Splendid!" said the others. all in a breath.

Such scheming and contriving as followed.

"What will we do about refreshments?" asked Jenny.

Several plans were suggested, such as asking cook to give them supplies, using their pocket money to buy the necessary articles, but these modes were altogether too correct and proper for their purpose, and just here the teachings of that fatal evening again developed themselves, and Lois came forward with her plan.

"You know," she said, "the day-scholars bring lunches. We 'll help ourselves out of their baskets."

"And perhaps we can get into the store-room down-stairs," said Jenny. "There 's the sliding door; we can climb through that if we can't find the key."

So the plotting went on. It required several days to perfect their arrangements, but finally the party came off and was pronounced a grand success by the participants, and of course they knew!

It brought out all of Lois's strategic powers to

gain the necessary permission to stay all night with Jenny, and once the plan seemed near failing entirely for want of so simple a thing as this. But finally, upon her showing that she and Jenny were learning a duet that required much practice together, and which they were to sing at the coming examination, the desired object was gained, but only because Tom was laid up with a lame foot and could not go for her at nine o'clock, as Dr. Deane had at first insisted. The brilliant idea of pilfering the lunch-baskets had been successfully carried out, and little Minnie Frink had squeezed herself through the slide and handed out a whole pie and a lot of pickles with cold meats.

Julia Wright's room, being the largest, had been selected as the scene of the play. Those who were busy with their toilets when the under-teacher went her nine o'clock round had simply responded to her tap, "Light out at once," and no mischief was suspected. Five minutes later a strange group was assembled in

Julia's room. The costumes had been kept a secret; remember their secrets were in couples. And here were two in boy's dress! Who could they be? Of the ten girls engaged in this frolic, Lois Deane was one of the last to be suspected of such an impropriety, but when the masks were removed the exclamations were,

"Lois Deane!" "Jule Wright!"

"How could you!"

"That 's what you had your hair cut for, was it?"

"Before I 'd have done that for the sake of a little fun!"

"Little fun!" said Julia, "I mean to have considerable out of it before I 'm done."

"How did you get your dress?"

"I found a way," and Julia never told.

There are ways found for many things that parents and teachers never dream of. O! mothers and teachers, seek the confidence of the young girls, save them from the follies that, in a greater or less degree, bring shame and remorse

Said a lady, not long ago, "I am filled with surprise, when I look back to my school-days, that I was not utterly ruined in health and mind, body and soul, and I was a steady girl compared with many of my companions."

The masquerade was over, and they were not found out! Just as the clock struck twelve, one by one they glided stealthily through the dark, lonely halls to their rooms. The room was cleared up, all traces of the feast put away, nothing left about that could tell the story of the night's frolic. After all, the eating had been the principal part of the entertainment, and if there is truth in the old saying about stolen fruit, they must have had a deliciously sweet repast, for everything was stolen. Of course the girls did not employ that ugly word. Lois remembered that her father and Professor McDown had used the newspaper word confiscation, and she introduced it for their use. The girls who were in the habit of leaving their baskets in the cloak room had missed their lunches, and the cook

knew that the store-room had been invaded: but the suspicions of all parties pointed to the boys' hall. The girls chuckled over this, and congratulated themselves upon their expertness.

"Is n't it jolly?" said Lois, as she talked it over with Jenny. "I 'm glad everybody do n't believe in Graham. I do n't know what father would say to my eating such things."

"He would feel worse about that than about your stealing it, would n't he?" laughed Jenny.

Lois flushed.

"It is n't stealing — not real stealing. It is only for fun, you know. There can't really be any harm in it, for it is precisely what Professor McDown told about doing, and laughed over it as a good joke."

"And I suppose that when we are forty years old, we may tell of it and laugh over it; but we do n't exactly want to be found out now, do we?"

"I reckon not," replied Lois, horrified. "It would be hotter for us than the pickled pepper

you fished out of the jar and took in your mouth when you thought you were going to drop it on the stairs."

"My! was n't it hot, though?"

This was only the beginning of a series of mad frolics. It seemed as if the very spirit of mischief had entered into these girls. A tide of insubordination swept through the school, and none could tell where it rose. Certainly the Deane and Matson clique were, to all appearance, most exemplary in conduct. But their sport came to a sudden stop. Some one had said:

"Lois, your own father would never recognize you in that costume," and straightway Lois was possessed with a wild desire to try the masquerading outside Julia Wright's room. With wits sharpened by practice they made their opportunities, and one bright evening Jenny Matson found herself walking out with her "cousin from Buffalo." But Dr. Deane's eyes were keener than Lois's school-mates had predicted, and his anger more intense than they could have

imagined. Lois was marched home, Jenny was reported to Prof. McDown. Pretty soon the whole story came out. Lois, Jenny and one or two more of the leaders were *excused* from farther attendance upon the sessions of the school, and order was once more restored, much to the relief of the puzzled Faculty.

After the first outburst, when Dr. Deane poured out his wrath upon the head of his offending daughter, he rarely spoke to her for weeks. He gave orders that she should not leave the house unless accompanied by himself or her mother. But this could not last. The unaccustomed confinement soon affected Lois's health, and the practiced eye of the Doctor saw this, and he was sorely puzzled. He felt obliged to allow her more liberty, though he did not trust her.

Meantime the fruits of that careless talk were cropping out in another quarter, but fortunately only to be nipped in the bud. Some time before the humiliating ending of the girls' fun,

Tom Deane sat perched upon a desk in one of the recitation rooms, surrounded by half-a-dozen boys, to whom he was recounting the stories of the Professor and the Doctor.

"Now, boys, say we go in for some sport!"

"Say we do!" said Will Arnold. "There 's no use in going on in this poky fashion." And then and there a plan was laid for a wild adventure, a plan which was never to be carried into execution.

The fire in Prof. Morse's room was a failure that morning. It smoked and smoldered, and finally went out altogether. The Professor shivered and growled, and threatened to complain of the janitor; then, gathering up his books and his papers, he rolled his arm-chair into the hall, stationing himself beside the register, close by the recitation room. Thus it was that the talk of the boys floating out through the open transom came to his ears. What should he do? He was very busy and the quickest way to end the matter and spoil their sport

would be to report to Prof. McDown. There were reasons why he disliked to do this, and he decided upon another course. Laying aside his work, he tapped lightly at the door and entered. He was a favorite teacher and the faces brightened at his entrance. He swung the door wide open and brought his chair into view, and smiling said:

"Well, boys, I have been driven to the hall by the coldness. If one of you will go out there, you will find out how distinctly every word of our conversation can be heard."

The boys looked crest-fallen, and Prof. Morse continued:

"You 've been listening to some interesting stories. Suppose I tell you some to match them?"

The boys were reassured and looked up brightly.

"Yes, do!" said Will Arnold.

"Well, I don't suppose you will like mine quite as well; but they are true. When I was

preparing for college, we academy boys were as ready for frolic and adventure as any of you. No matter who suffered in person or property, so long as we had our fun and were not found out. Sometimes we *stole* fruit; sometimes we rang door-bells at midnight. Once we carried away every gate on Main Street and hid them in the woods; but that was a sorry night's work, for having been watched we were compelled to carry them back by daylight. Another time we *borrowed* Mr. Grimes's new cutter to ride down hill, and ran against a stump, and in consequence our fathers had the privilege of paying twenty dollars apiece to keep us out of jail. I can tell you, boys, such kind of sport don't pay. I can not think, now, where we put our manliness at such times, for we all aspired to the name and position of young men. Some of those very boys entered college a year or two in advance of me and were there to bid me welcome. And it was a welcome that I never forgot!"

Prof. Morse walked with a crutch, and as he

spoke he glanced at his shrunken limb. He continued, sadly:

"It was a bit of sport that had become an established usage, and had never resulted disastrously before; but I was made a life-long sufferer by it. I can't tell you *that* story. But, boys, I wish you would n't carry out your plans."

"We won't!" said Will Arnold, promptly. "I 'll have nothing to do with it!"

"Nor I," "Nor I," said one and another.

"Thank you. Such things are not manly, not worthy of one who aspires to the title of gentleman, and certainly they are not Christian. I know they are common, and even supposed to be a necessary part of one's school and college life. But I can not see why an act which ordinarily would subject a young fellow to a fine and imprisonment should be tolerated, and even commended, in school-boys and collegians."

CHAPTER III.

HELD BACK.

MR. DEANE was a Christian man. He was anxious that his children should become Christians; but he wanted them to come into the kingdom in his way, by the path he had marked out. Their Christian experience must be such as his own had been, or it was no true experience of Christ's love and forgiveness. He expected that the lambs of the flock would walk wisely and soberly and discreetly, even as those who had the wisdom of years to guide them, and the cares and sorrows of life to subdue them. He wanted to lift his children out of child-world at once. Wise in many things,

he was lamentably deficient in his knowledge of his own children's hearts, and he could help them very little in their seeking for Jesus.

Dr. Arnold was pastor of the church to which the Deanes belonged. During the latter part of the winter he had united with the pastor of two other churches in holding extra meetings, hoping to advance thereby the cause of Christ. God was present with them by his Holy Spirit and every evening some souls were won for Jesus. Dr. Deane looked on disapprovingly. He did n't believe that different denominations could work together harmoniously. He did n't mean to stand in the way of good being done; but he could n't feel like taking hold of the work as he should if the meetings were conducted according to his mind. Why! several ladies had spoken in the prayer-meeting. He could not countenance such a thing. Yet he hoped that his children would be awakened to a sense of their sin and danger. He thought Dr. Arnold was apt to encourage children to think they were Chris-

tians without a deep and thorough experience, and sometimes where there was no marked change in the life. He must guard against their making any mistake.

As usual, Kitty came and went as suited herself. She attended the inquiry meetings. To her pastor she said:

"I want to be a Christian. I think I love Jesus now. I think about him all the time. I try to think about my sins and to feel sorry, but I can't. Just as soon as I begin I think right away how he promised to wash away my sins, and then I am so glad and love him so! Tell me what I must do."

"My dear child, go right on loving him. He will show you your work soon, I think. Only try to keep near to him by prayer and study of his word. May God bless and keep you."

There was a change in Kitty. Dr. Deane could not deny it. She was more respectful to her father and mother, more thoughtful of the comfort of others, and more patient under re-

proof. But no word passed between her and her parents as to the new life she had entered upon until one afternoon she came in just after her father.

"Where have you been, Kitty?" he asked.

"Down to the church."

"To the church!" he repeated, in surprise. "What for?"

"Why, you know," she said, hesitatingly, "those who want to unite next Sunday were asked to meet the committee this afternoon."

"Did your mother know?"

"I did n't tell her."

"And you went without consulting any one! Kitty, I am surprised that you should take such a step upon your own responsibility! Why didn't you come to me first?"

"I thought you would be glad. You prayed this very morning that we might all belong to the invisible church as well as the church on earth, or something like that. I did n't like to speak about it. I thought Dr. Arnold

had, though, or I should n't have gone. I 'm sorry you do'nt like it."

"Kitty," said Dr. Deane, "I can not consent to your taking such a step at present. I am very glad if you have really passed from death unto life; but you are young to join the church. You can not understand the responsibilities involved."

"Father, I understand that Christ said, 'Do *this*.'"

"Yes, child. Still I think you had better wait awhile, until you are certain that you are not deceived in this matter. I am afraid that you do not understand the principles that underlie the Christian hope. Is the plan of salvation clear to you, Kitty?"

Kitty was silent. Finally she said: "Dr. Arnold did n't ask me any such questions. He only asked me why I wanted to come, and if I was willing to belong to Christ, and a few more things like that."

"Yes, I know. Dr. Arnold has some very

singular ideas. I will see him myself and explain the matter. I think you must wait a few months at any rate."

And poor Kitty, who longed to follow Christ's command, looked down from the gallery upon the solemn scene when, with many others, three of her dear girl friends, belonging to her Sunday-school class, were allowed to sit at the Lord's table. Her heart was very heavy, and the tears would not stay back as she bowed her head, saying, simply, "Dear Saviour, I wanted to obey thee, but they held me back." And Jesus himself was her comforter, and Kitty went out from the feast at which she had been only a witness with her soul strengthened and with a quiet happiness that did not grow less as the days went by. But when another communion season came around, and still her father kept her back, she became almost discouraged. She had been so unfortunate as to incur his displeasure by being thoughtlessly gay, and he said:

"Kitty, I can not consent that you should

take this step yet. I do not feel satisfied. We are enjoined to walk soberly, and you do not seem to realize what a solemn thing it is to be a Christian."

"But, Father, I am so happy I can't help being lively. I don't feel sober nor solemn, and if I thought I must, I wouldn't want to be a Christian. I don't believe that Jesus wants me to feel that way, either. I think it is a great deal more solemn not to belong to him than it is to know that he is our best Friend."

"Kitty you speak of Christ too familiarly. You should remember the infinite distance between the King of kings and poor worms of the dust."

Now Kitty had learned to think of her Saviour as an Elder Brother, as an ever-present Friend. As she had known him, there was not an infinite distance between her own soul and her Redeemer. But her father's words made her feel very sad. He had been a Christian a long time, of course he knew; he was a great deal wiser

than herself she very well knew; it must be as he said, that she was not steady and sober enough for a Christian. Oh, dear, she would have to wait a great while!

Meantime Tom had been led quietly to accept Christ. In the early part of the revival he had spoken of his desire to follow Christ, and some weeks later he said:

"I am glad I set out to seek the Saviour, and I would say to my companions that if they will seek him he will be found, and will reveal himself a great joy and an ever-willing help."

Dr. Deane felt it his duty to interfere. He had not known that Tom was passing through any great struggle. He had not seen any signs of deep depression, of great sorrow for sin. He was too anxious, too fearful that Tom's experience was not thorough. So he questioned:

"Tom, I was glad to hear your voice to-night. I did not know that you had passed through the crisis. When did it occur?"

"What, Sir?"

"Why, when did you find peace in believing?"

"Oh, I have been trusting in Christ for several weeks. I suppose that always brings peace," answered Tom.

"Yes. But will you tell me the circumstances of your conversion?"

"Why, Father, there is n't much to tell. I got interested. Prof. Morse talked with me about youth being the best time to begin to serve Christ, and I thought so too, and I began to pray, and ask him to receive me and forgive me; and after a while, I do n't know how long, I thought he had accepted me. Now I am asking him to show me what I ought to do for him."

"But, Tom, can't you tell the time when you yielded to God,— the time when your burden of sin fell off, and a new and sudden light broke in upon your soul?"

"No, Sir. I do n't think there was anything sudden about it. I just began to pray and kept on, and slowly I seemed to get nearer to Jesus."

"Tom," said Dr. Deane, solemnly, "it is a fearful thing to be self-deceived. I think one ought to be able to tell exactly when and where the change takes place. When one gets peace without knowing how or where he got it, I am afraid it may prove a false peace."

And this conversation and others like it got Tom to doubting. Why could n't Dr. Deane let his children come to the Saviour as they seemed to be drawn? Why could n't he have known that the Spirit does not operate upon all hearts alike?

As for Lois, the one for whom both her parents felt most anxious, no persuasion seemed to affect her. She appeared hardened and reckless. Sometimes she went to church, and her father relaxed his guard over her to allow her to accompany some of her young friends upon one or two occasions; but he repented this when he discovered how recklessly improper was their conduct. Not content with standing aloof while others were flocking to the cross, Lois and her compan-

ions attracted attention, and called out a mild rebuke from the pulpit by their unseemly behavior in the house of God. The father was saddened by all this; but I am not sure that he was not more angry and mortified than sorrowful. Lois was certainly very trying, and seemed bent upon going the wrong road. What was to stop her? If she would only come to Christ, I think he would not have minded the manner of her coming; and perhaps if she had been gently and tenderly urged she might have come. But when her father put it in this way she would not.

"Lois," he said, "I wish you would pay more attention to religion. This would be a good time to make your salvation sure. Under the circumstances it would be well for you to come out a Christian. It would help you to regain your character."

"No!" said Lois to herself, willfully misapprehending her father, "I am not going to put on a cloak to cover up my wickedness. I 'm bad, and I 'll show bad."

Many were gathered into the church during that year, but Dr. Deane's children were not among them. Whose fault was it?

Lois continued to attend the private school, but things did not go on smoothly at home. Greatly exaggerating the disgrace Lois had brought upon herself, and as he imagined upon the whole family, her father looked coldly upon her best efforts, and between discouragement and anger Lois kept in a chronic state of unamiability. More than ever she needed tender, loving counsel. Her mother was loving, but, truth to tell, Lois could manage the mother a great deal better than the mother could manage Lois.

Dr. Deane was puzzled.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING NEW.

ALL at once a thought came to Dr. Deane, which seemed to him like a sudden inspiration. So exactly did it accord with his mood that he determined to act upon it at once. He remembered the stern discipline of his boyhood's home, and recalled the relentless severity with which his boyish faults were punished, and said to himself: "I 'll take Lois to my mother. She will know how to manage the girl. I 'm thinking my lady will have to walk straight if she once gets under that roof.

Lois was dismayed at the proposal, but dared not rebel openly, and Mrs. Deane knew that

opposition was useless; so the two quietly and hastily made their preparations, and a week from the day the plan was broached, the father and daughter were on their way.

"Never mind, Loey," said Tom, at the parting, "the ogress won't eat you up."

"She 'll find a peppery dose if she undertakes it," interrupted Lois, laughing through her sobs.

"That 's so," responded Tom; "but, see here, do n't you go to sprinkling pepper or throwing snaps the first thing. If you are only a mind to do your best, you can get on the right side of grandma, then you 'll get on all right. Just you look sharp to that."

"What chance to get on the right side will there be, I 'd like to know, after father has told everything he can think of?" said Lois, bitterly.

"Oh, father won't tell; he is too proud. You need n't worry about that."

But Lois did worry all that long day's journey. She longed to ask her father how much he meant to reveal of the past to the new friends to

whom she was going, but she did not dare. Very little was said on either side, though Dr. Deane was kinder in voice and manner than he had been for a long time, and the stern look on his face seemed to soften. I think that, as he journeyed toward the old home, a throng of memories pressed upon him and stirred his heart, until somewhere from its depths arose the tender emotions of his nature which he had so long ignored. The last ten miles was a stage ride, and they were the only passengers. Lois shrank from being alone with her father, but he tucked the robe about her so carefully, and thoughtfully arranged a satchel for her feet, speaking so gently that the tears sprang to her eyes. Noticing her emotion, the doctor said:

"Lois, I have not meant to be harsh, but your conduct has been a sore trial and its consequences very mortifying. As for sending you away from home, I have done it for the best. You would not find it easy to break away from old associates and build up your character again

at home while at your grandmother's you will have a chance to start fresh. But, Lois, you must learn deference to your superiors and obedience to those in authority. My mother will not brook a disregard of these duties, nor will she put up with your hoydenish propensities."

Dr. Deane had not seen his mother or the old place for nearly twenty years, and he had little idea of the changes that had been going on. True, through the medium of a regular though by no means frequent correspondence, he knew that one by one his brothers and sisters had gone out to make new homes, that his father had been dead several years, and that his mother had charge of the farm. And, too, various improvements about the house and grounds had been mentioned in the letters from home; but, after all, it was the homely, wood-colored house standing in the shadow of the great hill, toward which he seemed to be traveling. It was a home full of young life, and busy, bustling activity. They were all there,—the hard-working father,

grave and somewhat stern like himself, the noisy boys and blooming girls, and his mother. Ah! had Lois known of the picture in her father's mind, she might have wished yet more earnestly that the stage ride, unpleasant as it was, would never end. Old Mrs. Deane was emphatically a strong-minded woman, with a stateliness and reserve that seemed like coldness, and lack of love and sympathy, with an intolerance of youthful follies, and a power of restraining those under her authority from entering foolish ways, that, irksome as it had once been, now seemed to the distressed Doctor the very embodiment of virtue; and such was the memory of his home and his mother, that he was utterly bewildered when the stage stopped. There was the two-story house, longer than he remembered it, and seemingly lower, and there was the hill; but they were not the same — the house had been extended at the side and in front, the color was a pale buff, with dark brown trimmings. There were piazzas and a bay-window; the road had

been built lower down, so that the lawn was wider; the wild berry-bushes were gone from the hill-side, and an air of refinement as well as of thrift pervaded the scene. Everything seemed to be of generous proportions, house, barns, lawns, garden and orchard. All this Dr. Deane took in at a sweeping glance as the man unfastened Lois's trunk and took-down the Doctor's satchel. And did that calm, sweet face, shaded by the soft, merry border of her widow's cap, belong to his mother? The old roundness and freshness were gone, and with it much of the severity of expression. She sat in an arm-chair before the fire, and welcomed her guests without rising.

"My son!" she said, clasping his hand and drawing him down until his lips met hers. Dr. Deane could not remember that his mother had ever kissed him before in all his life. Doubtless in his babyhood such a thing might have happened, but since he could remember any expression of affection had been rare indeed, and the

grave, taciturn man was for a moment disconcerted and embarrassed.

As he drew back to give place to Lois the old lady said:

"And this is my granddaughter whose acquaintance I have so long desired to make. Ah! Thomas, you have kept your treasures well to yourself all these years. Never mind, we shall make it up now, won't we, dear?" Then turning to a young lady several years older than Lois, who had admitted them, she continued: "Thomas, this is my friend and companion, Miss Halsey. I have written to you of her." Probably she had, but her son had forgotten, if indeed he had ever taken in the idea of such a person's existence. After their introductions were ended, Mrs. Deane said:

"Alice, you will please attend to Lois's wants now. Is her room warm? Perhaps she had better wait here while you call George to carry up her trunk. And as you go through the kitchen tell Jane to give us something hot with our tea.

I forgot to mention it when she came for orders, but there is time enough for muffins and cutlets."

"Hot bread and meat for supper!" thought Lois, and she stole a look at her father to see what his face expressed upon the subject, but the room was growing dark and she could not read the look.

The travelers were soon shown to their rooms, and when they came down again they found tea upon the table. Poor, hungry Lois must have thought this the opportunity for which she had once longed — to eat and be sick! There was fragrant tea, the whitest bread and the lightest muffins, a fried chicken, with jelly and pickles, with some late peaches smothered in sugar and cream. And Dr. Deane — what did he do? Why just as the rest did — ate what was set before him; and he was much more likely to be kept awake by his thoughts than by his supper. Truth to tell, he could not believe his senses. As we have said, he had never realized the changes of the twenty years of his absence; indeed, it had been thirty

years since he had been at his old home for any length of time. He remembered his mother young and vigorous, in a dress of dark blue print and a check apron, taking her plain meals in the low kitchen; he saw the table now, with the brown homespun table-cloth, sometimes without any, and the blue-edged crockery, the tin tea-pot, the little japanned pepper-box and blue-glass salt. And the contrast was so great that the Doctor was bewildered. Here at the head of this generous table, with its handsome appointments, sat a woman seventy years old, a specimen of beautiful old age. She had grown old, but the peaceful triumph written on her face told how. Everything about her was in keeping. The soft bombazine dress, with folds of lace at throat and wrists, the comfortable chair in which she sat (and in which she was wheeled to the table by Alice without rising), the bright, well-furnished room, and the cheery face of her companion, all spoke of plenty and of a great happiness. When they were all seated at the table with bowed heads,

Mrs. Deane's voice, low but clear, broke the silence: "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

The next morning Mrs. Deane said to her son:

"I am sorry that you could not have the old south room. It would seem so much more home-like. But Mr. Hastings occupies that when he is here, and I did not like to have his books and papers disturbed."

"Oh, no matter," replied the Doctor; "my room is very pleasant. But who is Mr. Hastings?"

"Well, to be sure, don't you know? He is our minister. You see his folks live over at Greenville, and he preaches there half of the time; and when he comes to the Valley to preach he stops here. He has gone home now, to stay over the Sabbath."

"So you have a minister in your family," said the Doctor, wondering: What next?

While they were at breakfast Mrs. Deane said to Alice:

"I presume that Lois will want to unpack and put away her things this morning. See that the fire is lighted. It is very chilly. If this weather holds, we shall have to get the furnace going. But I wanted to have Bailey come over from Greenville to put those registers in your room and Lois's before we start it. Mr. Hastings is going to speak to him about it." Turning to her son, she asked: "Do you heat your house by a furnace?"

Lois would have answered, "We don't heat it at all," but wisely allowed her father to speak for himself. Already Lois was delighted with the home to which her father had brought her. "Everything is so comfortable," she had whispered to herself as she came into the breakfast-room and toyed with a kitten before the fire, while Jane was bringing in coffee and hot cakes. As for the Doctor he began to suspect that his daughter's banishment would turn out quite an agreeable thing; but he had committed himself for a six

months' trial of it, and could not draw back; besides, he still had faith in his mother's ability to "manage the girl." As Tom had predicted, he had not revealed the whole story of Lois's misdoings—only, in a general way, given his mother to understand that the child was hard to manage, and that he thought a change of associates desirable. Before leaving he was about to deliver some charges concerning Lois, but his mother interrupted him:

"Now, Thomas, it won't do for you to say that Lois must do this and mustn't do that. Very likely she will, and will not, as the case may be; but you have committed her to my care, and I want no restrictions. With God's blessing, I hope to return her to you sound in body, and with a clean heart."

So the Doctor said his farewells to Lois with no word of admonition, and laid no commands upon her. Once during his visit he had expressed surprise at the remarkable change in his mother and her manner of living. Mrs. Deane replied:

"You know that for many years before your father died we were wonderfully prospered. I do not know—but I have thought that the Lord saw that we could bear prosperity, and so gave us an abundant reward for our toil. Your father was a faithful steward and gave freely to the church, at home and abroad. He fitted up the homestead. He said he wanted to make it a pleasant place for the children to come back to once in a while, and he left a provision in his will, as you know, that if any of them or their children should be in want of a home, its doors should be open. As for the change in me," here a voice tender in, speaking of her husband grew solemn, "Thomas, it is of the grace of God. Fifteen years ago he gave me the blessing so rarely given, because rarely sought. Call it what you will,—I call it the gift of peace. It is promised, you know, to those whose minds are stayed on God. My mind is stayed on the Lord. I have many cares and some anxieties; and, as you well know, we have had some heavy trials, but the Lord has always

helped me over the rough places. When I became a confirmed invalid he sent me my faithful Alice, who brought perpetual sunshine into the house. And it is she who has in some measure broken up my old still, reserved habits."

"Well, Mother," responded the Doctor, "I am glad to find you so comfortable in your old age. But I tell you plainly that Lois needs a firm hand. I am afraid you will be too easy with her."

"Now, Thomas," said the old lady, "my ideas of the strict training of children have undergone no change; but having experienced so much of the love and tenderness of my heavenly Father, perhaps I have come to think of more gentle measures. Think of the patience and forbearance of the Lord towards us, and say if we ought not to bear more with the waywardness of our children."

"May be you are right. We shall see how you get on," was the reply of the doubting Doctor, who went on his homeward way thinking in this wise: "Mother overrates the power of love. I'd like to be around when the first tiff comes off.

Lois can't keep out of mischief long, and her high temper is ready to go off at a touch. That Miss Halsey seems a pleasant person — a little too lively. If she would n't laugh so often, and make so many trifling remarks, she would appear much better." If Miss Halsey had heard him she would have said: "Thank you, Dr. Deane. I might appear better but I should not appear myself — and I'd rather be myself than somebody better!"

"It is a good thing," soliloquized the Doctor, "having the minister there so much. His presence will likely prove a check upon Lois. I am sorry I could not have met him." Then, meditatively — "Hastings — Hastings. Why, there used to be a minister by that name at Milton. That was twenty-five or thirty years ago. He must be an old man; but I should n't wonder if it were the same one." And the Doctor settled himself complacently for his homeward journey, reflecting that, with such experienced advisers as his mother and old Mr. Hastings, Lois could not fail of improvement.

HOW IT HAPPENED.

CHAPTER I.

BABY NELL.

"Baby Nell has ten little toes,
Baby Nell has two little hose,
She always stares when the hose go on
And thinks that her ten little toes are gone."

THERE she sat, the very Baby Nell of whom that immortal poet wrote these lines. At least she looked as though she might be the self-same baby, as she watched with those astonished blue eyes of hers, while sister Elsie poked and squeezed the fat pink toes into the bits of stockings. Sister Elsie, meanwhile, lecturing her after this fashion:

"What a naughty, naughty baby you are to

pull off your stockings so many times in a day! Keep poor Elsie racing after them and putting them on, from morning till night. What do you do it for? Don't you know you're a troublesome, mischievous, perfect little torment, of a precious old darling?"

And having finished this singular scolding, and squeezed one foot into place. Elsie stopped to smother the baby-face in a perfect torrent of kisses. Then she went on with her work, Nell staring the while, and occasionally making a remark in German, which, as nearly as I can judge, she spoke fluently.

"Elsie!" called a clear, ringing voices from the room above, and Elsie answered: "Yes, mamma, I'm coming; I'm putting on Baby Nell's stockings. Keep your foot still, baby! Dont curl your little toe up so. How can I ever put a stocking on such a funny little ball of a foot? Oh dear, let go of my hat, you 'll have it off. Oh my patience! Don't pull my hair." All of which orders, Baby Nell minded as much

as young misses of her age generally do. After gazing a while at things in general, she suddenly bent forward and dived both fat hands into the masses of yellow curls that were bobbing about her face. And Elsie, in despair, dropped the pink-toed foot, unbent every one of the ten determined fingers, and saying: "Go barefoot, then, naughty darling," ran hastily to obey her mother 's second call.

Baby looked after her thoughtfully, then reached over and felt of every one of her dainty bare toes, then gravely tugged at the other stocking, uttered a triumphant "Da-da-da-a" at her success, when it came off with such a jerk that it nearly tipped her over, and looked about her for something to do next. It was house-cleaning time, and mamma and everybody else was very busy, which explained why Baby Nell was left alone for even so few minutes: generally they knew better then to leave the little mischief maker out of sight of watchful eyes.

She spied a crumpled bit of white paper over

by the window and went for it as fast as hands and knees could take her — gave several eager little chuckles over the crackling sound, then crept to the stove-pipe hole and solemnly dropped it down. Then she sat up straight and gave a satisfied little sigh. That work was successfully accomplished. Mamma and Elsie came in together, Elsie talking rapidly: "Oh, mamma, do look at Baby Nell! I do believe I 've put her stockings on twenty times to-day, and here she is barefoot, and she curls her foot up just like a little ball of cotton, when I go to put them on. Where in the world is the paper that this was wrapped in? Mamma, what do you suppose has become of it? I unrolled it the minute I came in the room because baby snatched at it, and her fingers were wet with milk and I was afraid it would soak through and soil the ribbon. Where do you think it can be?"

"I don't know, dear; take some other paper, and make haste, for Miss Johnson is waiting. And, Elsie, you must stop at the store and tell

your father to send up some fresh biscuit for tea,"

"Mamma, there is n't a paper here to tear — there never is when I 'm in a hurry. May I tear a piece from this one, just this once? It is a week old, and I heard papa say it was awful dry."

Mrs. Porter was stamping her foot softly, and saying, "No, no, do n't touch; baby mus'n't" Then she said, despairingly, "Oh, dear me! When will that baby learn that the stove will burn her?" Then to her other daughter, "Yes, yes, child, take a piece af anything, only hurry." Mrs, Porter was not a cross woman; but you see she had been cleaning house.

The paper was torn and the ribbon rolled up, and Elsie on the street was joined by her very particular friend, Carrie Cox. The two went gleefully on together, glad that their errands lay in the same direction. Down Ferry Street, up Franklin, they came at last to the milliner's shop, and Elsie unrolled her ribbon and laid it on the counter, giving her message all in one breath, as she was

apt to do. "Mrs. Smith, mamma says this ribbon is to blue, too light I mean; She must have it two shades darker; she wants it to match Baby Nell's eyes; and if you have n't it, will you please send for some, and she'll wait to finish the sack."

No ribbon the color of Baby Nell's eyes was to be found, which was no wonder, for if you had but seen those eyes, you would have thought that nothing short of a piece of the sky could have matched them. Out went the bustling girls, Elsie talking as usual. "Now, Carrie, what is your errand? If it is more than a minute long, I can't go with you, for I've got to hurry. Mamma wants to know about the ribbon, because, if Miss Johnson can't finish Baby Nell's sack to-night, she wants to go out and match the merino for her dress before dark."

"I'm to call at Miss Draper's for her sleeve pattern — that won't take half a minute."

"Miss Draper's! let's go down Vesey Street then."

"No. Let's go to Stone Street; that's the quickest."

And so they stopped at the corner, and one pulled one way, and one the other. The wind decided it at last, Elsie said, for it blew them around the corner of Stone Street.

"Now I'll have to stop in papa's store," she said, "I've got an errand."

"So have I, only let's go to Miss Draper's first, because I've got to carry my errand home from your papa's store, and it will be heavy, and Miss Draper's is only around the corner."

"It will be longer," said Elsie, thoughtfully. "Oh, no, it won't either. why, Carrie. I've got an errand away up North Street. Stone Street was right, after all. See here Carrie, I'm taking this piece of paper with me; it was what the ribbon was rolled in. How came I to bring it away with me I wonder. I'll give it to the wind now."

"Oh, you awful girl!" Carrie said, catching a

glimpse of it as it whizzed away. "Mamma never allows me to tear a religious paper."

"We don't tear them, either; and I suppose that's the reason they're always on top of the heap when I go to look for one to tear; but to-day they were all religious papers, and mamma was in a hurry and she said, 'Take anything.' There's nothing in this one anyway.!"

Away went the paper, whistling round and round, then straight ahead, then taking a zigzag course, as if it made no difference where it went.

There was a bakery on Stone Street: there was a smell of fresh, warm bread, and whiffs of hot rolls stealing out on the air, as the great glass doors constantly opened and shut. There stood a boy outside, looking in, with, oh, such a longing face — a ragged, forlorn, hopeless-looking boy; his hat was torn, his jacket was torn, and the dirty sleeve of his shirt was torn and hung in strings; but they were as nothing compared with the hungry look in the boy's eyes. A man opened the bakery door and came out.basket in

hand. Then, suddenly, he set the basket on a standard outside, and hurried in again. Up came the wind and seized the paper that had been tucked around the fresh rolls, and whirled it away into the air. Then the ragged boy turned his hungry eyes on the rolls. What if he should take one — two? Nobody was looking, and he was so hungry! The man would not miss two — no, one; he would n't take but one. Like enough the man would give him that, if he knew how hungry he was. He must have just one.

CHAPTER II.

ROLLS AND BUNS AND CHANCES.

MY friend Bobby, to whom I told this story the other day, when I reached this point, said: "Ho! what a mean scamp he must have been to want to steal just because he saw buns. Why, I pass a great splendid bakery every morning, where there 's lots and lots of magnificent things in the window, and I never think of such a thing." And his wiser sister Nellie said:

"Yes, and you eat seventeen buckwheat cakes before you start."

We will hope, for the sake of Bobby 's stomach, that Nellie meant seven instead of seventeen; but the moral is the same. Bobby, with a full

stomach, not only was not tempted to take buns, but had no sympathy for the hungry boy at the door.

Well, whiz came the wind around the corner, and blew into that boy 's very eyes a piece of paper — Elsie 's piece — with nothing on it; he seized it; there were large letters on one side, great printing letters; he could hardly have helped reading them:

THOU GOD SEEST ME.

Now this ragged boy remembered the time when he was about five years old, remembered that he had a beautiful blue and black plaid jacket, and that he stood at his mother's knee and spelled slowly out of a great book, pointing out with his fat fingers to every letter, T-H-O-U G-O-D S-E-E-S-T M-E. He knew what it meant then, his mother told him. If you want to know how a boy who once had a good mother, and a nice jacket, and fat fingers, came to be the ragged, homeless, hungry creature that he was that day, it is very quickly

told. It was all because his father bought liquor of a good respectable man who kept a few barrels of it in the back room of his store, and the father drank and drank, a few drops more every day, until at last the respectable man would n't sell him any more, and then he went to a cellar grocery and drank rum. And there by that bakery window stood his homeless, friendless boy. He crumpled that bit of paper in his hand and stuffed it into his ragged pocket, while he muttered, "It's queer I should a forgot that." Then he went after the other paper; it was tired of its frolic, and lay still on the edge of a stone step. He picked it up, brushed off a bit of dust, discovered that the other side was still fair and clean, then he came and resolutely tucked up the rolls with a firm hand.

"There's a lad who, if I mistake not, has fought a battle and came off victor," said a man who was looking out of one of the great windows, standing so that he could not be seen from the outside, and yet could see all that was passing.

"Porter, I'm going to ask him in to get warm."

"What is it? Some wretched nuisance of a boy? I wish they were all in Oregon."

"Poh! no you don't; you'er at your wit's ends for one this very minute. Come in, my lad, and warm your fingers. What's your name, my boy?" he asked, as the boy promptly accepted the invitation.

"Stephen Turner, sir."

"You'er not very warmly clad for such weather. Where do you live?"

"Jones' Alley, around the corner from the brewery."

"Your father live there?"

"No, sir, he's dead."

"Have you a mother?"

"No, sir, mother died six years ago."

"With whom do you live, then?"

"Nobody but myself; there's an old woman let's me sleep in her basement; I pay her for it."

"What employment have you?"

"None at all, except odds and ends, and not many of them."

"How do you live then?"

"By my wits, mostly," the boy said, gravely, warming his blue fingers by the fire.

"Don't you want to work?"

At this question Stephen Turner looked up with a kind of grave surprise at the gentleman's face, but he only answered:

"Yes, sir, of course."

"Porter, why don't you give this boy some work?" the gentleman asked, turning quickly towards the busy man behind the counter.

"Looks like it," said Mr. Porter, briefly.

As for Stephen, he looked neither surprised nor disappointed. "That's what they all say," he exclaimed; "I never earned enough to buy any clothes.'

The people kept coming and going, and pretty soon came Elsie and Carrie. They eyed the ragged boy curiously, at least Carrie did; as for Elsie, she was talking.

"Papa, mamma wants you to send fresh biscuit for supper; and Oh, papa, Mrs. Carter was in, Dr. Phillip's, mamma sent me to Dr. Phillip's, and Mrs. Carter said it was very fortunate for her that I came in, and she wants her rolls an hour earlier than usual, because Mr. Carter is to take the seven o'clock train, he's going to New York, and, papa, he's going to bring little Katy a music box, and she wants them fresh and hot."

"She's a nuisance," sputtered peppery Mr. Porter. "You go back and tell her she can't have them at all; tell her both my boys are sick; boys are always having measles or mumps."

"I've had 'em both," interrupted Stephen, gravely.

"There!" said the gentleman, "what better recommendation do you need? Try the boy, Porter."

"Stuff and nonsense! Do you know where Mrs. John Carter lives?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many rolls will you eat if I send you up there with hers?"

Stephen was very grave aud simple in his answer.

"Not one, sir."

"I doubt it," Mr. Porter said, quickly, "but I've got to try it."

An hour after that, Elsie Porter was putting on baby Nell's stockings, when she looked up quickly and said:

"Mamma, here comes papa's new boy that I told you about. He's got a note for you, I guess."

"What a looking boy!" said Mrs. Porter, and then Rosy let him into the room, and Mrs. Porter read her note.

"DEAR ALICE: Find some clothes, ca n't you, for this rag-bag?" and give him some supper. I've hired him for a week on trial. He went to Carter's and back quicker than any boy I ever had, if he went there at all, which I rather doubt. Yours hastily,

'HUSBAND.'

Mrs. Porter went to look up clothes, and presently Elsie sat Baby Nell on the floor, and ran after her.

Stephen looked at the small, sweet face, and nodded and smiled; Baby Nell smiled back. Stephen nodded harder, and whistled a little, and Baby Nell laughed outright.

"Is Rosy in the dining-room?" Mrs. Porter asked of her daughter.

"No ma'am."

"Then run right back. We don't know anything about this dreadful looking boy. Perhaps he may be tempted to steal something."

Elsie ran back, but she was not quick enough. Stephen had stolen something — and he went away with it, too.

It was Baby Nell's heart.

Baby Nell shed some tears, because the boy went away, but was consoled by a red-cheeked apple; and as she tried with her two pearly teeth to bite a hole in the smooth skin, she forgot all about Stephen Turner. In fact, she had not

the least idea that she had anything to do with his life, nor once imagined that because she just happened to drop a piece of crackly paper down the stove-pipe hole, therefore Stephen Turner had a good supper, and a new jacket, and had been hired on trial for a week. And Baby Nell was not a bit less wise than her elders.

"Mamma, is n't he a funny looking boy?" Elsie said, as she watched him from the window. "I'm glad papa hired him; he looked so sad. Is n't it queer that he happened into the store just as I came to tell papa that Mrs. Carter wanted her rolls earlier?"

Stephen Turner as he walked back to the bakery, in his new gray jacket, and with the taste of the cold corned beef still in his mouth, said to himself:

"I got my supper, good supper too, and I did n't take the man's roll's, I'm glad of that; it's odd how that bit of paper happened to come flying into my face just then."

"That chap happened in at just the right

time," Mr. Porter said, eating his supper in haste, and telling wife and daughter about the day's troubles between the mouthfulls.

So they all talked about the things that happened, and not one of them seemed to think about that great Father of them all, who planned all the happiness that there is in the world.

CHAPTER III.

HE was the boy that Mr. Porter engaged for a week on trial, you know. You remember him? Well, at the end of a week Mr. Porter said, "I guess you and I will try it together for a month, my boy." "He isn't brisk," Mr. Porter explained to his wife, when she asked about Stephen. "You'd call him slow and dull, and think he was n't going to amount to much; but somehow, when he gets started, he keeps started — stays in motion, you know, until the thing is all done up. When I see him shoulder his basket and start for Murray's up on the hill, I 'm just as sure of his going steadily there, as I am that he has started. You remember that spry little Jimmy Norton that I

had? Well, Jimmy would be up the street and around the corner, while this boy is getting ready to open the door, but half an hour after you 'd find Jimmy no further then just around the corner, watching a dog-fight, or rolling marbles, maybe, while Stephen would be trudging down the hill with his empty basket, so you see what he lacks in briskness, he makes up in stick-to-a-tive-ness. I've had a good many boys to deal with, and I always noticed that those who stick at their work in spite of dogs, or marbles, or horses, come out at the top of the heap after all." At the end of the month there was nothing said about another contract. I think Mr. Porter forgot it, but Stephen did not, and his heart was in his mouth, until just as he was leaving, feeling very sad and discouraged, Mr. Porter said, "I shall want you half an hour earlier then usual to-morrow morning. Will you be on hand?"

"Yes, sir," said Stephen, with unusual briskness, and vanished. At home, or at the place

that he called home, the cellar where he paid for the privilege of sleeping, by the window stood a little girl flattening her nose against the pane. A dirty, ragged, forlorn girl, who had yellow hair, and never combed it. Her eyes were gray, and her skin was freckled; her nose did n't need flattening; it was short and broad enough already. She did not turn from the one dingy window when Stephen came in, but spoke quickly,

"Well, are you discharged?"

"No."

"Hired over?"

"Why, I do n't know,' said Stephen. slowly and thoughtfully. "Yes, I think I am."

"Humph!" the little girl said, in rather a scornful tone. "It 's queer you can't tell for certain. I could decide which it was awful quick."

Then they were silent while Stephen ate his supper. I suppose you think there was a table, spread with a white cloth, and clean dishes on it,

and bread and butter, and cake of course. Nobody has supper without cake, only maybe it was n't in a cake basket, since they were so poor, but on a common plate. Just let me tell you about it. There were just three plates belonging to that family, and they were in the cupboard this minute, and held, one a loaf of bread, one a very little lump of butter, and one four cold potatoes. These things were for the little girl and her grandmother's breakfast and dinner next day. Stephen boarded himself. He went into the corner at the foot of the bed, took a biscuit out of one pocket and a dried herring out of the other, and with these he made a hearty meal. When there was just the tail of the herring left, he spoke, suddenly, "Dick, have you had a herring lately?" Then you would probably have looked around for a stout boy named Dick to answer this question; but the little girl at the window answered, "Not in ages." Then Stephen eyed the herring's tail; he wanted it awfully;

but at last he said, "Come over here and get this bite."

And Dick answered him as promptly as before: "I sha n't; eat it yourself."

"No," he said firmly, gathering strength for his great self-denial; "no, I want you to have it. Here," — and he came over with the dainty morsel and held it temptingly before her eyes. "There's just one bite left, and you shall have it. When Mr. Porter pays me, I mean to buy three of them, and treat all around." Dick swallowed the tail without more ado, and when it was gone, said, "Why do n't he pay you? He must be mean."

"No," said Stephen, thoughtfully. "It is n't because he's mean, I don't think; only he handles heaps of money every day, and mine is so little, you see, he forgets it."

Dick turned back to the window and flattened her nose again. Pretty soon she said, with a low-drawn sigh, "I'd like to earn some money myself, Stephen."

"Well," Stephen answered, hopefully, "like as not you can. Who knows?"

"I don't know. Chances come. You look and look for a way, and there isn't any, and you feel like fighting or stealing, or something, and then all of a sudden comes a chance."

"Chances have to be gone after," Dick said, crossly.

"No, they don't," was Stephen's positive answer. "They come. How did I get this place? I didn't go after it, nor know anything about it; and it come right along. I didn't do a thing; it just happened."

You see Stephen knew no more about the bit of tissue paper that baby Nell threw down the stove-pipe hole, and Elsie's search for it, and the torn newspaper — how it came to flutter to him, and the man inside the bakery looking on, and the great God who overruleth it all, than he did before.

"Then I wish it would just happen to me, that's all."

This Dick said wearily, very much as if she did n't believe in any such thing.

"You might be getting ready for it."

"What do you mean?"

"Why you might wash your face, you know, and comb your hair."

"How would that get a chance to earn money? Besides, Stephen, you said you did n't do a thing."

"I spose I do n't quite mean that. I walked along the street, you know and look around, and if I had not been there by the bakery, you know, I would not have been called in, though how I came to be there, at just that spot, instead of any other, I do n't know. But then you see there might come a chance to you that would take you if your hair was combed, and would n't if it was n't."

"I have n't a comb," said Dick, gravely.

"I might lend you mine," and Stephen drew forth a wooden comb that had seen much use.

"My hair would snap that all up in a twink-

ling," the young lady said, with a bit of scorn in her voice.

"You might comb it, one little speck of a lock at a time, and then it would go, all right."

"Well," Dick said, after a little pause, "I 'll wash my face and comb my hair, and you walk along the streets and look around, and see if any of your 'happens' will come to me. Only do n't begin until day after to morrow, because I sha n't get my hair combed before that time."

"I 'll keep a lookout!" was Stephen's grave answer. "Something'll happen, you'll see if there do n't." Then he want into the cupboard, set the bread and butter and potatoes on the highest shelf, and went to bed on the straw, spread over the floor.

Mrs. Porter was almost in despair. She was trying to set the table, for the cook was also the washerwoman, and it was Monday. Baby Nell was on hand, she had climbed a chair and tilted herself half out of an open window; her mamma took her down with a scream of terror, and

closed the window. She had set one dainty slipper sailing in a five-quart pan of milk, she had slipped into the pantry unawares, and stepped with one slippered and one bare foot into the box of sugar under the shelf, and standing so, had reached up after a pan of flour and showered it over her curly head, all this, and much more, in the space of one distracting hour. No wonder her mamma's cheeks burned like fire, and that the first thing she did when she sat down to the dinner table was to fan herself violently with her **apron.**

CHAPTER IV.

"I am just completely tired out, and that's the whole of it," she said, wearily. "Such a forenoon as I have had; Baby Nell has done everything," and then followed a history of some of her pranks, at which father and daughter laughed, until they made the tired mother laugh too.

Stephen Turner had come in with the mail, and he lingered, and nodded, and whistled softly, and clapped his hands at Baby Nell, and finally took her in his arms to show her two cats sitting on the next neighbor's piazza in the sun. The mother breathed more freely, at least Baby Nell was out of mischief for a few minutes, she was always good with Stephen.

"I wish he was a girl," Mrs. Porter said, looking with admiring eyes at the careful manner in which he held the fluttering morsel. "Then I should keep him to take care of Baby. She is very fond of him.

Stephen looked eagerly interested. He didn't wish he was a girl, not he. He would much rather be a boy, but if this should happen to be the chance that he had been looking for.

Mrs. Porter continued: "I have made up my mind that I must have some one. Kate grows crosser every Monday, because I have to hinder her so much, and I couldn't be hired to live through such another day as this. I had to keep Elsie at home until after ten this morning."

"That won't do," Mr. Porter said, promptly. "Elsie ought to be in school."

"No, of course it won't do, but how am I going to help it? I can't find a girl."

It certainly was the "chance," and Stephen came forward with Baby Nell in his arms.

"I know a girl who would like to come and take care of Baby," he said, earnestly.

"Who is she?"

"Her name is Dick Bates. She is"—but at this point Stephen stopped, abashed at Mrs. Porter's exclamation:

"Dick! I thought you said it was a girl."

"So she is, ma'am and her name is Harriet Ann Bates. But folks have got in the notion of calling her Dick."

"Where does she live?"

"She lives in the basement where I do; it's her gran'ma that lets me have the closet to sleep in."

"Is she the girl who had a pitcher the other day, when you was at the pump, Stephen?" Elsie asked this question, and Stephen nodded.

"Mamma," said Elsie, "she's an awful looking girl; her dress was torn criss-cross everyway, and so dirty, and a fright, Baby Nell would scream if she looked at her."

Mrs. Porter looked as though she didn't mean

to give her a chance to try it; and Stephen somewhat down-hearted, yet determined to do his best.

"She has combed her hair since then," he said, eagerly. "She got it all done this morning, and it looks real nice, and she mended her dress and washed her face, and she wants a chance real bad."

"Is she a good girl?" inquired Mr. Porter, and Stephen hesitated. Was Dick a good girl? She was sometimes rude and saucy to gran'ma, and slapped the children in the next room to theirs, and quarreled with the boys who lived in the attic. But, then, gran'ma was cross and the children needed slapping, and the boys teased her; finally he said, slowly and thoughtfully:

"She ain't very good, I s'pose, but I guess she means to be if she gets the chance, and she don't lie nor steal, and she would love Baby Nell."

"What do you say, Alice?" asked Mr. Porter. "Will you give the girl her chance?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said poor puzzled tired Mrs. Porter. "How do I know but she'll be ugly to Baby? To be sure I could keep her with me and watch her, and I can't find anybody else as I see, but then, dear me, I don't want such a set around me. Oh my patience!"

This last sentence was for Baby Nell. She had slipped down from Stephen's arms and pitched upon this particular time to climb a chair, over in the corner, and from that to a table, and pull with all her little might at a pitcher that stood on it; over it came at last, and the water splashed delightfully and the pitcher made a grand crash as it bumped on the floor, and Baby Nell gave a yell of glee over the success of her plans. When the hubbub was over, Mrs. Porter said, excitedly:

"That's the way it has been every minute this day, and is every day. The very second my back is turned she finds somewhere to climb and something to tip over."

"Stephen," said Mr. Porter, decidedly, "you go home and get this girl, and then stay here till

Baby Nell gets a little acquainted with her. We'll try it anyhow."

"I don't suppose Baby will have anything to do with her," Mrs. Porter said, doubtfully. "You know if she takes a freak not to go to her, she won't, and you can't help yourself."

"Well, then, you can send her home, and you'll be no worse off than you were before you tried. Go ahead, Stephen."

And Stephen went. I've found the chance!" he said, bursting into the basement, as Dick was eating her cold potato dinner. "It happened along, just where they always do, where you ain't thinking of finding them. And here it is."

"I don't see it," said Dick coolly eyeing Stephen, as she chewed the last mouthful of potato.

And then Stephen told his story.

"She won't come to me," Dick said, positively. "You see if she does ; babies never do."

"She will if it's your chance," Stephen answered as positively, and Dick whirling suddenly

around to him, asked, "Stephen, what do you mean when you say that?"

"I do n't exactly know," said Stephen, soberly. Some queer notion had got into his mind that there was a "chance" somewhere for everybody, if they only looked out for it, and went to work at it. At least he thought it was a queer notion, but you and I know that it was the same idea that the good man had who said,

"God has a plan
For every man."

CHAPTER V.

IT was very much the same idea that you will find in your Bibles in the tenth chapter of Matthew and the thirtieth verse, But Stephen did n't know about that. Dick had managed to mend her green dress, until it looked whole at least, and the business of combing her hair had been finished that morning, so although she did not look much like Elsie Porter, whom she met in her fresh buff pique dress and white ruffled apron, on her way to school, yet on the whole she looked better than Mrs. Porter expected, and after talking with her in the basement a few minutes, she took her up stairs to see if Baby Nell would agree to the arrangement. Stephen had gone

up to entertain the little lady while Mrs. Porter went down to receive Dick. Now, Baby Nell was full of unaccountable freaks, one of which was to take violent dislikes to people, for nobody knew what reason, to scream with terror when they looked at her, and go off into a succession of heart-rending shrieks if they attempted to touch her. The performance might be kept up for weeks, and whether she would choose to receive Dick in this fashion no mortal knew. Stephen stood before the door holding the precious little tyrant in his arms, looking her sweetest and brightest. Dick slipped in after Mrs. Porter, and Baby Nell looked at her. Dick's heart beat fast, not that she knew that this moment was to be the turning point in her whole life, not that she had the least notion of the power that lay in this roguish looking baby to make her what she was not, but she wanted some work. Baby Nell didn't know it either. She hadn't the least idea that if she screeched like a little steam engine, Dick would be sent

home in disgust and disappointment. Oh, none of them knew anything about the "plan" that God had for her, and for all of them through her, but they waited anxiously and Baby Nell stared. So far, good; at least she had n't yelled. Dick nodded her head and smiled, and Baby stared. Then Dick ventured on putting out her hands with a coaxing word. Baby half turned away, half hid her head in Stephen's neck, then thought better of it, and peeped out again. Still the coaxing hands were held out. Baby leaned forward a little, then drew back and hid her face, then peeped out, and suddenly with a quick little squeal of glee, bounced herself fairly into Dick's outstretched arms.

Once again, all unknown to her silly little self, Baby Nell made a great change in another life, as well as in her own.

"It is a fortunate thing for me that she chanced to take a fancy to the girl," Mrs. Porter said, with a relieved sigh, as she watched Dick's careful handling of Baby Nell.

"For once in my life I'm in luck," Dick muttered to herself, as she squeezed Baby's fat foot into her blue shoe.

And Stephen, as he walked away from the door, said, decidedly, "That's her chance for certain."

They were packing and jamming themselves into the carriage. Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Willard and Baby Nell filled the back seat, the Misses Willard took the middle seat, and Elsie was in front with the driver and Fred.

"Dear me, mamma," said Elsie, in dismay. "Where will Dick put herself? We are all squeezed up now."

"Dick can't go," Mrs. Porter declared, emphatically. "What with shawls and cloaks, and lunch and people, we have just as much in here as we can stand." Dick stood on the walk below, looking with sorrowful, submissive face upon these preparations, for the long talked of day to be spent on the beach.

It was a white day to the Porter family; they

had neither time nor money to spend very extensively in this way. One day by the ocean was the treat looked forward to by Elsie and Fred Porter, and talked of for weeks beforehand with eager delight.

This year Dick had been counted in their plans, and had contrived to get up as much enthusiasm, and more wonderment than themselves, for the sea was something that she had never seen in her life.

"Oh. mamma," Elsie said, with a more dismayed face than before, "Dick must go; she has never seen the ocean, and Baby Nell will be just as full of mischief as she can hold. We shall have to take care of her the whole day, and we shan't have a bit of a good time. Do please, mamma, let her go. Fred and I can squeeze closer."

Mrs. Porter looked irresolute. "We certainly do need her to-day, if we ever did," she said, thoughtfully, "but there really is no place for her."

The driver looked down at the grave, wistful face of the child. He had a little girl at home who dearly loved the sea.

"She might curl down here, ma'am. between my feet; she wouldn't take up much room," he said, addressing Mrs. Porter, respectfully.

"Very well," she answered, in a listless tone, and so the matter was settled, and Dick promptly and gleefully curled herself into a very small space, and the carriage rolled away.

CHAPTER VI.

ONLY an hour's drive, then the great foaming ocean rolled and tumbled itself into view. They in the carriage gave it various greetings. Fred and Elsie screamed and clapped their hands in wild delight; the Misses Willard murmured, "How perfectly magnificent!" mamma Willard said cheerily, "There it is, Baby Nell; something you never saw before in your life." Dick looked at it in solemn silence, with great, gray, astonished eyes; as for Mrs. Porter, I am not sure that she even heard the roar of the waves. The truth is, she was thinking of something else.

The carriage unpacked itself, and the inmates wandered off to indulge their various moods. Dick shouldered Baby Nell, and stood still in the

deep white sand, staring. The other children began a wild search after shells; the young ladies took to writing their names in the sand, with the points of their parasols; and Mrs. Porter left the rest and moved away alone. Truth to tell, she was in a very uncomfortable state of mind. The ocean might be all very well for those who liked it, but she was in no mood to enjoy it that morning. It seemed to her that the white waves made "much ado about nothing," seething, and boiling, and tumbling over each other in mad haste, apparently to reach somewhere, and then suddenly falling back to do the very same thing over again, hundreds and thousands of times. She turned her back upon it with an impatient frown, and continued her reverie.

The subject was an important one; her troubles were definite, but they could be expressed very briefly. She wanted a new parlor carpet, and fresh curtains, and Mr. Porter had that very morning represented to her the impossibility of his incurring that expense during the present

year. His words had been very kind. He had assured her that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to gratify her if he could do so. Mrs. Porter was not given to such foolish moods. Many and many were the things that she silently, patiently did without, but this had been a long cherished wish, and the disappointment had come upon her suddenly, and at a time when she was rasped with a dozen other trifles. So she turned her back upon old ocean and looked contemptuously on her sister-in-law, Mrs. Willard, who had joined the children in their search after shells. "Mrs. Willard," she said, bitterly, "can afford to play; she has nothing else to do." Mrs. Willard owned a grand house on Pennsylvania Avenue, and had brussels carpets and lace curtains to her heart's content.

She was stopping at her brother's house for a few days previous to her summer trip to the White Mountains, and the very force of contrast between her elegant, easy life, and Mrs. Porter's quiet, industrious one, made that lady look with

hard eyes on her own laborious lot. She felt very much disgusted with herself for coming to the beach that morning. What was the beach to her? Or why should she who had so much to do, waste a whole day staring at the ocean? Of course, it would have been a disappointment to the children. "But what of that," she said gloomily: "the children must learn to bear disappointment, as their mother has before them. They will probably have little else to look forward to; I never have." Now, please do Mrs. Porter justice. She didn't mean one word of this. Her life had been a quiet, but a very happy one, and she knew it, and she would have sat up and worked all night rather than to have her children lose that day at the beach.

But it is so nice, once in a while, when one feels in the mood, to be thoroughly and hopelessly miserable.

At this point, Dick came plunging through the sand, Baby Nell in her arms, and called Mrs. Porter's name. The lady turned impatiently.

"That girl is the plague of my life," she muttered, "forever screaming after me, and wanting something. What I keep her for is more than any mortal can tell." Then she spoke aloud and sharply. "Put the baby down. What do you carry her in that absurd fashion for? Let her sit in the sand. What do you want?"

"If you please, ma'am, the little bit of a gold pin that fastens Baby Nell's blanket is gone. We were walking along, and the wind just took us and blew us right around, and blew off Baby's hat; and when I got it, and got her straightened up again, the pin was gone."

Mrs. Porter's, answer was prompt and decided; "Well then, you may go and find it; and don't come back till you have done so. I can't afford to buy gold pins for you to lose."

"What shall I do with Baby Nell, ma'am?" questioned patient Dick.

"Leave her where she is. You don't give her a chance to play in the sand at all. You just drag her around in your arms. Now go; and

mind you don't come back without that pin!"

I don't think Mrs. Porter realized her own absurdity. The little gold slide wasn't an inch long, and not much wider than a thread; and, of course, the idea of finding it in that sea sand was absurd. But when people are in ill humor, they seldom realize their own folly.

Away went Dick to her hopeless task, and Mrs. Porter turned back to the sea, merely glancing first to see if Baby Nell was in a dry place. Then she walked on a few steps, looking gloomily out into the surging waters, and continuing her gloomy thoughts. Baby Nell was in a high state of glee. She was not afraid; no, indeed! Why should she be? Nothing ever hurt her. She fancied that everybody and everything loved her. She tossed the warm sand in her chubby little fists, and showered it over her feet—white feet, from which she hurriedly jerked her slippers and stockings. This fun lasted for some time and nobody saw that the treacherous sea was creeping nearer and nearer

to Baby Nell — nobody but Baby herself. She saw it and liked it, and helped it along as fast as she could. She went, with swift little creeps, out into the wet and slippery sand, only glancing back now and then; and, as no warning voice said the familiar, "No, no, Baby mustn't," she went gayly on. The water came surging about her feet, and she only yelled with glee. She thought the sea was only a great splendid bath-tub.

She crept a little nearer. There came a great, white wave, dashing and splurging, and broke right around her, spattering the water over her curly head, and giving her a taste of its saltness. She shivered a little at this, and looked around, and said her one little word, in a wandering, pitiful tone, "Mamma!" But mamma was looking away out to sea, and thinking sullenly about her carpets and curtains.

And so there came another great swelling wave, and broke away above her head, and took Baby Nell's strength and breath quite away;

and when it slipped wickedly back again into the sea, it carried the baby with it.

She gave a weak little cry; but the great sea roared, and nobody heard the cry.

Nobody knows what prompted the mother just then to turn from her carpets and look for her darling; and above the roar of ocean, the people on the beach heard the awful shriek, long, loud and piercing that came from that mother's heart. It all happened in a very few seconds. The shrieks of the mother as she tried to plunge through the sand, terrified ladies following helplessly after her, and away ahead of them all a little, swift-moving shadow dashing head-long down the beach, and out into the very sea itself. Just a second more, and Dick had snatched the little white dripping bundle, that a great wave was just ready to devour, and, battling fiercely with the wave that broke in fury over her head, she made her way, panting and breathless, and laid the pale-faced, tired baby

in her mother's arms, ere she sank down utterly exhausted in the sand.

What a time they had after that! With what eager, nervous haste they worked over that baby! How quickly the dripping clothes were torn off, and the little body rubbed until it glowed all over! Then she was wrapped in blankets and shawls, and pinned securely, like a little mummy. Then the whole party wedged themselves into the carriage, and drove rapidly homeward.

They had had enough of the beach and the sea. Dick, very wet and very happy, was rolled in a great blanket shawl, and lay curled snugly inside the carriage with her head on Mrs. Willard's lap.

Will ever anything look pleasanter to Mrs. Porter, than did her own dainty parlor that evening, with the curtains drawn and the gas light brightening the carpet, and the whole circle, all complete?

Baby Nell, in a fresh, white suit, danced and fluttered and jabbered as joyously as though the ocean had not almost swallowed her that day; and the thankful mother held her securely, and looked down upon her with soft, happy eyes.

Could it be possible that it was she who had cared for carpets and curtains that morning?

How rich and cheerful-looking her curtains were, after all, and the carpet so much brighter than she had any idea of! She would not have new ones for anything; she shivered at the bare thought. But for thoughts of them, she would not have left Baby Nell that morning among those cruel waves.

"She is just the age that my baby was when I lost her. Did you think of it, Alice?" Mrs. Willard asked, gazing tenderly on Baby Nell; and the mother, too much moved to answer with words, snugged her darling closer, and shed grateful tears over her happier lot.

"If you please, ma'am," Dick said, appearing at the door, "here is the little gold pin. I

found it, and I was coming with it when I saw Baby Nell."

"Oh, dear child," said Mrs. Porter, tremulously, "I wish you had thrown it in the ocean; I never want to see it again. If I had not sent you to find it" — Then she stopped, with quivering lip and choking voice.

Just then Baby Nell gave one of her sudden springs, and landed safely in Dick's outstretched arms; and as they watched her cooing and nestling there, Elsie slid toward her mother, and said, softly:

"Mamma, if we hadn't squeezed this morning and made room for Dick, what would have become of Baby?"

CHAPTER VII.

I am an old woman, nigh on to eighty years; leastways, I 'm past seventy, and eighty do n't seem very far off. I belong to this Porter family, of which you 've heard tell so much. John Porter, he 's my oldest son, and the only one I've got now, and Sarah Willard she 's my only daughter; I belong to the long list of very much troubled and pulled about old mothers, that we read and hear so much about: only, I 'm on 'tother side of the line: part of the time I live with my daughter, Sarah Willard on Pennsylvania Avenue; and part of the time I live down here in Stone Street, with my son John Porter: and there aint a nook, nor a corner, of

the grand house on the Avenue, with all its handsome furniture—marble, and velvet, and damask, and what not—nor of this cosy little house here in Stone Street, that every single soul on em' don't think looks a little nicer and comfortable if Grandma is in it.

Whichever house I'm in when I begin to gather up my traps and pack my trunk, and talk about going to the other place for a spell, there's the greatest hue and cry you ever heard tell of: the children, they hang around me, as if there wa'nt nobody in this world but Grandma; and my grown up children ain't a bit behind 'em; so between both families, I'm kept in a kind of muddle, most of the time a tryin' to decide which of them needs me most. I'm one of the old fashioned kind; I wear plain white caps with close borders; and I wear very plain, short waisted black dresses. but my daughter Sarah she tends to the gettin'of 'em up, and they are nice and fine and soft, I can tell you. You ought to see my grand easy chair that was

bought a purpose for me. It sets in the nicest corner of the back parlor, in Sarah's house: and and when I'm seated in it of a morning, Sarah, she brings her grand visitors out, and she says to 'em "This is my mother." as chirk and proud as if I was a queen instead of a wrinkled up old woman. As for Son-in-law Willard, I don't know as he ever came up to the house in his life that he did n't bring "mother" some oranges, or some figs or some grapes, or some new fashioned candy, or something or other. But land sakes, I dont know as the chair is a bit easier then this old fashioned, high backed one, that I'm sitting in this minute, and that daughter-in-law Porter stuffed, and covered, back, and sides, and arms, a purpose for me: and Baby Nell she sits in my lap and coos, and smooths out the wrinkles on my old face, with her dear teeny little hand, and kisses me with her tongue, and snuggles her curly head in my neck, and goes to sleep as good as a kitten, times when the rest of 'em can't do nothing with her. As for my son John, I do

really belive he thinks that there ain't but one mother on this blessed earth, and that's his mother. But I begun this a purpose to tell you a little story about my son John, and my grandson Fred. This morning we had a terrible time. I never did see a house turned more topsy turvy than this was, for a little while: John he flew about like a No'th wind; I knew by the signs, before I heard a word, that he was a hunting something. He always was a losin' things and a huntin' of 'em, when he was a boy.

Well, how he did whiz around to be sure. Pretty soon I heard his voice: "Where's my bank book"—says he. "I laid it right here, on this table. Some one's taken it. Here, Elsie, have you been meddling with my bank book?" Elsie she said that she didn't know nothing about it: and then he said:

"That was a likely story; bank books didn't walk, unless somebody walked 'em." Daughter-in-law Porter she was very meek and quiet like, but she looked under the table, and inside the

coffee pot, just as people do when they're kind of flustered, and don't quite know what they're about; and she said—"its very strange." Then John spoke up, real sharp and testy, and says he "It ain't strange at all. I never laid a thing down in this house and found it again, never. The children are as mischievous, and meddlesome as the day is long: and you'd let the baby have the glass pitcher, and the hammer, if she wanted them." and he glared at the children as if they belonged to some old vagrant, and not to him at all. I declare for it, I guess we all felt relieved and rested like, when he finally got his hat on, and flew out of the house.

Daughter-in-law, she didn't say a word, she just give the children a peach all around: and by and by she says to me.

"John is hurried almost to death about his business: he does have too much to do sometimes, he is in such a hurry, that he doesn't know what he says or does."

We had a quiet enough day after that, John,

he was so busy that he couldn't come home to dinner, so we had it all by ourselves, and Baby Nell was the only real busy one in the house that day. I declare for it if she didn't make every bone in my body ache, the way she trotted around. When I took her in my lap to try to quiet her, she pulled my specs from my nose, and put them on herself, and pulled down my white hair to make it curl like mamma's." When my own babies used to do mischief, I always used to consider it my duty to slap their fingers; but dear me! I always thought it hurt me, more than it did them, enough sight: and I'm glad them days are gone by and its no concern of mine to be slapping Baby Nell's soft little fingers.

CHAPTER. VIII.

BABY got her work all done after a spell, and toddled over to me, willing to be taken up, and patted and sung to sleep; and there she lay in my arms sleeping quiet as a lamb when her father came home to tea. He had got quiet too.

He brought an orange for me, and a fig for the baby, and he kissed her, and talked to me good naturedly a spell, and then sat down to read his evening paper. Fred was in the hall with his slate and pencil. He had been there quite a while, working away, and once he brought his slate to show me. He was making a picture of a steam engine, that he had been to

see that day; and it was just the completest thing! screws and wheels all fixed.

He explained to me as natural as if he had built the whole thing himself. I believe that boy is going to be a genius.

It seemed as if everybody in the last half hour had wanted something of Fred. His mother called him, and the cook she wanted him, and then Elsie had to have something she could n't reach and so he was laying down his slate and pencil and bobbing up and down most of the time.

The next thing that happened — his pencil was lost. He hunted after it quite patient for a spell, and then he begun to fret.

Now what has become of that pencil? I heard him say, "I never did see the beat. A fellow can't make anything in this house.

Where could it have got to?

Elsie Porter, I just believe you have been meddling with it. I just wish you would let my things alone."

And then there was a good deal of sputtering between him and Elsie, she saying "I did n't," and he saying "You did." Just then my son John jumped up and went out there pretty spry and says he, "Fred, what do you mean by such kind of talk as that? Working up such an uproar about a slate pencil, and being so cross to your sister."

"I won't have such goings on. You can go to your room and stay there until after supper. We do n't want such a cross boy to take supper with us."

Then he came back and sat down to his paper again.

I sat and thought quite a spell and then says I "John, did you find your bank-book?"

He looked at me kind of foolish like, and says he, "yes, I did; I found it in my other coat pocket. I had forgotten that I had changed my coat."

"Well, then," says I, very grave and solemn like "you can just go into that clothes press

and get on the shelf and you can't have no supper, because we don't want no cross boys to our supper."

John, he looked at me a minute, and then he burst out laughing, and laughed so loud, I was afraid he 'd wake Baby Nell. Pretty soon says he, "Seems to me that 's pretty hard on me, aint it mother? A bank-book is of more consequence than a slate pencil."

"John," says I, "that depends on how you look on them."

"You can be sure of one thing, things look amazing different at fifty, from what they did at ten, and I make no manner of doubt, that when you was ten or twelve, a slate pencil was enough more important according to your notion, than a bank-book, 'specially if you happened to be making a steam engine."

Then I up and told him all about the steam engine, how cute and perfect it was.

He listened as pleased as could be, and says he, "Yes, he 's a smart little fellow, no mistake

about that. I do n't know but I was pretty sharp with him. I 'll call him presently, and let him come down to tea."

Then he read his paper for a spell, and I sot and thought. There 's things that I 've been wanting to say to him this long time, but I did n't know just how to set about it; finally I thought I 'd say them just as it happened out of my heart without any fixing.

"John," says I, "I have been thinking to-day about going home. I 've been down here a great many years, and it stands to reason that I can't stay here very much longer. I am expecting the Lord will send for me most any day, and I 'm willing and ready to go; only for one thing. How am I going to be certain that I 'll see you again after a while?

John, you 've been doing about every thing you could think of for your mother, all your life. Won't you do just one thing more? Let me be sure I can have you with me always."

I broke down there — my voice got all trem-

bly like. You see I felt it so much — this one trouble of mine. John, he looked kind of startled at first, and then his face got pale and tears came into his eyes.

He came and leaned over my chair, and kissed me twice, and says he, his voice all shaky, "Mother, I'll try, but don't you talk about going away, and leaving us; I can't bear it."

Then he went out of the room. I sat thinking about it a little spell, and the more I thought, the more I felt as if I must have it, till at last I went and laid Baby Nell on the bed in my room, and I got down on my knees by her to ask the Lord if there was any more that I could do; and after I had prayed a little, it seemed to me as if I heard a voice saying, "Those lambs, Grandmother, coax those lambs into the right way and like enough the sheep will follow."

CHAPTER IX.

"HAVE you a handkerchief Elsie?" Mrs. Porter asked this just as Elsie and her father were ready to start. Everybody in the house had been helping. Mrs. Porter had been up since sunrise, and it was an august day, so she rose pretty early; and Grandma came in without her cap, in her haste to help them off. Baby Nell had helped, too; she put the key to the valise in the water pitcher, and gave one of Elsie's shoes to the dog, under the window. But in spite of all delays and mishaps, they were finally ready.

"Yes 'm," Elsie said in answer to her mother's question. "I have that hem-stitched one that Aunt Sarah sent me."

"It has no name on," Mrs. Porter said hesitatingly. "I'm afraid you will lose it. Well, never mind, there is no time to change it now."

"It has a name mother; it is marked Saw in the corner."

"Marked Saw! What do you mean child?"

"Why, don't you know? S. A. W. are aunt Sarah Willard's initials, and they are worked in the corner; Dick calls it my "saw" handkerchief.;" and Elsie went away, laughing. I want you to know that she was going to New York. Mr. Porter ran down to the city on business every two or three months,—sometimes oftener,—but although it was 'nt much more than two or three hours ride from home, Elsie Porter had never been there; and she had longed with all her might to go. At last she had her wish. Fred went to the depot to see them off, and said, half enviously, that he was the oldest, he ought to have gone first. "Ladies served first, always, that is a gentleman's creed." Mr. Porter said, as he gave into his hands the

change left from buying tickets. "I know it, all right, thank you, Father," said Fred, choking down his envy, and smiling at the sixty-three cents in his hands. Then the whistle blew, and people crowded and pushed each other, and all tried to get on or off the cars at once, but found that after all they had time enough to take it more quietly. Elsie put her shawl strap containing her crimson and black plaid shawl, in the rack above her head, shook out her linen polonaise, stuffed her hemstitched handkerchief into the conspicuous side pocket, surveyed the buttons of her kid boots, to see that they were in immaculate order, then looked complacently around the car. She was certainly a very well dressed young girl, comparing favorably with any about her, and she was on her way to New York. "Meet the 7.50 train to-night Fred," she called out amid the shrieks of the engine. She had studied the time table, and the business like sentence "the 7.50 train," rolled glibly from her tongue.

"Well," said Mr. Porter, "you are fairly started for New York at last, aren't you? Does it feel as nice as you thought it would? Then he bought her two apples, an orange, a pint of peanuts, and a box of prize candy. After that he read the newspaper. Elsie Porter was not by nature a timid little girl. Thus far she had found very few things in her life, worth being afraid of, and she was perfectly astonished at the nervous way in which she clutched at her father's arm, and held on tight, as he pushed and elbowed his way among the throng at the depot. What a tangle of men, women, trunks and children, there were! More than half of the time Elsie suspected that her father was hunting for something that he could 'nt find and did 'nt know what he was about; for no sooner was she seated in a street car, looking at the people, than he whisked her out of it, into an omnibus, then back into a street car again, and it seemed to her bewildered vision, that they

were going over precisely the same ground that they had just traversed.

Suddenly he stopped on the sidewalk, rushed into a large house, through a hall, up a flight of stairs, pulling breathless Elsie after him, and landed her in a large handsome room. "Now, Elsie," he said, "I must leave you here a little while; I have some business to attend to near here, and you can rest until I come back,—then I will take you somewhere." "Father," said Elsie, very much startled, "I do'nt like to stay here alone. I wish you would let me go with you I would n't trouble you at all.

"You could n't, child; I 've got to go where there is a great crowd. It is as much as I can do to get myself through. Why? You 're not afraid, are you?"

Elsie shook her head resolutely. The idea of having Fred and Dick told that she was afraid and Dick had lived in New York a whole year—"Why no," she said hesitatingly, "I 'm not afraid

of course; but then it's kind of strange and lonesome, you know: Whose house is this, anyway, and where are the people. Are n't they friends of yours?"

"Whose house! Why, it's French's hotel! You do n't think I pitch into private houses this way, I hope? This is the public parlor, and there 's plenty going on down on the street to look at, and I thought you would like it."

"French's hotel?" repeated Elsie in great surprise. "Why! I thought hotels stood away from other buildings, and had long piazzas and ever so many doors?"

Her father laughed. "You are thinking of the hotels at home, I guess," he said. They do n't have any room for piazzas and extra doors in this part of the city. Well, what am I going to do with you? If you are afraid to stay here alone, why that's another thing.

But meantime, all Elsie's native courage had returned to her. It was certainly splendid, to

be left alone in the public parlor of a grand hotel, just as if she were a lady. "I'm not the least afraid," she said with energy. "What should I be afraid of?"

"Sure enough," said the father. "I don't see anything. Well now, you understand that you are to stay right here, until I come back. I won't be long, and of course you won't venture out on the street alone."

"Of course not," Elsie said, and seated herself complacently in a chair by the window while her father hurried away.

"What crowds and crowds of people," she said, flattening her nose against the glass. "I do wonder where they can all be going, and what makes them in such a hurry. So many horses, too. I would n't be down among them for anything. Oh, my! what splendid peaches; I wonder what Fred would say to them. He thought that one he gave me last night, was big. I do wish I had one of those for him, they 're

twice as large as any I ever saw; if I was down there, I might buy some. I 've got some money and I do n't suppose that father meant I was n't to go just down there, in front of the door. I could buy one for mother, too. How fast they are selling them."

CHAPTER X.

AS for Mr. Porter he went with all speed down the stairs, and was promptly lost to Elsie's sight among a crowd of men. He was at all times a quick-motioned man. But he hurried through with more business in one hour, that morning, than he often did in two. There was a new feeling about this coming to New York; for the first time in his life a little daughter was waiting for him, just around the corner. "Let me see!" he said, looking at his watch. "I've been gone an hour; Elsie will be getting tired. Well, I've done a good deal of work. I shouldn't wonder if I could push into Central Park now. I've got to go pretty well

up in that direction, and Elsie would like that about as well as anything. I wish I had time to go over to Brooklyn. Fred wanted her to be sure and tell him about the ferry boats, but I guess that must go until he comes. I'll bring him down next time. Here we are. I'll just tske Elsie up to Stewart's with me, she wanted to see the big store," and the eager father sprung up the steps of French's hotel, three at a time; a well pleased father he was; he had succeeded in planning, so that quite a little time could be devoted to sight seeing, with his daughter. Up to the public parlor, and down its length he strode; the room had filled up during his absence; there were children of all sizes, but he saw nothing of Elsie; he shaded his street blinded eyes with his hand and walked slowly back again, looking steadfastly at every little girl; she certainly was not there. A little startled, he stepped out into the hall, and ran against a waiter. "Do you know where my little girl is?"

The waiter, not being used to such curious

questions, answered him with a stare, and finally said: "Who is your little girl?" Sure enough. How should he go to work to tell? he hesitated, looked bewildered, but finally said:" She is about as tall as that girl by the end window, and has brown hair; she had on a brown linen dress, and"—the waiter interupted him. "I beg pardon, sir, but the house is full of little girls of that size, from morning till night, and they all wear brown linen dresses, or something like that, but they are generally in care of some one. Who did you leave your little girl with?"

"Why;"—said Mr. Porter, speaking fast and nervously. "I never thought of leaving her with any one, she was to stay right there by that window, until I came back."

"She is probably taking a walk through the halls."

"They mostly do that,"he added, beginning to pity the anxious father. Then what a search there was! Mr. Porter grew more excited and

frightened every minute, and flew up and down stairs like a wild man.

The proprietor of the hotel was found and questioned, but he knew no more about Elsie Porter, than he did about the man in the moon. "Did you book your name, Sir?" he asked of Mr. Porter.

"Why no," said that gentleman, eagerly. "I only left her for an hour, you know, then I was coming to get her. We are going back home to-night."

"Did you leave her in charge of anybody? Chambermaid or any one?"

Poor Mr. Porter shook his head, he began to feel as if he had wilfully thrown her away. Finally the servants' bell was rung, and all the people employed in the hotel trooped together to the office, and were questioned, one of them "see a little girl about that size and dressed in linen, buff linen, with brown trimmings?" Mr. Porter nodded eagerly. "Well, I see her eating

some peanuts, and the next time I went by the door, I see she wasn't there."

And this was all. Mr. Porter's awakened hopes, went down to Zero. They were very full of sympathy, these servant girls; they searched promptly and willingly, through every room, every hall, every stairway, every closet from the attic to the basement in the rear; no Elsie. Can you guess how nearly distracted Mr. Porter was by this time? Can you imagine what an afternoon he had? He ate no dinner, he meant to have had such a grand dinner, he and Elsie, at a hotel table, when she was to order whatever she chose to fancy. He did not go near Central Park, or Stewart's store: instead he hovered around French's hotel questioning the boarders, loungers in the bar-room, the policemen who stalked by on their rounds. All to no purpose; if the earth had opened and swallowed Elsie up she could n't have disappeared more suddenly and hopelessly. One policeman saw a little girl answering to the description, trying to cross the street, and

he called to her, that she would better not; but there was a fracas at the corner just then, and he turned to that.

"And what became of the little girl?" Mr. Porter said, waiting breathlessly. The policeman smiled. "That is more than I know; she crossed, I presume, without any accident; they mostly do."

"There was an accident about here, though, this morning — a child run over," a bystander said.

"A girl?" asked Mr. Porter, quickly.

"No; a boy, I think. I was n't here. I heard somebody speak of it." "Yes," the policeman said, "it was a boy, I believe, and two girls yesterday; it is a dangerous corner." Mr. Porter's face grew paler, and he turned sick at heart. "I thought you said they generally crossed safely," he said fiercely. The policeman smiled again. "Well, a thousand or two of them did, but two got hurt." And that was all. To him, Elsie Porter was only one of a thousand

or two of girls. To her father it was as if there were no other girl. It was half an hour after the evening train had left the depot that he bethought himself of the people at home, who would be expecting them on that train. Now what could he say to them? Of course he couldn't go home. What! go home without Elsie! He could never do that. He might telegraph. "Detained until morning train." He would surely find her by that time, and this dispatch he finally sent leaving them to bear the disappointment as best they could. "If they only knew what detains me," he muttered, as his trembling hand wrote the message, and a great lump seemed to rise up in the strong man's throat. Night was setting down upon him, and where should he go to find Elsie? And how could he live until morning, if he did not find her.

CHAPTER XI.

FRED PORTER stalked home from the depot in a very much disgusted frame of mind. He had been to meet the 10. 50 train, the morning after his father's departure from home. "They didn't come, mother." —he called out, as soon as he came within sight of her, waiting at the window. "Here's another dispatch instead. I suppose they are detained until night, now. A nice time Els. is having."

By this tlme he had reached his mother's side, and stood looking over her shoulder, while she broke the seal and read, "Take first train for New York; bring baby, and Dick."

Mr. Porter had studied over that dispatch;

Such a night as he had spent, he never would forget, up and out all night, hunting aimlessly through the streets, talking with policemen, visiting station-houses, and morning found him without a single trace of Elsie.

Now the family at home must have some word, he could not telegraph that Elsie was lost; he could never write it to them, besides, her mother, she could find her; Elsie was a great mother child, always; the mother would surely contrive some plan by which to get their darling again. The mother must come. But she couldn't leave baby? No, Baby Nell must come too.

But what could they do with Baby Nell, while they planned and hunted for Elsie? Dick must come, Baby Nell would stay with her, day or night. So the telegram went, so it reached the family at home. Fred Porter read it over twice, with fast bluring eyes. "Take first train for New York; bring baby and Dick."

"And not me! mother?" Fred's voice shook.

"Elsie must be sick," The little mother said,

with a quietness of tone that she did not feel. "Father knows that his boy will be wanted at home, to help us off, and take care of things at home, until we come. When is the first train? my son."

"It is at twelve o'clock, and it's after eleven now. Shall I get uncle Hall to drive down with you, mother?" Fred's voice had cleared, and was strong and helpful. There was that in his mother's tone and words, that had made a man of him. Mr. Porter was waiting for the two o'clock train, and he clutched at Baby Nell, with a nervousness that startled Mrs. Porter afresh. "How is Elsie?" she said, the instant her voice could reach his ear.

"Here is a carriage," he said in answer. Get in Dick, quick. Now drive to French's hotel."

"John," said Mrs. Porter, — and she laid her hand on his arm. Tell me just exactly how Elsie is."

"I don't know how she is," he said with tremulous lips. "If I could tell you that she was

very sick, and I was taking care of her, I should be thankful. Alice, she is lost. I haven't seen one glimpse of her, since ten oclock yesterday morning, and I can't get the least clue to her whereabouts."

I am glad I can not describe to you what the Porter family said and did and endured, during the next three weeks. The places they visited, the people they questioned, the times when they thought they had found her, and the awful disappointment, when they discovered their mistake. It makes me sick to think of it, and nobody can describe such suffering. "If she had only died, with us taking care of her."—Would Mrs. Porter cry out, night after night, with something between a moan and a groan. And when mothers come to places where they can say that, why there is nothing left, that words can tell. But she rose up the next morning, and went about the search again. Long before this, Fred had been told the dreadful story, and daily letters went home to him, where he bravely waited,

bearing his hard, hard part, that of doing the errands for his uncle, and going to school as usual, and going to the store to see what message Stephen Turner had to send to father, and doing all those common place little things, instead of having the dismal comfort of helping in that dreadful search. So the days wore on; and every morning they said with a touch of hopefulness. "We shall surely find some clue to day," and every evening they said with white lips, "another night without her." Ever so many people had come to know the small, pale lady, who went about with such a quiet sorrowful face, looking right and left about her, and staring at every child she met; and the restless nervous man, with haggard face and wild eyes, who gave himself time neither to eat nor sleep, in his vain search after the lost daughter. The papers were full of the sad story, the police were earnestly at work, and still no trace of Elsie.

Dick's business during these weary days, was to keep eyes and hands on Baby Nell who

grew more lawless and full of mischief every hour. There was just one hour of respite for her, that was during Baby Nell's afternoon nap, Regularly at that hour came Mrs. Porter from her search, and bolting the door against all interruption, knelt beside her sleeping daughter, to pour out her heart's longing for the daughter who was not with her. Jesus knew where she was, and to Jesus this helpless mother was driven, as she had never been before. This hour, Dick devoted to searching for Elsie. Her method of search was very peculiar. First, though she took the best possible means for succeeding, she always got down behind the great rocker in the corner, and said with great earnestness, these words: "Lord Jesus help me to find Elsie Porter." Every day, — just these words; nothing more, never less. Dick had but lately learned anything about prayer, but she had what many a praying Christian might have envied, a very firm belief that her prayer was to be answered of course. "Wasn't she speaking to Jesus

Christ? and didn't he always hear? From her knees she went directly down to the walk in front of the Hotel, and steadily pursued her plan of work, which was to speak to every single person who passed that way, saying always this one thing: "Elsie Porter is lost; do you know anything about her?"

Some of the people passed by her, with an astonished stare, some of them did n't hear her at all, but many stopped and inquired. There was a good deal of method in Dick's plan of work. This was the way she reasoned about it. If the people who pass by don't know anything about her, maybe they'll come across her this very day, and if I tell them about her, they will know where to bring her. Besides, a great many people must have passed by, that day she got lost, and if I keep watch and ask them all, maybe some one will go by who saw something happen to her, and can tell me about her." It was fortunate for Dick's plan that the hour in the day that she was at liberty, was the hour when

there was the least passing by; as it was, there were many who escaped her question; these she sighed over, but regularly found comfort in the thought — "I asked the Lord Jesus Christ to help me, and it's likely He knows whether those folks know anything about her." There was one other thought that comforted Dick. She knew what occupied Mrs. Porter at this hour. "She's a praying about it this minute," — She said, over and over, to herself, and her faith was strengthened.

CHAPTER XII.

IT was three weeks from the day that Elsie Porter had seemed to vanish from the face of the earth. Dick, fresh from her stronghold behind the rocking chair, had stationed herself on the walk below, for her hour of work. There was a very ragged, very grimy looking boy, just at the corner; he had taken up his stand there, within a week, to way-lay the passers-by and beseech them to buy an evening paper. Dick had surveyed him with much disgust. He reminded her forcibly of the days before she found her chance, and began to be respectable.

On this particular day, she felt like leaving no possible loop-hole for information untried, so she

resolutely marched up to him, and they had this conversation.

"I s'pose you don't know anything about Elsie Porter?"

"What makes you s'pose so?"

"Well, do you?"

"Can't say that I do."

"I knew that you did n't."

"What made you ask me, then?"

A gesture of disgust from Dick — a chuckle from the boy; meantime, people were passing. Dick darted towards a group and began her work. The boy grew interested. "Who is she?" he asked in one of the pauses.

"She is our little girl, and she has been lost for three weeks."

"Where was she? tell us about her."

Long practice had made Dick prompt and brief in telling this story. She answered with a hopeless sigh:

"She came to New York with her father,— he left her here at French's hotel, and was away

[illegible] hour. When he came back, she was gone; and that is all we know about her."

The ragged boy whistled. "That's a pretty tough thing, now, ain't it?" he said sympathizingly.

"I wish I did know something about her. Three weeks ago, did you say?"

Just exactly three weeks this very day, the second day of August, it was." Dick said mournfully; and between his questions and her answers she plied her trade of questioning the

[illegible]y of August, that's the day [illegible]as off his beat. I was down here in these parts that day: and there was a girl got killed. Maybe your girl was 'Saw.' Who knows?"

There was a group of people coming, but Dick paid no attention to them, she turned with eager eyes to the boy and grasped his arm.

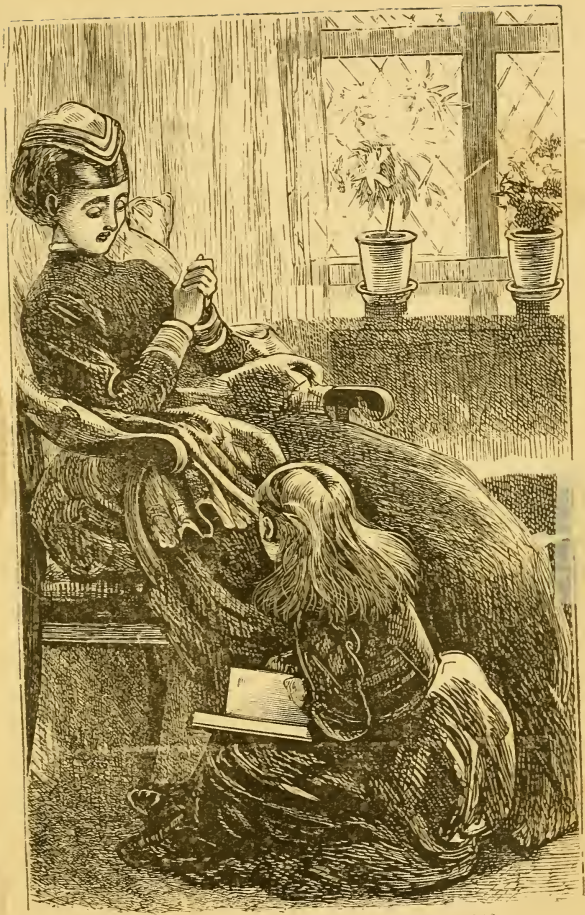
"Who is Saw? What do you mean? What do you know about her?"

"Oh, she was n't your girl," the boy said, coolly. Things do n't generally happen that way; and I do n't know who she was from Adam. She was rushing after a peach cart to buy peaches, and she dropped her handkercher, and I picked it up, and was goin' after her, but some horses knocked her down, and they took her into that ere house over there, that's a hospital — and she died; and I carried her handkercher over to her; and it was marked Saw, in one corner."

Dick clasped her hands together with a moan of pain. "It 's our Elsie," she said, in a low, solemn voice. "Are you sure she is dead?"

"Yes, I 'm sure, 'cause I carried the handkercher over, that very afternoon, and I asked how the girl was that was took in, and they said dead."

"I 'm going over there," said Dick with quiet determination. "There may be some mistake; there's mistakes to most things. Did they take the handkerchief?"



Emma talked over the ride. Page 202.

"Yes, they did; but you can get it again if ou prove property. They keep all such things or proof you know. I'll go along with you nd whet their memories." Threading her way cross the street to the great building, Dick, by int of being guided by her new acquaintance, nd after answering endless questions, got some nformation. "There was a girl brought in here. he was unconscious, and was supposed dead; but he rallied, then we discovered that she was Mrs. Wheeler's daughter on Fourth Avenue, and he was removed there.

"Is she the one the handkerchief belonged ?" Dick questioned, eagerly.

"Yes," the woman said, "and the handkerchief went with the rest of the things in the carriage."

"Was it marked?"

"Yes, it was marked S. A. W. in one corner; but was why I remembered this boy, because ne said the handkerchief belonged to that girl

named Saw, that was hurt; that was the way they came to know where to send her. They had heard that Mrs. Judge Wheeler's daughter was missing, and some one in the house happened to know that her name was Stella Ames Wheeler."

"Did she die?" was Dick's next eager question.

That the woman had never heard. She should think more than likely she did; she was hurt about her head.

Still Dick was full of questions. Could the woman remember how she was dressed?"

"Why, yes, I most always remember how to describe dresses; it is part of my business to remember. She wore a buff linen suit with brown trimmings, and kid boots buttoned up, and she had a pretty ring on her third finger with a stone in it — "

Dick interrupted suddenly — "Please, can you tell me just exactly where that lady lives?"

"Now I 'm going to take a carriage and go to her house," she said emphatically to her ragged boy, as she left the hospital.

That woman described our Elsie exactly, ring and all."

It was a short ride, and Dick, half wild with excitement, found herself standing in Mrs. Judge Wheeler's hall before she had any idea what she wanted to say to that lady.

She talked fast and without much connection when Mrs. Wheeler came to her. "Oh if you please, ma'am, was your little girl's handkerchief marked S. A. W. and did she wear a buff linen suit the day she was brought home. And did she die?"

Mrs. Wheeler was a small, pale woman, dressed in deep mourning. "Are you looking for some one you have lost?" she said, and her voice was so low and gentle, that Dick's excitement calmed down of itself, and she said simply, "Yes, ma'am."

"My little girl was killed at a fire," Mrs.

Wheeler said tremulously. And the next day there was sent to me from a hospital a little girl whom they supposed to be mine. She was so very sick that I could n't send her away, and I have taken care of her ever since. She has had brain fever, has been very, very sick, and is not yet so that she knews where she is, or can tell who she is. She has talked a great deal in her delirium about Baby Nell, and sometimes mentioned Dick and Fred. Do you know any such little girl ? "

" It is our Elsie," said Dick, and then she sat down on the hall carpet and cried so hard and so loud that she frightened everybody in the house.

Tea was just ready at Mr. Porter's. Mrs. Porter set a huge dish of peaches on the table as the crowning touch.

Fred, with Baby Nell in his arms, stood at the window, watching father as he came up the walk. Dick passed back and forth, setting chairs, bringing water and answering Baby

Nell's chuckle of delight. In a great arm-chair pillows at her back, a footstool under her feet, sat Elsie. Her hair was coming out in new soft, little rings all over her head. Her eyes looked twice as large as they used to, and there were heavy rings of black under them. But there was a pleased smile on her pale face, for this was the first day that she had been able to sit up until tea time. She was getting well. Gathered about the tea table, they talked over the whole story, for the hundredth time, just as people are possessed to do.

"I can't understand what that Mrs. Wheeler could have been about, that she did n't read the papers and find out you were lost?" Fred had made very much the same remark twenty times before, and did n't seem to get much satisfaction.

"She had enough to be about," said Elsie. "I was awful sick, you know, and her own little girl was dead."

"But she advertised you in the papers, why

didn't she look in and see if anybody answered?"

"She said she never thought of it," Dick said. "Elsie was brought from the hospital, you know; and she said she thought she was some child without near relations; but she advertised her, for fear people were looking, but she never thought to look at the advertisements of other folks. I don't think that was strange; you see, she thought people would come and call on her if they wanted to know more about it."

"And she had n't much time to read the paper," Elsie chimed in.

"It was no stranger than we did, any way," Mr. Porter said. "We all acted like a company of idiots. Why did n't we read the paper and find her advertisement? I never once thought of anybody else advertising. I thought we were doing it all."

"What puzzled me is that those people at the hospital did n't know more about her, they certainly must have found out when they took

her there that she was not Mrs. Wheeler's little girl." This was Mrs. Porter's addition to the family puzzle. Dick shook her head positively. "No she said. They told me about that too. The little girl—Mrs. Wheeler's little girl you know, wasn't buried yet and the house was full of people coming and going, and the girl who came to the door thought that it was a girl who was so sick they couldn't carry her any farther, and of course they wouldn't turn her away. "Then afterwards, Mrs. Wheeler went to the hospital and saw one of the doctors, but she said she supposed the nurses were not told about it."

"Oh it's easy to understand, after all,—Mr. Porter said—"If you remember that it was in New York that it happened, one third of the people might be killed, without the other two thirds knowing much about it. "There's such a swarm of people, and so many accidents, and so many children that don't seem to belong to anybody. "The wonder is that we ever found any trace of her again."

"Why you'd have found me when I began to know anything about myself." Elsie said, "But then"—she added, with a little tremble of the lips.—"I guess maybe I would never have known anything about myself or anybody, if mother had not come just when she did."

"That was what doctor said, daughter. Mr. Porter said tenderly. "You needed something to arouse you, so you owe your life to your mother, after all."

"Under God."—Mrs. Porter said softly, and then they were quiet a few minutes,until Fred burst forth with—"I say, Dick, why didn't you speak to that fellow before?" Dick laughed a little, and looked confused.—"He was such a dirty ragged boy"—she said at last—"I didn't want to speak to him at all. I thought it was foolish to suppose that he knew anything about it."

"The wonder is, that she thought to speak to him at all, or to any of them"—Mr. Porter said—"I'm sure it was a plan that would never have entered my head."

"How came you to think of it, anyhow?" Fred asked.

"I didn't.—said Dick, gravely, "I never thought of it at all. The Lord Jesus told it to me, himself."

Fred whistled a little, he couldn't help it, he was so surprised; the rest were silent. Suddenly Fred spoke again.

"Well, I say it was queer anyhow, that that ragged newsboy should be the only one of all the crowds of people, who knew anything about it."

During this talk, Stephen Turner had come in with a message for Mr. Porter, and waited for his answer. He spoke out now, as if it came from his heart.—"It was his chance, you may depend."

"His chance!" said Mr. Porter.—"What do you mean, Stephen?" "His chance to do something good, something to help people, that would help him, too, they all have it, I think."

"That's an idea." Mr. Porter said, telegraphing a wise look to his wife.

"Have you had your's, Stephen?" "Yes sir." said Stephen, with a quiet smile. "Mine looked small, but it keeps growing bigger."

"And will grow bigger yet, if I have anything to do with it." Mr. Porter answered, laughing. "The way you managed things while I was away, surprised and pleased me. I shall not forget it."

"Dick had her chance too. That was a great big one I think. And likely to grow bigger in every way." Mrs. Porter said with a tender touch to her voice. "She has saved both of our daughters for us."

"And is our own little daughter now, forever." Mr. Porter said this, in a very grave and solemn tone. As for Dick, or Mary as they were trying to learn to call her, she cried for very joy and thankfulness.

"Mother"—said Fred, with a sudden and entire change of voice and subject. "Are not these peaches splendid? I wish Elsie could have some of them, do you think a taste would hurt her?"

Elsie shivered a little. "I don't want any" she said. " Father, you said you would tell me some day what that peach I went after, cost. Won't you tell me now ?"

" If you really want to know, child, I may as well tell you now, and be done with it. It figures up about seven-hundred and fifty odd dollars, counting the printing and doctor's bills and everything."

" Oh my !" said Elsie, with white lips. Her father hastened his sentence. "A pretty dear peach, daughter, but we'll call it cheap considering all the lessons it taught us. You learned to be very careful to remember just exactly what father says, and your mother and I learned to remember that we had a Father in heaven who had a much greater right to be obeyed: and all of us learned that He leads by strange ways, and that nothing "happened" without his knowledge. I suppose he even makes our "chances for us; eh, Stephen ?"

SANTA CLAUS' MISTAKE.

"WHAT is Kiss-Muss, mamma?" asked three-year old Freddy, who had quite forgotten the stir of last Christmas.

"Why, this is 'Kiss,'" answered mamma, laughing a little as she stooped to caress the household darling, "and you are right in a 'muss,'" she added, looking about the room, which she had just entered, and smiling upon the group who with busy fingers and busier tongues were making all ready for Christmas, which was now only two days off. "And so much as we have to do!" said Mabel. "Here are all these wreaths to make and put up, papa's handkerchiefs to be finished, and —"

"O Mabel, Mabel!" exclaimed Sue. "You

will let the kittens all out of the bag, if you don't bite your tongue, or hold a pebble in your mouth, or something."

"Mamma, I wish you'd take Freddy up stairs. He bothers asking questions that nobody has time to answer."

"Freddy don't bozzer. Freddy don't want to go up 'tairs," insisted the sturdy boy. "Brozzer Tom, don't you like Freddy?" he said coaxingly, to the big brother, who had proposed his banishment.

"Yes, darling," interposed mamma. "Tom likes Freddy, but he is very busy now. We will go up to mamma's room until they get cleared out here, and I'll tell you all about Christmas."

Nestling in mamma's arms in the great easy chair before the fire, Freddy listened attentively while she told him about the dear Christ, whose coming upon earth we celebrate, how he loved little children, and took them in his arms and blessed them.

Then she told him of good old Santa Claus.

"And may I hang my '*tocking wite* up on a nail?"

"Yes, dear — when Christmas comes."

"When will Kiss-Muss come?" Freddy asked.

"To-morrow night you may hang up the stocking."

"And may I hang it up all myself?"

"Yes, if you can reach," answered mamma.

"And will Santa Claus fill it full up?" said the little questioner.

"I think he will," answered mamma, smiling to think of the treasures waiting the hour.

"I want to hang it up wite off now."

Mamma explained that it would do no good to hang up the stocking before the time. Freddy was quiet for awhile, then suddenly he said in a troubled voice,—

"Mamma, my 'tockings are so 'ittle!"

"Oh, you little greedy!" said mamma, hugging her boy so closely, that Freddy, though

he did not know what a "greedy" was, thought it must be something very nice.

The hours flew by, and everything was in readiness, in spite of Mabel's worry. The dining-room had that rare luxury in these days, an old-fashioned open fire-place, and the room had been made like a summer bower. The pictures looked out from evergreen frames, wreaths and festoons hung upon the walls, while scattered about were various devices, crosses and crowns, anchors and harps, marvels of skill and beauty. A long row of stockings hung under the mantel, for although the children, except Freddy and six-year old Nell, understood the mystery of Santa Claus, the pleasant custom of hanging the stocking was kept up, father and mother setting the example.

Mr. Willard had given orders to have the fire lighted at five o'clock, knowing there would be some early risers on Christmas morning; and sure enough, just as the flames

began to dart up the chimney, and the shad ows to play upon wall and ceiling, quick foot-steps were heard on the stairs and along the hall, and soon the clatter of tongues put an end to papa's morning nap, and he soon joined the group. Mamma was before him, with Freddy in her arms.

Sure enough! Freddy's "'tocking" was "so 'ittle." It would not hold half the gifts Santa Claus had lavished upon the darling. What a queer looking stocking it was! stuffed until it was ready to burst, with toys and picture cards, and a small candy shop, and tied on at the toe, pinned on at the side, and hung on the nail above it, were blocks to build a small Chicago, sleeping-cars and palace-cars, and a whole menagerie. Freddy screamed and crowed, and cried, "Mamma, papa, see this! and this!"

And mamma looked in surprise (?) and shared his joy. "Why, Freddy!" she said, "Santa Claus must have made a mistake.

Here's a great many things for one little boy. I am afraid some little boy will have to go without."

"That's so!" said Tom, teasingly. "Some of these things must belong to some other boy, and he'll be coming around after them by and by. I shouldn't wonder if Santa Claus himself came back to-night to get them."

"I'll put them in mamma's buzo-drawer, and lock 'em up tight," said Freddy.

"Just think!" put in Maud, "of the poor boy with an empty stocking this morning. I should not have thought old Santa would have made such a blunder."

"Oh! I don't wonder," responded Tom, "he has so many boys to look after. But I'd like to know where these things do belong."

"They 'long here — to me," persisted Freddy.

"I rather think that some of them — but so many! Why, I have not half as many." Just here Nell, who had taken her gifts to the window seat, exclaimed, "Why, papa, I

don't believe that Santa Claus went to Mr. Randall's at all. There isn't a bit of a track on the roof."

"Sure enough," said Tom, looking out upon the house across the way. "I knew he had made a mistake. Poor Willy Randall!"

Mamma saw that Freddy was beginning to look grave, and checked the children's teasing, regretting that she had first suggested the idea.

Late in the afternoon Freddy was alone in the dining-room, building houses and railroads, mamma had gone up stairs for a little while, but Tom and Maud were in the next room, Tom absorbed in one of his new books, and Maud trying the pens and paper in her new writing-case. Sue passing the door heard Freddy say, "I wonder if Santa Claus did make a mistake. I guess dese cars 'longs to Willy, and dese, and dis!" then she too went up-stairs.

Perhaps it was ten minutes later that Mrs. Randall heard a small voice say "P'ease open 'is door." Answering the demand at once, she

found Freddy with a shawl over his shoulders and trailing behind, and with Maud's hood on his head, and a basket held fast in his chubby hands, which were crimson with cold.

"Why, Freddy," exclaimed Mrs. Randall, "how came you here?"

"I walked wite across the woad myself," said Freddy. "I'se comed to bring dese. Santa Claus made a mistake, and dey 'longs to Willy, I dess."

"What makes you think so?" asked Mrs. Randall, laughing.

"'Cause he left a great much of things to my house, and I can't see any bit of tracks on your roof, and mamma said he did make a mistake."

"Did mamma know you came with these?" asked Mrs. Randall.

"Mamma did say Santa Claus made a mistake," persisted Freddy, who, having nerved himself to the sacrifice, meant it should be accepted. Meantime, four-year old Willy had appropriated the contents of the basket, and

already had a freight train en route for New York.

Mrs. Randall was both amused and annoyed. Amused at the little budget with trailing robes, standing before her with such a very grave face, and annoyed at the thought of Willy's disappointment when he found that the pretty toys must be sent back. "Grace," she said, turning to her daughter, "I wish you to go home with Master Freddy, and take the basket of toys and explain to Mrs. Willard."

"Brozzer Tom said Willy ought to have part," almost screamed Freddy, "and I bringed 'em wite over for him. Grace sha'n't take 'em back again."

"Well, my dear, you shall leave them. Grace will take you home." Then to her daughter in an undertone she continued, "tell Mrs. Willard that you will bring them over bye and bye," and she sighed as she thought of the meagre gifts her own darlings had received, and wondered if everything was not a *mistake*. Not

that she envied the family in the great house opposite, but it was so hard to be poor!

Freddy marched off with Grace, who succeeded in explaining her part to Mrs. Willard, who in turn had to explain to Grace, telling her of the morning's talk; then in reply to her proposal to bring back the toys as soon as she could pacify Willy, Mrs. Williard said, "No; but ask your mother if she will be kind enough to let Willy have them. It will really be a great favor to me, for it will not be easy to make Freddy understand that our talk was all nonsense. You know he plays with Willy a great deal, and it makes little difference which claims them."

And that is how Freddy mended Santa Claus' mistake.

OUR ELLA.

YOU have never seen "our Ella." She is a merry, chattering piece of mischief, just six years old. She has a pair of the brightest of blue eyes, and a sunny smile lurking about the very rosiest of lips. We all love her very much, and I am afraid we all pet her more than is for her good. This little girl is very fond of having her mother or cousin Sarah read nice stories and sweet bits of poetry aloud, and she really thinks that it will be a very nice thing to be able to read them for herself. But the truth is, "our Ella" is quite too fond of her play to learn very fast. Now, I will tell you what

happened the other day, and what a victory Ella gained. As our little girl is the only child in the house, she cannot be spared to go to school, for what would father and mother do all the long day without their darling? So she reads a lesson, and patient cousin Sarah hears her spelling every day. But sometimes the words are long, or Ella feels a great deal more like play than like study, then her indulgent mother says, "Well, my darling can have her playtime now, and study her lesson by and by;" or "To-morrow she will feel more like studying."

And so "our Ella" has come to think that she need not study unless she *feels like it.*

Two or three days ago she had another hard lesson. After she had studied it over a few times, she brought the book to her cousin, who pronounced the words very distinctly. But alas! poor Ella could not spell one of them.

"Now," said Sarah, "what shall we do about this?"

"I don't know," answered Ella slowly, and twisting her fingers.

"Are you going to give up? You know the lesson must be learned sometime. It will not be one bit easier to-morrow. Don't you think, Ella, that you had better learn it now, and have done with it?"

The little girl shook her head. "I don't want to study it now; I want to go out and play."

"But, Ella, if you always play instead of learning your lesson, you will never learn to read."

"I don't care," and the rosy lips pouted a little. "Mamma'll read to me."

"But," replied Sarah, "sometimes your mamma is too busy, or has one of her bad headaches, and cannot read to you."

"Well, I can wait until she gets better," persisted Ella.

"I know you can; but wouldn't it be pleasant if you could read to her when she is ill?"

"No; because when mamma is sick, she can't bear reading. Besides, cousin Sarah, I never can learn that hard lesson if I tried a week," and the blue eyes filled with tears.

"And so you will give up! Conquered by a few hard words! You'll never do to belong to a 'Try Company.'"

A short pause followed, during which Ella tugged vigorously at her apron string. After watching the workings of the little face a few minutes, Sarah said,—

"Well, Ella, which shall it be? Will the long words conquer Ella, or will she conquer the long words?"

Ella waited a moment, still pulling at the string, which threatened to come off, then she looked up brightly, and said, "I'll try the lesson again, cousin Sarah."

The poor, despised Speller was picked up from the corner, where, in her despair, Ella had tossed it, and once more the sweet little face was bent over the Speller.

It *was* a hard lesson. All that long afternoon she studied. It seemed as though the sun never shone so brightly, and the birds never sang so sweetly. And surely little Hatty and Mary Cole never laughed so merrily, as they played in the next yard. When Ella suddenly remembered that Hatty had promised to make her dolly a new hat in the very latest style that afternoon, she thought she must go right away and take dolly over there. But catching an encouraging glance from cousin Sarah, she did not yield to the temptation, but studied on, until, with a certain air, she carried the book to Sarah, and spelled every word correctly.

"There!" said her cousin. "Are you not glad that you persevered?"

"I guess I am!" and the blue eyes danced with triumph. "But it was very hard. I thought I could not stay in. I almost went two or three times." Then, after a moment she asked, "Cousin Sarah, did you ever have to get your lessons over?"

Sarah smiled, as she patted the rosy cheek, and replied,—

"I once staid after school until dark to learn that very lesson."

"You!" exclaimed Ella, who looked upon cousin Sarah as a miracle of learning. "Well," as she went on deliberately, "*I am going to stick to it* now, and see if I can know as much as you."

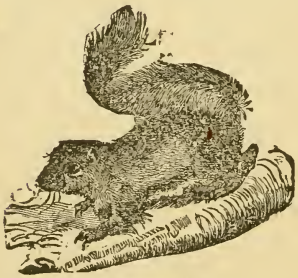
Now the little round hat was tied over the sunny curls, and Ella skipped away to join her playmates. Do you not believe that she enjoyed her playtime all the better for the victory she had gained?

Now I know other little girls, and *boys too*, who are like Ella. They are afraid of long words! Some, a little older, are afraid of difficult examples in their Practical Arithmetic, and they say, "I can't do it, if I try a week."

Oh, fie! Girls and boys, with bright, active brains, will you let a hard lesson conquer you?

How many are ready to say, with "our Ella,"

"I'll try the lessons again?" Don't give up. Oh, *don't.* These little victories are worth gaining, for they prepare the way for greater ones. A boy who always masters his tasks, will be sure, when he grows older, to walk over all difficulties straight on to success. *Don't give up!*



TOM'S FAULT.

BOYS, can you be trusted?

Whew! how your eyes snap — and how your cheeks flush, and your fingers tingle, as you stretch them out to snatch the pen that dares to ask such an insulting question! And a very bad pen it was; I've thrown it away, and taken a new one, which I hope will not bring that angry flash into your eyes. It is true, a right-minded, honest boy, does not like questions that imply a doubt of his trustworthiness. Of course *you* can be trusted; and I am glad there are so many of you. But when I began to write to you to-night, I was thinking of a boy—

alas! there are some such — who failed in this particular. He does not belong in your ranks? Well, perhaps not; yet he is a bright boy, and so fun-loving that he has never been able to keep out of mischief long at a time.

Well, Tommy lives with Mr. Brown, who has a fruit farm. One day this last spring Mr. Brown was suddenly called away from home in the middle of the forenoon. The call was imperative, yet he looked down the long rows of strawberry vines with dismay. Already he was behindhand with the work. It did seem as though it would not do to let those vines go another day. Tommy saw the look, and understood the perplexity.

"Mr. Brown," he said, "I think I can manage the cultivator. You know I tried it in the other field."

Mr. Brown hesitated. He had been told that Tommy was one of the boys who worked better when the master was by; but there was no other way, so he handed the reins to

Tommy, with the injunction to give old Sorrel his oats at noon, and went off. Tommy worked very well until nearly noon. He was a stout boy, and found no difficulty in the work. Suddenly, however, he heard shouts and loud laughter; and then he remembered that it was Saturday, and the village ball club had an appointment to play on their grounds half a mile away. He was sure now that it must be noon, and hastily unclasping the traces, he drove old Sorrel to the stable, and thrusting a bundle of hay before him, started for the ball grounds, saying to himself, "Mr. Brown always takes a good hour's nooning, and I don't want any dinner; so I'll just run over and see how the boys are coming on."

Reaching the place he was greeted with a loud cheer.

"Hurrah, Tom! you are just the one; our side is one man short, and you'll just fill the gap."

"I can't stay long," he said; "but I'd like to join while I'm here."

Now, will you believe me? all that long afternoon Tom tossed and ran, and—Oh, well, you boys know all about what ball-players do; I don't. I mean that he stayed, got excited, wanted to see it out, and did not think it was getting late, and then fairly forgot that he had anything to do, until—well, it was nearly dark when he finally tried to steal in at the back door, dreading to meet Mr. Brown; and there at the very threshold he encountered that gentleman. I think that all you honest boys will agree that Tommy deserved the scolding which he received, (not that you or I believe in scolding,) and that if he had been sent home to his father in disgrace, it would have served him right.

Now this same Tommy had some excellent traits, and Mr. Brown was not unwilling to try him again upon his promising to do better. But he took a night to think of it, thus leaving poor Tommy in a state of suspense. His reflections were not of the pleasantest

sort. The truth was, he feared Mr. Brown — he feared his father, and he feared disgrace. In vain he tried to excuse himself *to himself*. It was of no use; he knew that he had been unfaithful to a trust, and that was the whole of it. And there was enough manliness in the boy to make him feel a keen sense of shame and dishonor, to say nothing of the consequences; and these consequences were surely to be dreaded. Mr. Brown had given him no word of hope; of course, he will be turned off. And his father — Oh, you boys with kind and loving fathers, who deal gently and tenderly with erring sons, cannot guess at Tommy's feelings as he thought of his stern parent, who could never overlook a boyish folly, much less an actual wrong doing — you cannot guess at the strength of the temptation that assailed him that night. Once he had risen from his bed, and moving softly about, gathered up his clothes, as the resolution to run away from all the disgrace and punishment grew stronger.

"I can't," he said, "I can't meet father. He will just about kill me. I was a fool to get into such a scrape; but I might as well get clear of it by running off as any way. I can't be much worse off. I'm just as sorry as I can be, but father always says 'sorry don't mend things;' and now that I've lost my place, he will be as likely to turn me out of doors as not. I've a mind to stay and give him a chance."

More bitter and angry thoughts of the father, who had never won his love and confidence, followed. But after a while he paused, standing irresolute for a few moments; then dropping the half made up bundle, he slipped back to bed, saying,—

"Any way, I won't sneak off in the night. I'll wait until the worst comes, and stand it, if I can; and if I can't, why — well, I won't think any more about it."

But he *did* think, as he tumbled and tossed through the night that seemed to be endless; and I think that he thought to better advantage

than ever before; and I believe he prayed, promising God that if he would but help him through this dark place, he would try harder, for the future, to keep his steps from straying; and it would seem that God heard, for when, in the morning, Tom said to Mr. Brown, and there was sorrow and humility in his voice, "Try me once more, Mr. Brown, and if I do not do better I will not ask it again," he found that gentleman ready to grant him pardon and farther trial.

Now, that was not many months ago; and we cannot tell what Tom's course may be, should weighty temptations assail him, but we trust that the resolutions formed during that weary wakeful night have thus far been kept, and that the habit of *being faithful* is growing upon him. Still, he has not got rid of a feeling of shame, when he thinks of that afternoon; and sometimes, when he is confident that Mr. Brown watches him closely, he wonders if he will ever entirely regain the confidence of his employer.

Boys, I am glad *you* can be trusted. Faith-

fulness in the little things will give you a character for trustworthiness, and after a little while you will find that parents, employers, and associates will be ready to place the fullest confidence in you, and you will not fail to find in that a considerable degree of satisfaction.

RAG-PICKERS.

THEY are not dirty, ragged boys of any "Five Points," these *rag-pickers* of whom I am going to tell you; but they are two as neat looking lads as you often see. They are well acquainted with the use of soap and water, as well as combs and brushes. They belong to no Ragged or Industrial School, but five mornings of the week the Seminary bell summons them to their lessons, with which their work is never allowed to interfere. In short, they are just such boys as the sons of the Rev. Mr. Graves should be.

And now what do I mean by calling them *rag*-pickers?

That's what you want to know, is it, Harry? Well, I will tell you and the rest of the boys.

You all know what we mean by home missions? You know, too, that in many of our Sabbath-schools money is collected and sent away to help the self-denying missionary? Well then, boys, George and Frank Graves were much interested in a letter which their father received from a brother minister, telling a sad story of the destitution and sufferings of the family of one who was laboring in a mission church in the West.

When they were going to bed at night, George said, "I say, Frank, don't you wish we were rich men, so that we could give a great deal to the missionaries?"

"Yes, I do, though papa says that the richest men are not often the most benevolent."

"Well, I would give away as much as I possibly could, if I were rich. I am sure I would," said George.

After a little, Frank responded thoughtfully, "It seems to me that we might better be trying to do something now. While we are waiting to be rich, people will be starving."

"Well, I don't see what we have to give, any way," answered George. "Now just see that, will you?" holding up the foot from which he had just kicked the boot, and displaying a stocking with heel and toes sticking through it. "If I don't need somebody to make me a donation, then I've made a mistake," executing a comical flourish at the end of his sentence.

Frank did not laugh as he usually did at George's manœvres, and after a while his brother, noticing his quiet mood, said, "Dear me, Frank, I am just as sorry as I can be for those poor people out West, but I haven't a cent to give them, and if I had, what good would our little do? So where's the use in fretting over it? Cheer up, old fellow, hear me go over my declamation for to-morrow. I reckon that'll put some laugh into you."

Long after George was asleep, Frank was trying to think out some plan for raising money, but every scheme seemed to be quite

impracticable, and morning found him as poor as ever.

A day or two after this, he was sent down street to get the old coffee-pot mended. While he was waiting for the work to be done, a man came into the shop with a sack of old rags. As Frank watched the weighing, and saw the man receive money for them, a thought shot into his head. "Why not save rags, and sell, to get money for the missionaries? I'll do it!"

And he did do it. Not a thought that there might be anything degrading in the work ever entered his head. These boys had been taught that a proper motive, and earnestness in pursuing the object, ennobles any occupation.

George readily entered into his brother's plan, and now began the work. From garret and cellar, from street and gutter, from chapel and playground, came daily additions to their stock. Papers, brown and white, printed and

written, were seized wherever found. The good minister found himself obliged to keep a sharp lookout, lest sermons and notes should find their way into the general vortex. Barrels of old newspapers, pamphlets, almanacs, hand-bills, &c., the accumulations of years, were hauled over, and Mr. and Mrs. Graves were compelled to give their attention to the matter, and decide which should be saved for future reference. Not a pound of sugar came from the grocer's, or a slice of steak from the market, but one of the boys was at hand to carry off the wrappings.

Rags of all colors and textures, the clippings of mother's work, the cast-off garments of Jenny's doll, the worn out apron, and ragged cap, all helped to increase the collection. Mrs. Graves even imagined that George's elbows found their way out of his coat sleeves with unusual rapidity, in order that the garment might add to their riches.

Almost every day the bag was brought out

and weighed, to see how much they had gained. It was a happy day when the boys received a bright crinkling greenback in exchange for their "good-for-nothing rags." Then even George could not say, "we have nothing to give," and though his stockings, and boots too, might be out at the toes, he had no thought that the money could be used for any other purpose than was originally designed. In four months, the boys received six dollars and twenty-six cents from the rag trade! If each Sunday school scholar would do as much, we should not have such constant appeals from the Board of Missions for help. How many boys are ready for the work? You may not all be *rag*-pickers, but keep your eyes open and you will find a way. "Gather up the fragments." Do what you can. If you *cannot* find a way to earn *dollars*, then earn *pennies*.

EMMA RUSSEL'S MOTTO.

FOUR happy people sat together in the pleasant breakfast-parlor at Mr. Russel's. These were my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Russel, their daughter Emma, and myself. Emma, always one of my pets, seemed to me unusually bright and winning. I noticed a change in the child's face since I saw her last — a new glow, a brightness different from the old, merry look — an unwonted light in her eyes, as if some great joy was shining out there.

I had wondered a little if this were fancy, and if not, what had happened. I shall tell you how I found out all about it.

We were talking of the beauty of the morn-

ing, and it was glorious! The sun shone brightly, and the snow sparkled as though millions of diamonds were strewn over its pure white surface. I did not wonder when Emma asked,—

"Papa, isn't this a good morning for the sleigh-ride you promised me? It is so bright and sunshiny, and Robert says the roads are fine. Do, papa, please take me to R——," and Emma slipped around to her father's side and laid her hand coaxingly upon his shoulder.

"Did I promise you a ride, you mischief?" asked Mr. Russel, smiling upon his little girl.

"Now, papa, of course you did; and I know you mean to take me, too."

"How do you know?"

"Why, I know you always mean to do things when you have that queer look about your mouth."

After a little playful talk, the promise was given, and Emma fairly danced about the room in her delight. Eleven o'clock was the hour,

and long before the time, Emma had brought out an almost endless quantity of wraps, tippets, furs, and mittens, and was trying her best to curb her impatience, when her father came in, and calling her, said,—

"My little girl, can you bear a disappointment?"

"No, papa, I can't. If you mean that we are not going, I can't bear it — you promised, you know," and she gave a little laugh of triumph, for she knew her father kept his promises.

"Yes, my daughter, and I shall keep my promise, unless you release me; and now I'll tell you why I wish you to do so. I was going to attend to some important business for old Mr. Warren, and Esquire Davis says that it will be necessary for Mr. Warren to go to R—— himself; so I came up to ask you to give your place in the sleigh to him for this morning."

"But, papa," urged Emma, "why can't he go in the cars and meet you there? I'm all ready — I can't stay at home now," and eyes and voice were full of tears.

"My child, Mr. Warren is an old man, and an invalid; he could not well go alone." Thus speaking in a very grave tone, Mr. Russel added, "Emma, remember your motto."

With a little start, Emma answered sadly, "I forgot; I—I'll try to be willing to do as you wish, but"—a great sob choked her, and she ran away to her own room. I remembered the passionate fits of weeping which she used to give way to, and looked forward to her return to the parlor with swoolen eyelids and sober face. Great was my surprise when she came down smiling, with the same bright glow in her eyes that I had noticed before. She had a bit of canvas and some zephyrs in her work-basket, and came over to my corner, saying,—

"Now, Miss Faye, since I can't go to ride, won't it be a nice time to learn that stitch you were to show me — that is, if you have time."

I would gladly have set aside far more important matters than any I had on hand that morning, for the sake of the dear child. I knew that

it was a trial to give up the ride; for her father did not often find time for sleigh rides, and riding out with Robert perched up on the driver's seat, and she alone in the sleigh was not pleasant. Together we mastered the new stitch, and dinner-time soon came, and with it Mr. Russel, greeting Emma with,—

"Well, have you moped the morning away, and made the house too gloomy for anybody to stay in?"

She answered promptly.

"No, sir; Miss Faye and I have had a splendid time — haven't we?" appealing to me.

"I think," continued Mr. Russell, "that if you could have heard Mr. Warren thank me, you would have felt repaid for your sacrifice.

"I am not a bit sorry, papa," insisted the little girl.

After dinner, as Mr. Russel was putting on his overcoat, he turned back from the hall to say,—

"Emma, I think of driving over to A ——,

with the large sleigh; and if you know of three or four little girls, besides yourself, who would like to go, have them here at four o'clock. Tell your mother that we will take supper at A——, and return before nine this evening."

He was off before Emma, in her surprise and bewilderment, could stammer out a word. When she realized what her father had been saying, she exclaimed,—

"Oh, my! won't it be grand to ride after those splendid horses with papa — have supper at a great hotel, with a lot of girls — then to ride home by moonlight? O Miss Faye, won't that be too splendid for anything?"

And Emma suddenly found that the second dish of pudding, for which she had just called, was a very unnecessary addition to her dinner.

"Now, mamma, who will I ask? Can Robert take my notes, or will I go myself? I think I'd better go. I can't keep quiet long enough to write notes. Of course, I'll have Annie Gates; then there's Mary Lee and the Murrays — that will be six, with papa."

As she talked, she was rapidly cloaking and hooding herself, and now danced away, but turned back to say,—

"Mamma, what do you think? Suppose I don't ask the Murrays this time? There's Amy Nichols, who never gets any rides; and Fanny Green. We don't like *her* very well at school; and I don't think she treated me very well about that concert matter; but — you know, mamma, she is poor, and thinks we girls, who have rich fathers, feel above her. Don't you think she would like going to A ——, and having a grand supper for once? I'll have papa order oyster-pie, and — Oh! lots of nice things. Shall I ask Amy and Fanny, or the Murrays?" she asked, in concluding her somewhat mixed and hurried remarks.

"If you do not think Fanny will spoil your pleasure, ask her, by all means," answered Mrs. Russel.

"I guess she will be good for once," laughed Emma; "but I must hurry."

Five happier little girls than those who, wrapped in soft furs, tucked in among the bright cushions and fleecy robes of Mr. Russel's grand sleigh, dashed down the avenue, and out into the street, and away out of sight, neither you nor I have ever seen.

That evening, after their return, nestling down by my side, Emma talked over the ride. The beginning and ending of the story was, "Such a grand time!"

"And to think," she said, "that I came near losing it all by going to R—— this morning. I shall be thankful to old Mr. Warren as long as I live, for having some bothering business to keep me at home."

"Emma," I said, "will you tell me how you happened to give up that morning ride without" — here I stopped. She finished the sentence.

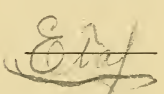
"Without a storm of tears and fretting, that lasted half a day? That's what you mean! Well, I'll tell you, Miss Faye;" and her voice was grave, but full of peace. "I am trying

to be like Jesus. You heard what papa said about my motto? The motto is, '*Remember Jesus!*' Somehow, when I do *that*, the angry goes right out of my heart. The *sorry* staid a good while this morning; but afterwards I was glad that I could help that poor old man by staying at home."

Here was the *secret*. I knew now what was the change in the child's face. I knew that it was the Saviour's love that filled her heart, and shone out in her eyes, that made her so thoughtful of others' happiness, that helped her to put away the old fretfulness, and kept her from bursts of passion.

Dear children, the same Saviour waits to fill your hearts with this love and peace!

ETAF.



THE Rev. Leroy Chapin. He was a classmate of mine. We graduated together and settled at the same time — that is, I settled. He stopped at the village of ——. Ah, well, I will take sober second thought, and not give you the name, because I wish to remark that the church there didn't know enough to call my friend, so they invited him to preach for some months — an indefinite number — with a view to settling. That always means, provided the candidate does not carry a handkerchief with too broad a hem, or too narrow a one, or wear his hair too long or too short.

Some one of these abstruse and important questions very often determines the question of settlement. I know, for my grandfather was a minister, and my father was a minister, and *I'm* a minister. I have never been sorry, despite the handkerchief and the hair, and similar worries. There are other things that compensate for even such trials as these. Well, brother Chapin, invited me to spend Christmas Eve with him, and attend his church festival. I was settled only twenty miles away from him. My wife had gone home to her father's to keep holiday. I was to follow as soon as I had performed the marriage ceremony for a couple who perversely chose Christmas morning for their entertainment — but weddings were not so plenty that I could afford to waste any of them,— so here I was with a Christmas eve on my hand, wifeless and babyless. Hence my invitation; and as Chapin had neither wife nor baby nor home anywhere, we thought we might as well be as comfortable as we could together. So I went,

and his church held a festival. It was a brilliant affair. The church was a well-to-do one, somewhat in the country, plenty of wealthy farmers connected with it, and quite a number of people of culture. We had a very pleasant evening. I don't know when I have enjoyed myself better than I did there. "It's queer to think, brother Newton, that you were only ten miles away from us, and neither of us knew you."

"And now you have come a thousand miles in one direction, and I nearly as many from another, to be entertained at his home." This was what the Rev. Mr. Newton said, as he put his comfortably slippered feet on a velvet footstool, and leaned back in a luxurious easy chair.

"Exactly. Life is a very strange thing."

"How many years is it since you spent Christmas eve with brother Chapin?"

"Fourteen years to-night; it was Wednesday evening I remember. Chapin is in his prime

now; he has improved wonderfully, and I always thought he was a fine fellow."

"What suggested that Christmas eve to you? Simply the fact that it occurred fourteen years ago to-night?"

"Oh, to be sure, that and some other things. I fell into a reverie, and forgot my story. You remember brother Chapin's leaving that church; or did you go west before he left?"

"No; he went some months before I moved west. I heard all sorts of twisted and contradictory statements, but never the correct one, I presume, I left that region so soon afterwards. How was it?"

"That Christmas eve was the starting point. They had, as I told you, a church festival; and I presume you know by experience how ingenious Satan is at creeping into those affairs. I really thought, though, that he had been left in the lurch that evening — at least so far as a tangible form was concerned. There was no post-office, nor ring cake, nor even a grab-bag. They had a

sumptuous supper, and everything was passing off delightfully. Over in one corner of the room, as much out of sight as possible, I noticed a pretty good sized barrel; it had been covered with some sort of a spread early in the evening, and I mistook it for a table, but the cloth had slipped from it and disclosed a barrel. It struck me as rather singular; the other appointments of the hall were very good, and it did not seem probable that they were so hard up for tables.

"What is that?" I said to Chapin, as we stood near it.

"That's a barrel," said he solemnly. "Suppose you mean what is it here for? And I have not the least idea; it must have been needed for some purpose, but I should suppose they would have had it removed."

Before the evening was over we found out what that barrel was. It was a most ingeniously arranged thing. We admired the "getting up" of it a great many times since.

You see, they had prepared a card for each man, woman, and child in creation, or in that neighborhood, at least. Each card contained a line or two, I believe it was two lines of poetry, of a somewhat dreamy or mystical nature. Then they were piled in a heap on the table, and every one bought a card. Oh, there were hundreds of them sold. Fifty cents apiece they sold for. Now it seems there were two cards that were duplicates, and one of these was tacked on to the head of the mysterious barrel. Only one young gentleman who managed the affair was in the secret as to which card was duplicated. Then the house was called to order soon after supper, and it was announced that the game of Etaf would be played. Nobody knew what Etaf meant; at least Chapin and I didn't; and we listened with the rest. We might have known that there was a secret, and that a good many were in it, for the din had been indescribable three minutes before this, but they were as

quiet as mice after the game was announced. Somebody put a card into Chapin's hand, and another into mine, and oracularly stated that whenever the word on our cards was spoken, we were to read the line on the other side, aloud. I neglected to say that there was some common or queer word on each card, in addition to the lines on the other side.

It was then announced that the presiding genius of the game of Etaf had appeared to them in the form of a barrel, that whoever pronounced a sentiment entirely in unison with his feelings would have signal proof of his favor before the conclusion of the game. There was a fellow in Chapin's congregation, at least his folks were in it; he was a lawyer in New York, a sharp fellow, and a real wit; he came forward at this point, and began to tell a story. It was so absurd, Newton, so altogether ridiculous, that I would give considerable to have you hear it; every few sentences a word from one of the cards would

be introduced in a most ingenious manner, and up would start somebody and repeat the sentence on his card. I tell you, Newton, I never laughed so much in my life as I did that evening. Those quotations came in such a way as to make a complete absurdity. We were in the very height of the frolic when the word on my card was called, and I responded. The roar of laughter which greeted my reading had not subsided when we were startled by a very sepulchral voice solemnly repeating the same sentence. I wish I could remember what it was. I know it was ridiculous in the extreme. Well, so far as we could discover, the barrel had found its chosen affinity, and out it walked from its corner into the very middle of the room, halting directly in front of me. I tell you, for a minute I actually was startled. There were great bursts of laughter, and voices called, "Open it, open it!" So there seemed nothing for me to do but obey, and I lifted the cover in a very

gingerly manner. Inside sat a youngster of twelve or so, with eyes as large as moons, and he held up to my view a single golden pippin —held it by a ribbon tied to the stem. I solemnly took it, and around it was pasted a strip of paper whereon was written, "Touch me not, the barrel is yours. I belong to the Rev. Leroy Chapin." And to that gentleman I immediately handed it. It was tremendously heavy, and I began to suspect something. So on the impulse of the moment I challenged him for a piece of it, and he in the same spirit produced his knife and attempted to cut it. As I suspected, the inside had been dug out, and its skin was almost literally full of gold dollars! At this instant, Chapin's Sunday-school scholars, who had been previously instructed, began to call out from every quarter of that room, "Merry Christmas! merry Christmas! merry Christmas!" and older ones took it up, and shouted until you couldn't hear yourself think. "Now, Newton, I want

to know if you ever knew Satan to get up a more ingenious device for introducing a lottery into the Church of Christ, and making the pastor of that church a leading participant in it?"

"A lottery!" said Mr. Newton, with a puzzled face.

"Why, yes—don't you see? They had sold tickets to everybody; actually *hundreds* of people around the country had bought; only a select half dozen or so were in the secret, the rest knew that they were competing for a prize. Some of the money that was realized for the tickets they converted into gold, as a gift to the pastor; I think there were a hundred dollars, and they had a handsome surplus left for church and Sunday-school purposes. I certainly never saw a poor man put in such a position before; it was especially hard for brother Chapin, you see, for if there was anything that he hated with entire and righteous hatred, it was gambling in all of its forms."

"What did he do?" asked brother Newton — he had taken his feet from the velvet ottoman, and was sitting erect, his face full of sympathy for our brother Chapin.

"Do! He did what very few of us would have had the courage to do. For some minutes he didn't take it in at all; he saw the money, and that was a pleasant sight, for Chapin was poor; they gave him a starving salary, and I knew he could spend the hundred dollars a hundred ways for his actual needs. Presently he said to me,—

"Sanborne, what on earth am I to do? I can't keep this."

"Can't keep it!", I repeated, like a parrot, and full of astonishment.

"No, I can't. Don't you see, it's a lottery? They are talking all around us about having tickets, and it's even worse than an ordinary lottery; there was actually nothing but an old barrel to strive after."

"But they did it as a present for you," I said,

eagerly enough, for I was anxious for him to have the money.

He shook his head. "No, there isn't that excuse," he said. "I heard young Butler telling some one that there was just six of them in the secret, and the rest thought they were striving for a valuable present."

"But they understood that the money so procured would be given to you for a Christmas present, Chapin; they certainly must have been told that much," I said, still personating Satan, you see. But he answered me almost sternly,—

"I cannot be put up at lottery, at all events, if I *never* have a Christmas present!" And his eyes were pretty stern as he said it.

"I tell you I was at my wits' ends. Of course I foresaw a terrific storm if the gift was returned; and I loved Chapin like a brother. I couldn't bear to have him in deep waters.

"My dear boy," I said, coa[illegible] arrange it somehow? Those[illegible]

right; it is an error of ignorance; they want to do you honor, and it will grieve and offend, and make trouble in your church to decline the gift. Can't you overlook the matter, because of the motive that prompted?"

He turned towards me with that penetrating look of his. "Get thee behind me, Satan," he said, with an attempt at playfulness. "Sanborne, you wouldn't have me do it — overlook the act, tolerate a lottery — because it brings a hundred dollars to me — but frown upon it when the money belongs to others. That is what the enemies of Christ would say of me, and with good show of reason. I know I shall be misunderstood and lose many friends — perhaps lose my church — but I must not do evil that good may come. It just cuts me like a knife to think of returning it — but I must do it. I believe it is right; the Lord can take care of me."

He went forward without another word, and called the assembly to order. I would give

much to be able to tell you what he said — it was tender, gentle, grateful — yet earnest and solemn. It seemed to me that it ought to melt all hearts — there were tears in my own eyes — but neither tears nor melting were there, I can tell you. Why, it was a regular uproar, I had to leave by the very early train — and I went to Massachusetts the next morning; but when I came home, the first thing I did was to run down and see him. I found him in deep trouble. The most outrageous stories were afloat, twisted and turned to suit the narrator's particular views of the festival, until it seemed to me that the very powers of darkness were arrayed against the poor man. My heart ached for him. I went hither and thither through the village, trying to make things plainer and smooth some of the ruffled feelings. But I might as well have talked to a quart of chestnut burs. I couldn't reason with them any more than you can with pins. I never saw anybody who fancied that his generosity had been under-

valued that you could reason with. I asked Chapin if he ever felt that perhaps it would have been wiser, all things considered, to have kept the money, and appropriated it to some public use; but he shook his head emphatically. "I haven't been given over to that feeling," he said, decidedly, "though I think I have had every other discouraging one that ever mortal endured. But in this case there wasn't room to doubt. It wasn't done in ignorance, Sanborne; if it had been, I do think they would have taken the explanation better. It is not so much that they are hurt, as that they tried to entrap me, and failed. It is a gambling community, the ladies buy their tea of those who offer a prize for every third pound, and the gentlemen buy their cigars in the same manner. The very children, when they go to town on the cars, come back laden with prize candy and prize pop corn. The people know how I hate it all. I have preached against it, and talked against it, and I am obliged to think

that they, knowing my poverty, meant to give me a great temptation, and arrange it so that I almost could not escape, in order to silence my troublesome voice."

"The whole thing was abominable," brother Newton said, excitedly. "And so that was the occasion of his leaving that church so soon?"

"Just that, and not any of the hundred and fifty absurdities that were told at the time. I was mad for six weeks right straight through all the time about it. Isn't it a strange thing, brother Newton, that the Lord sends such trials to a man like Chapin, who seemed to need them so little?"

"It is strange," Newton said thoughtfully; "that is, it seems difficult for us to understand the why, but I presume the Master knows just why he does it. It didn't *crush* brother Chapin, anyway."

"Oh, no, he wasn't crushed by any means — at least not for any length of time; but it was a bitter trial, and I never *could* get the least

glimpse of the 'working together for good' that there must have been in it. However, as you suggest, it is a great comfort to know that we haven't it to manage."

Then we both left brother Chapin's luxurious study and went down to his elegant parlors. We were spending Chritsmas together,—Newton, my new ministerial friend, and Chapin, the friend of my boyhood, in the latter's beautiful city home. He was not in the parlors when we went down, but Mr. Osborne, a gray-haired member of his church *was*, and arose to greet us.

"Be seated, gentlemen, Mr. Chapin will be back in a few moments." I, full of the story that I had been telling, said, as I took a rocking-chair,—

"I have been telling my friend, Mr. Sanborne, about the last Christmas eve I spent with my brother Chapin."

"Ah!" he said, in a tone of courteous indifference.

"Fourteen years to-night?" He turned towards me promptly.

"That was in ——," bestowing a very searching look.

"Were you there on Christmas eve?"

"Indeed, I was."

"Then you know all about the 'golden pippin'?"

"Decidedly I do. Did Mr Chapin tell you of it?"

"I did not need to be told. I was an eye-witness."

It was my turn to be surprised. "How was that?" I asked curiously. "Oh, it all 'happened' as we Christians have a reverent way of saying. I have an old uncle, or had, in that township, and I ran down there that Christmas eve for the sake of old times. Now, I've a mind to tell you something that brother Chapin doesn't know himself; if I had not been there that night, and both seen and heard the golden pipin, in all human probability Mr. Chapin

would never have been our pastor; we love him for a thousand reasons now, but we began by admiring the noble, difficult, manly course that he took that night."

Then the old gentleman came over to my side, and bent down to speak in a lower tone:

"Since you know about the other matter, I'll tell you another thing that Mr. Chapin doesn't know yet. There's more than one golden pippin in the world, you know. We have one for him that is free from any taint of gambling. We want to blot out the painful memory if we can, and give him something pleasant to think of when he eats apples after this. I wonder we didn't think of it years ago. It is to be presented at our anniversary exercises this evening. It isn't filled with gold dollars, but with very good representatives of them after all; it's pretty well filled up with National greenbacks."

"And how much do they count?" I asked, with eagerness.

"One thousand dollars," the old gentleman

answered me. "Pretty fair, isn't it? And it's the free-will offering of a loving people. Every man, woman and child in the congregation is represented, not because we couldn't easily have made up the amount without them, but because they wanted to be in it. The little children in the infant class, the very wee-est of them, are to present it."

Our host came in at this point, and I could do no more than look my appreciation of the delicate courtesy.

"Things are 'working together' all the time, it seems, even though you and I can't see it." This was my brother Newton's aside to me, as we went out to dinner.

Seated in the elegant up-town church of which my brother Chapin is now the pastor — it was during one of the anniversary addresses, to which brother Newton seemed to be listening — that he suddenly turned to me, and covering his mouth with his hand, whispered, "What does Etaf mean?"

Despite my ministerial dignity, that had to be maintained, I laughed as I whispered back, "It was a lottery business all through. Spell it backwards."

CHOKER AND OLD STUFFY.

CHAPTER I.

"I SAY, Tom, what an intolerably blue, black, cold day it is. Did you ever see its equal?" The speaker was a sight to behold: his clothing, much too thin for the season, was short at the wrists and lower extremities; in the absence of a fire or an overcoat, he had wrapped about him an old-fashioned red and green comfortable, from which the cotton grinned in a ghastly fashion, at the mouths of many holes. He stood pressing his nose against the window-glass, looking down from his third-story perch

on the driving sleet below; book in hand he had paused a moment in his study to take in the dismal scene, and while he looked, his nose against the icy glass grew blue, and his teeth chattered with the cold as he spoke. His companion, very little better clad, had the remains of an old woolen shawl wound closely about him, and was pacing the room with rapid strides, studying vigorously. He read over part of the section that he was coaxing into his brains, before he took time to ask,—

"What did you say, Dick?"

"I said I was freezing," answered the young man thus addressed, speaking in sour and savage tones.

"Oh, is that all! I passed the crisis long ago. It isn't so bad, after you get used to it; study the harder, man."

"I can't study; my brains have frozen fast to the back of my head, and I'll be hanged if my heart even beats any longer."

Nevertheless, he took his nose from the win-

dow, shrank further into the comforter and betook himself with energy to his work. Silence reigned in the room after that, until the sharp nasal peal of a bell clanged out on the frosty air. Straightway the two young men threw down their books, divested themselves as rapidly as cold fingers would admit, of their outer covering, Dick saying with many a shiver and grimace, "Wish we could wear them into class. What do you suppose the Faculty would think of us, if we should appear in this rig?"

But his companion was half-down the hall, and Dick, flinging his comforter on the bed, followed him.

These two young men were medical students, and had been undergoing what they pleased to term "a cramming," for several days, preparatory to a general review of the lectures; study had driven them for the past week. They were both earnest students, bent on acquiting themselves well, and on this Friday

afternoon came off with flying colors. Two hours, and they were back in their room, or their den, as they familiarly termed it; and that, it must be confessed, seemed a more appropriate name. Such a dingy, cold, cheerless hole as it was, guiltless of carpet or curtain; the rickety bed, with its main covering in a ragged heap at one end, a little demon of a stove, ashes on the hearth, but never a fire inside; a three-legged table, piled up with papers, pamphlets, magazines, books — all medical references — and two wooden chairs, one painted a dull yellow, and one with no paint at all, comprised its furnishings.

The two gentlemen gave each other that peculiar sort of long-drawn sigh which betokens a letting down from some state of excitement or great mental strain, and Mr. Thomas Benton said, "I move we have some dinner; those three crackers that I ate somewhere in the vicinity of noon, were gone long ago."

"I second the motion. But where in the

name of all that's comical is the dinner to come from? We can't eat the plate and knife, and that is all there is left."

"Let's go out on a raid!"

Dick shrugged his shoulders, and replied, dismally, "I cannot dig, and to beg I am ashamed. At least, it isn't the season for digging."

"It is for shoveling, though. It has snowed like fun for several hours. I'm going to take the snow shovel and hunt a place to make paths, until I earn money enough for a dinner — a real, royal one."

"All right. I'll borrow the saw, and sally forth, and demand of every man I meet the right to saw a shilling's worth of wood at his wood-pile; the shovel's the best, though, if we could only borrow two."

"Never mind — the saw may do it. Come ahead, then; in two hours one of us ought to have earned enough to buy a dinner. Come back in two hours, Dick, and if we've each

earned something, we'll go shares; if I'm the lucky fellow, I'll stand treat."

"And what if neither of us should raise a cent?"

"Then we'll go hang ourselves," said Tom, cheerfully. "You put on the shawl, Dick, my coat is thicker than yours."

"Not a bit of it; I can't saw with a shawl on. I'll work myself into a perspiration, no doubt."

Be it understood, that these two forlorn individuals boarded themselves, or rather, starved themselves, in a systematic and scientific manner; both of them being members of families far away, who were making constant, patient sacrifices, in order that they might spare to these two their precious time, all they had to give to them. As Dick Graves buttoned his ragged coat about him, and further prepared as best he could to brave the cold, some sense of the pinched, cramped, starved life that they were leading rolled over him, and he burst forth savagely,—

"I say, Tom, it's too confounded mean!"

"So it is," said Tom, sympathetically. "Won't I give some one an awful dose of ipecac, the first day I am admitted, to pay for it all? Now, here goes for a dinner."

Down the snowy street they trudged, Tom breathing out threatenings against a certain snow scraper that was proceeding them. "Now, see that thing," he said, indignantly, "taking away a piece of our dinner with every scrape! but the old fellow can't penetrate into back yards, that's one comfort."

At the corner they separated. Dick with his saw under his arm, and his hands in his pockets, whistled to sustain his courage and perhaps his pride; he had some of that inconvenient article, and his face tingled with more warmth than it had felt that day, when he came face to face with young Harlowe, who passed him with a slight, pre-occupied bow. Harlowe was one of the students whom fortune favored; wealthy, talented, hard working, he was at once

the pride and envy of their class, and Dick wondered, as they passed each other, what he thought of his class-mate's appearance, and if he had any idea what was to be done with that saw.

"Never mind!" he said, cheerily. "My shingle will stand as fair a chance as his, when I get it tacked up. Harrah! Here's a wood-pile. Now my fine old lady in there by the window, I hope and trust that you haven't a stick of wood sawed, nor a single human being around to saw it for you, just for to-night, you know."

But he was doomed to disappointment; the fine old lady was better cared for than that by loving sons. Down the length of that street, on either side, around the corner, down another long street, with plenty of wood peering out from under well-stocked sheds, but not a person in need of any sawing.

The two hours were fully passed, when the hero of the saw presented himself at the den, tired, and thoroughly disgusted. His chum was

there before him, stamping the snow from his boots and blowing his fingers.

"What success?" he asked, cheerily, as Dick opened the door with a jerk, and closed it with a kick.

"Exactly the success I expected, just none at all. Are you ready for the hanging?"

"Not till after dinner, my friend. I had glorious luck; found two blessed old maids who were in agony because they had company come to tea, and couldn't get to the well; I made them a royal path, and brought the water for them, and wished most sincerely that I had been the company who had come to tea. I had to tramp over half the town before I found them, though. However, I've got enough for the dinner. You fire up 'Old Stuffy,' and I'll sally out again for the provisions. I say, Dick, let's have toast and fried eggs for dinner; butter we'll have, too, this once, seeing it's the first regular meal in three days. Do you vote for toast and eggs?"

"Aye," answered Dick, who was already bending over "Old Stuffy," so called, from its propensity to wheeze and puff and smoke, and do anything rather than burn. Dick, however, was persevering, and presently conquered. His spirits began to rise, the smell of fire was cheering, and the thought of toast and fried eggs was delightfully soothing. There was nothing particularly humiliating in being indebted to his friend for a supper, as this was not by any means the first time that they had been reduced to equal straits, and he was often the successful provider for their mutual needs, so it was only a return of courtesy.

It was quite a journey down town to the provision store, and by the time Tom returned with his purchases the room actually showed some signs of warmth, and the horrid little kerosene lamp, named "Choker," in honor of her smoking propensities, was blinking away in the middle of the three-legged table, which had been cleared of its contents by being un-

ceremoniously tipped up, until they all slipped into a corner on the floor.

"There!" said Tom, with triumph in his voice, "I got six eggs — three apiece. I told you we would have a tall supper this time."

"Wouldn't it be better to save two of the eggs for to-morrow?" suggested Dick, *very* faintly.

"Not a bit of it; to-morrow must look out for itself; we're to have three eggs apiece to-night. Rake out some coals, Dick, and I'll have yours cooked in a jiffy."

"Not a bit of it; you provide, and I cook, — that's the programme. You break the eggs and cut the bread, and then just give yourself to meditation till I have your feast ready."

At their own homes these two gentlemen were in the habit of sitting down to their meals with their families, civilized fashion. No doubt they would have enjoyed sitting down together on this particular evening, but when one's household furniture, or at least pantry

furniture, consists of one plate and one knife, various expedients have to be resorted to, in order to accommodate two boarders. In this establishment the matter had been reduced to a science; so there were speedily three good-sized eggs lying on the aforesaid plate; the plate resting on what the cook in question was pleased to call a bed of coals. To be sure there was more blaze than coals, and more smoke than either, but the eggs were cooking, and the bread was toasting, being stuck — three slices of it — on three sharp-pointed sticks, whittled for the purpose, and arranged in various positions around the blaze and the smoke. So in less time than it takes to tell it, Tom was seated at the table, his supper before him, and Dick was preparing to toast more bread; for what are three slices to a hungry man, who has worked hard, and eaten nothing to speak of in three days?

Work proceeded very rapidly now, and at last Tom, with a very satisfied air, tore a bit

of clean paper from an old lecture, and wiping off the plate very neatly, passed it over to his waiting friend.

"They're splendid, Dick; done to a turn. I hope you'll enjoy yours half as much as I did mine. Now, let me toast; you look after the eggs, though. I believe you understand that process best."

Only a very few moments thereafter, there was a sudden, sharp report, a quick fizz from the smouldering fire — and exclamation of dismay from Tom — an absolute groan from Dick; then both stood and stared at the plate, that had found the heat too much for it at last, and had split itself directly through the centre, and tumbled, half of it on one side of the smoky stick, and half of it on the other, while the treacherous eggs gave one delighted fizzle over the whole affair, blazed up and were gone. Is any one surprised to hear that these two idiots stood staring at the broken plate until they actually allowed the three toasting sticks to take

fire, tip over, and burn the bread to a cinder? This was the climax.

The loss was too serious to admit of laughter; the two gentlemen turned away from the scene of disaster in solemn silence, until Tom ventured to suggest, "There's some bread left, Dick."

"It may *stay* left for me," burst forth that irate young man; "after being such a born fool as to burn up half a loaf, I'll go without, to pay for it. I won't eat a mouthful to-night, not a mouthful."

And neither remonstrance nor entreaty could drive him from this heroic resolution. Presently he strode out into the gray twilight, for the early winter night was coming on rapidly. He was actually too hungry to sit down in that room where the odor of toast and egg still lingered; besides, he was in no mood for study. The pressure that had been upon them for a week was over, and his brain fairly reeled with weariness. He was thus a prey to a genuine fit of gloom. His was a cheery nature;

and it was not often that he allowed his grinding poverty to get the best of him; but somehow, it had been a hard struggle all day, and to-night hunger and cold, and sullen repining had it all their own way. Very savage he felt, and also very sad, almost tempted to resort to that other expedient of hanging, much preferable, it seemed to him, to living any longer.

In the frosty twilight he could distinguish before the college gate, two pawing, restless horses, shaking their bells with impatient curves of their handsome necks, and now and then starting determinedly forward, to be checked and soothed by the muffled driver. Dick knew the handsome turn-out, well knew it was waiting for Harlowe, to take him to his elegant home, only five miles away; and at that moment Harlowe came down the steps, passed him with that courteous, dignified bow of his, walked halfway down the path, paused thoughtfully, then turned back, and to Dick's astonishment ad-

dressed him, "Come home with me, Graves, and spend the night. I'm rather late, but we shall be in time for a supper and a bed; and the sleighing is superb."

The grand excitement of the evening sank into insignificance before this greater one. Harlowe, the dignified, reserved, courtly student, with whom he had hardly ever passed a dozen words, inviting *him* to his home! His first impulse was to decline with thanks, but the invitation was winning and frank; and there had been one powerful word in the sentence, "In time for *supper*." Be it remembered that Dick Graves was overpoweringly hungry; he forgot his frayed shirt bosom, his too short and more than frayed coat sleeves; and finally, the invitation being heartily repeated and pressed, he tore into his den, and with the exclamation, "Lend me your shawl, Tom. I'm going home with Harlowe," seized it, and rushed out again, leaving his chum aghast with surprise.

How the cold and hungry man nestled under

those fur-lined robes, and took in their comfort and the thought of supper! Perhaps they would have cold meat — tea certainly, possibly coffee. At least there was no harm in giving free rein to his imagination. How those horses skimmed over the five miles! In an incredibly short space of time they dashed into an elm-lined avenue, then paused with impatient snorts before the marble steps; then gas light and summer warmth in the great handsome hall, and elegant parlors, with sofas and easy chairs, and couches and cushions, and elegance everywhere; then a cordial, hearty greeting, from father, mother and "Sister Sara;" greeting almost as cordial for the friend as for the son and brother; greeting in which they seemed perfectly indifferent as to the frayed and rumpled shirt front, and entirely unconscious of the short and ragged sleeves.

But, Oh! that supper table! Shade of toast and eggs sink into nothingness. Cold meat, indeed! There was oyster stew; such a stew

as Dick had imagined, but never tasted. There was coffee, hot, creamy, strong, every way wonderful. There was boiled chicken, and cream toast and muffins. Young Harlowe pronounced himself extremely hungry, and ate as heartily as did Dick himself, and everybody seemed gratified that it was so, and acted toward their guest as if he were conferring a delicate compliment on them in being hungry, and enjoying their supper. It also appeared that from coffee and oysters down to cake, everything that seemed particularly delicious, "Sister Sara" had in some way the management of. So in many ways "Sister Sara" seemed to be a delightful and enviable person.

After such a supper, it was late when the two young men went to their room. What a room it was! How the "den" suffered in mental comparison! Softly carpeted, richly curtained and daintily upholstered; wonderful rose blankets on the bed, the door ajar into that elegant bath-room, with its hot and cold water

pipes, and all its dainty appointments; and over all, that delicious sense of warmth that stole through every nerve of this frozen young man.. He never forgot that glimpse into Paradise.

"Graves," his companion said, after a moment of silence, "I'm in the habit of kneeling for a word of prayer before I retire, will you kneel with me, or wait for me?"

A curious expression hovered over Dick's face; it was a singular invitation, a new one to him; he had not expected it. He hesitated a moment, then said abruptly,—

"I'd like to ask you a question first. How came you to invite me home with you to-night?"

Harlowe turned towards him with a bright, frank smile. "If I am not mistaken in you," he said, pleasantly, "you are a frank, plain spoken fellow, and like plain answers to your questions. Am I right?"

"You emphatically are."

"Well, then, I had been reading in my Bible this morning about the 'cup of cold water,' and it has stayed by me all day. I concluded that I was an unsocial fellow, who shut myself up in a shell, and gave not even cups of cold water. I resolved to look about me, and tried to find something to do. To-night when I passed you, you looked gloomy and lonely, I thought. I could think of nothing to do for you but to invite you home with me, and my Father in heaven prompted me to do that."

The queer look had deepened on Dick's face.

"So that was your cup of cold water," he said, lightly. "I preferred the coffee, I assure you; but, Harlowe, I have not lived up to the conditions. I don't belong to Him. I know that story, you see; it's one of my mother's."

"My dear fellow, won't you accept the conditions?" And Harlowe laid a gentle, persuasive hand on the young man's shoulder.

There was a little choke in Dick's voice as he answered, "I'll kneel with you, anyway, and thank Him too, if your act to me was suggested by Him, for I thought I hadn't a friend in the world, and He only knows how near I was to despair."

CHAPTER II.

OLD Stuffy was smoking villainously, and "the den" was in its usual state of supreme disorder, when Dick Graves burst in upon his chum the next morning, a huge wooden packing box hoisted on his shoulder.

"Such a place, Tom, as your eyes have not beheld in a month of Sundays! And such a supper as they gave us last night! and oh, jolly! such a breakfast this morning — buckwheat cakes and maple syrup, and butter that smelled of June and strawberries; beefsteak done elegantly, no taste of smoke to that, old fellow; and the coffee, oh, the coffee!" he said, striking an attitude and waxing eloquent, going off into a rhapsody composed of all the six-syllabled superlatives that his versatile memory furnished.

"I can live on the memory of that swell for a week," he added, with a sudden descent in ordinary tones.

"That's lucky," his companion remarked succintly, opening his lips for the first time since the open door had admitted a rush of cold air on his half frozen feet, and the voluble Dick at the same time.

"Why?"

"Because the chances are that you will have precious little else to live on."

"Don't you go to believing any such abominable croaking as that. What do you suppose is in that box that I nearly broke my back bringing in?"

"I don't know," said Tom, meditatively, glancing up from his book of medical statistics. "A skeleton, perhaps."

"I should not wonder," chuckled Dick. "Two of 'em, maybe; the box was heavy enough for it, only I doubt if their bones are as plainly distinguishable as they will be by

the time we are through with them. Now, Tom, just lay aside that book, and give attention to business, and we'll unpack the thing. A little lunch Miss Sara called it. She evidently surmised that we fellows only lunched once a week or so, on a cold cracker or two. You see it was sent to you, too, old fellow. The way of it was — when I was taking a sip of that glorious coffee this morning, and preparing a wonderful buckwheat, I suddenly remembered you, sitting probably on the ash-strown hearth of 'Old Stuffy,' with your head inside of her, and your cheeks puffed into a pair of bellows, trying to get up a blaze; and with something between a sigh and a groan, I said, 'Tom's at home — he is,' or something to that effect. And so of course they inquired about Tom, and Harlowe told them he was the Star scholar of our class. What do you think of that, my friend? And so Miss Sara was very particular to say the lunch was for Mr. Benton and myself."

"Who is Miss Sara?" inquired Mr. Benton, tugging vigorously at the box-cover, and taking all the past information very composedly.

"She is a sister, who makes the most amazing coffee, and cake, and muffins, that a half-starved party ever swallowed. I say, Tom, what do you think of the skeletons? Won't you go into the study of anatomy with new zest!"

There they cuddled amid snowy napkins — two of the plumpest, brownest chickens that had met Mr. Thomas Benton's gaze in many a long day; all around them lay little puffy biscuits, and piled high above them, those delights of gentlemen's hearts, doughnuts and crullers, while one entire end of the box was devoted to tier on tier of mince pies — great, fat, crispy looking pies, with raisins popping up from every tiny opening. A slip of paper was pinned on the napkin covering them, and on it was written in delicate chirography, which Dick at once decided could be no one but Miss Sara's, "If you keep these where they will freeze,

and only warm as you wish to use them, they will keep a long time."

"We can obey that order to perfection," chuckled Dick. "If she had said where they *wouldn't* freeze, we would have had to put them in Old Stuffy, and build a fire around them, and then I wouldn't insure them, if the wind were contrary. I say, Tom, isn't this jolly?"

"It is very kind and thoughtful," said older and graver Mr. Thomas Benton, with a suspicious mist before his eyes. Someway that box and its carefully packed contents made him think of his mother, and the things she would have done for her boy if she could — nay, of the things that she had done, of the shirts that he wore, sacred by so many darns, taken late in the night by that dear mother.

"Kind? I should think it was," Dick said talking faster than usual, to overcome a strange lump in his throat. "They piled the kindness on a fellow, I can tell you. Why, Tom, there were as many as four blankets on the bed

last night, and hot and cold water in the bath-room. My! it made one feel as if he *were* somebody. And so delicately they did everything too. 'She knew how gentlemen managed when they were hard pressed with their studies,' the fine old lady-mother said. Didn't take time to eat or sleep, and a nice little lunch came in handy now and then.

"Thinks I to myself, I guess it will! Tom, don't you think they packed Harlowe a box more than half as large as this! What the mischief he will do with it is more than I know. He boards at the Archer Street House, you know, where they have everything that's going; perhaps though, they filled it with saw-dust or something. I knew what they gave him a box for, of course. So I wouldn't feel awkward about taking mine, and I liked the thoughtfulness — exactly as well as if I hadn't seen through it; bless their kind old hearts." Then Dick Graves gave himself to the work of helping Tom bestow their treasure in the old chest,

which they wheeled into the further corner by the window; Dick remarking as he did so, "They'll freeze here, tight as a brick, no mistake."

"How came Harlowe to invite you home with him?" Tom said, skillfully moving the legs of the plumpest chicken to make room for a pie.

"Ahem!" said Dick. That was the one little thing that he had felt like leaving out of his story; that about 'the cup of cold water,' and the kneeling together by Harlowe's bedside. Not that he was ashamed of it; he had admired and respected Harlowe the more ever since; but he had a feeling that Tom wouldn't understand it, or sympathize with it, or at least that he didn't know how to tell it; so after thoughtfully clearing his throat, he said aloud, "Why, I stood out there, feeling dismal you know, and he passed by and saw me, and — Well, I suppose he thought he would."

"No doubt," said Tom, and then both betook themselves to their books, Dick saying with a little sigh,—

"But that coffee, Tom, went ahead of anything — if I could just have pocketed a cup of that for *you*."

"I'll take the will for the deed," said Tom, kindly, "and be glad that you had it yourself in the bargain. Now, Dick, we mustn't speak again for an hour."

It was the next evening but one, that Dick Graves sat alone in his room. "Choker" was blinking vilely on the three-legged table, and doing justice to her name. Dick sat with his boot-heels on Old Stuffy's head, vainly endeavoring to coax a little warmth into his limbs. The night was intensely cold; it was Tom Benton's evening to wrap himself in the old shawl and sally forth in search of letters from home. In extreme weather these two gentlemen rarely appeared on the street together, because the red and green comfortable wasn't considered presentable to the outer world, and there was but one shawl. There came a tap at the door.

"Come on," growled the inmate, expecting to see some other shivering occupant of their end of the hall come to beg the loan of a match or a book. The door opened gently, and the handsome face and well-dressed form of Harlowe presented itself. Dick brought his feet to the floor, with an energy which made Old Stuffy's door fly open, and smoke and ashes come out. Harlowe had never seen the inside of the "den" before.

"I'm afraid I have disturbed your studies," said this prince of gentlemen, courteously oblivious to smoke, and kerosene, and discomfort generally. "But I hope they will admit of further disturbance this evening. I dropped in to see if you wouldn't come around to our class prayer meeting. We hold them only an hour, and I think the change rests my brain, and fits me better for study."

Dick's brain straightway became very busy; this to him was a novel invitation. Class prayer meetings, or indeed, prayer meetings of any sort

he never attended; but for that "cup of water," administered so recently, the glimpse into this young man's home-paradise, the hearty welcome there, the thoughtful attentions showered upon him — he would have been able to give a good-humored, prompt refusal; but someway, the memory of all these things pressed in, and made the meditated refusal seem churlish. "I might go; it won't hurt me," he said to himself, thinking rapidly. "It's a little enough thing to do after his kindness." Then there arose another consideration — the shawl. Tom would not be back for half an hour yet, and the evening was very sharp. Aside from the *feelings*, it certainly would *look* badly for him to be out without other covering than his ordinary house-coat. At this point his eyes rested on the comfortable. "I might wear that," he said, still talking to himself. Harlowe had stepped to the table and taken up a book. And then a vision came over this absurd young man, of the absurd figure he would make traveling

through the streets beside Harlowe in his elegant broadcloth wraps, gotten up in the latest style, himself done up in the red and green comfortable, with the yellow cotton oozing out at numberless holes; and the vision was so very absurd, that he seated himself down on the side of the bed, and yielded to an uproarious peal of laughter. Harlowe looked up inquiringly.

"I beg your pardon, Harlowe," laughed Dick, still holding his sides, "something so extremely funny came over me just then, that I was obliged to laugh or choke; but it had nothing to do with your invitation, I assure you."

"All right," said Harlowe, in courteous good humor. "But you are going to accept my invitation, I hope?"

Tom sprang up briskly. "Yes," he said, hunting among the pile of papers in the corner for his hat, "I'll go;" adding, *sotto voce*, "I won't freeze, I guess, and even if I do, he's worth accommodating."

Just here my story-teller paused, and in place of the fun that had hitherto danced in his eyes, there came a tender, moved expression, and his thoughts seemed to go far away. You must know, dear friends, that I have been repeating to you a story that was told me one stormy night, by our family physician, Dr. Graves. I have given you the story in my own words, because there were certain details connected with our noble doctor's heroic battle with the world that I knew he would leave out, and that I meant to tell you of, but somehow they haven't got in. It was a midnight story, and its starting point was the doctor's complimenting me on the cup of coffee that I passed him. It was an unusual thing to hear Dr. Graves tell a story. There was much silver in his hair, and professional cares sat heavily on him; he rarely had time for other than the briefest of professional conversations, but this day had been to us one of special anxiety and fear; sickness, sharp and severe, had been

in our midst; the doctor had been with us during most of the day, and had been unremitting in his care. Towards evening the burden had lifted, but it was not until midnight that the doctor left his patient, and came down with cheery face to drink his cup of coffee, that had waited long. It was the reaction from the day's anxiety, I think, that disposed him to tell, and me to listen to the funny story; doubly funny when I looked at the dignified face opposite me. I thought of the respectful deference with which people were wont to listen to his opinions, and then imagined him enveloped in that red and green comfortable, or frying eggs on his one cracked plate.

I waited a little for the rest of the story, and finding him still silent, ventured at last to question, "What about the prayer meeting, doctor?"

"The prayer meeting?" he said, rousing himself with a slight start. "Oh, yes, that was a precious meeting to me. It was on that

very evening that the precious Saviour, who has been my guide, and helper, and never-failing support during a distracting life, sought after and found me. I can never forget that evening, nor Harlowe's prayer for me, though I thought then, and do now, that perhaps he might have prayed for me until this time, and I had given no heed, if he had not paved the way with his 'cups of water.' In fact, but for his previous kindness to me, I should not have thought of such a thing as going with him to prayer meeting."

"And what about Tom?" I asked, after a little.

"Tom came too," he said, with glistening eyes. "He was my dear friend, and after I had discovered what wonderful blessings were to be had in this world, just for the asking, I could not rest until I had coaxed him in. Harlowe tried for him, too, and it wasn't long before our dreadful little den seemed to us to have been transformed into a very Bethel."

"Are these two gentlemen living now?"

"Oh, yes; Tom is. Why, he is Dr. Benton, of Philadelphia; you surely had heard of him?"

"Yes, I had; most people in our vicinity had; he was not only known as a very successful physician, but as a Christian philanthropist. Still it had not occurred to me that he could be 'Tom.'"

"And Harlowe," continued the doctor. "You are doubtless familiar with his name also; he went as missionary surgeon to Southern India. A good man he is, and a grand work he has done there; he is coming home for vacation in the summer; then we hope to have a reunion — Tom, and he, and I."

"Did you ever go to his home again?"

"Often," he said, with the happy look deepening on his face. "Tom was included in the next invitation, and a jolly time we had; he didn't go as often as I, however; he was older, and more sedate than I, and he could not forget his frayed shirts and wristbands. But, bless

you, they didn't mind those things, the family didn't; they used to treat us as if we were princes in disguise."

After waiting and studying his face a bit, I ventured on another question, or suggestion. "Doctor, I want to hear some more about Miss Sara."

The doctor glanced up at me quickly, and gave a bright little laugh. "You must ask Mrs. Graves about her," he said, briskly. "They are very intimate friends, indeed I may say they are inseparable. It all came about, though, from that first cup of wonderful coffee, and really, yours to-night has been *almost* as good."

After that he went back up stairs, to his patient. Several months after this, we received one day an invitation that filled me with delight. It was a cordial little note from our doctor's wife, inviting us to take tea informally with two very old friends, Dr. Henry Harlowe, then on a visit to this country from his

home in India, and Dr. Thomas Benton, of Philadelphia fame. The note was signed, "Sara Harlowe Graves."

I never realized how much of a simpleton I was, until I stood confronting those two gentlemen, and found that I had actually been expecting to see in Harlowe a handsomely dressed young medical student, and that Tom's shirt-front would be sadly frayed. Gray-haired, both of them! Dr. Harlowe with a stoop to his shoulders — earnest, hard-working looking man, yet neither of them so old nor so professional looking as our own Dr. Graves, the merry "Dick" of the story. None of them, however, were overmuch troubled with dignity on this particular evening; they all talked at once, they laughed uproariously; they made constant allusions to "Old Stuffy," "Choker," and "the den." Dr. Harlowe seeming to be as thoroughly posted as though his early days had been days of poverty and sacrifice. When we were summoned to tea, our own doctor walked out beside me.

"We were going to have such a funny supper, to-night," he said to me, with a comic air, "that we thought we must send for you to help us appreciate it."

Among other things, they had toast and eggs! Very merry laughter greeted this dish.

"Did the plate break, Dick?" queried the Philadelphia doctor, and then shaking with laughter, "O Mrs. Graves, if you *could* have seen him when those three eggs slipped into the smoke."

"I saw him not long after," said Dr. Harlowe, "and he looked like a tomb-stone. I wondered then, what awful trial had befallen him. Sara, do you remember how you said afterwards that a special providence must have suggested broiled chicken and muffins for supper that evening?"

"O my!" said our doctor, "here is a dish of broiled chicken I forgot to serve. It isn't equal to Sara's getting up on that particular evening, though."

"Nothing ever will be," Mrs. Graves said, meekly, unless you happen to get lost in a desert, and have nothing to eat for three days."

"Tom, what's become of the shawl?" suddenly questioned Dr. Graves.

"I have it, or rather my wife has; keeps it in her bureau drawer, I think, or somewhere. Please to remember that I was wound up in it the first time she ever beheld me, on that never-to-be-forgotten day when I went to shovel snow."

"I'd like to know the fate of the comfortable," said Dr. Harlowe. "What about that, Dick?"

Our doctor laid down his knife and fork, and burst into an absolute roar of laughter. "There is postively the funniest story about that, that was ever heard," he began.

"Now, doctor," his wife said, deprecatingly.

"Now, Sara," he answered, eagerly, "do let me tell them; this is the very evening for all

sorts of absurdities, and it is too rich to keep. You know, Tom, that comfortable used to lie"—

"Clang!" sounded a bell, with one loud, sharp peal through the house. The next instant the story-teller was summoned from the table. He came back in a very few moments. All trace of the merry Dick had departed. He was the grave, earnest-looking professional man.

"I shall have to be excused," he said, speaking to all of us at once, "I am called to a very serious case. Dr. Benton and Dr. Harlowe, I should be glad if you would both come down after supper, the office boy will show you the way. It is at Newton's, Sara. I may not be back to-night. Good evening, all."

Grave and dignified, he departed—and I never heard the story of *the comfortable!*