

THE POCKET MEASURE



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“Don't you know I always mean what I say?” — Page 154.

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BY

PANSY,

AUTHOR OF "ESTER RIED," "FOUR GIRLS AT CHAUTAUQUA,"

"THE CHAUTAUQUA GIRLS AT HOME," "LINKS IN
REBECCA'S LIFE," "RUTH ERSKINE'S CROSSES,"

"A NEW GRAFT ON THE FAMILY
TREE," &C.



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CONTENTS.


CHAP.	PAGE
1.—THE SUM TOTAL	7
2.—THEIR JEWELS	24
3.—CAKE AND BENEVOLENCE	43
4.—CAKE MATHEMATICALLY CONSIDERED .	62
5.—INTERROGATION POINTS	80
6.—A SOCIAL PROBLEM	97
7.—MEASURING BRAINS AND HEARTS .	114
8.—SUBTLE DISTINCTIONS	131
9.—“YET LACKEST THOU —”	150
10.—THEY MEASURING THEMSELVES BY THEM- SELVES ARE NOT WISE	168
11.—PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR .	185
12.—CONFLICTING DUTIES	203
13.—SEED SOWN ON THORNY GROUND .	219
14.—A PROBLEM	235
15.—MEASURING CHARACTER	252
16.—“LAST NIGHT” MEASURED BY DAYLIGHT	269
17.—AN OPEN DOOR	285

18.—SERVING CHRIST IN THE KITCHEN	302
19.—THE ENDS MEET.	320
20.—MEASURED BY TRIAL	339
21.—THE ANSWER	358
22.—MEASURING HUMAN INFLUENCE	376
23.—MEASURING RESPONSIBILITY.	394
24.—MEASURED IN PROSE	412
25.—SHIRKING RESPONSIBILITY.	429
26.—MEASURING ENTHUSIASM	447
27.—MEASURING SACRIFICES	465
28.—THEN AND NOW.	481
29.—“GOOD MEASURE.”	498

THE POCKET MEASURE.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUM TOTAL.

T was just a speck of a house—only four rooms all told—and those so small that a housekeeper of the olden time, rich in blankets, and bed and table linen, would have thought of them simply as good-sized closets. A fashionable lady would have been in despair; I doubt whether she could have found room for her trunks! Even reasonable, present day housekeepers, with moderate views and small families, would have looked doubtfully about them, and wondered where the sofa would stand, and what could be done about

the large wardrobe, and whether the piano could be gotten in at all.

But to Mrs. Spafford the house was simply perfect. I do not know that she would have had a door or window in it altered. She had no piano, and no large wardrobe, and the sofa was just a cunning little box of a thing, made by Warren, on leisure evenings. There was plenty of room for their furniture; indeed, there was more room than they needed; one, the least sunny and the most exposed to northern storms, had been closed and locked, and the key hung on a far-up nail in the upper hall, until such time as they could furnish the room. When they said this they looked at each other and laughed; hardly anything in life seemed more improbable to them than that they should ever have means to furnish that unoccupied room! The furniture in their bit of a house, though so limited in quantity, had been the subject of much thought and care. Each individual chair, could it have spoken, would have had a history to relate. There were only six chairs.

“After all what do we need of more?” Callie had said, putting on a sober face as

soon as she could, after the laugh which their leanness had called forth. "There are only two of us, and we *can't* occupy more than a chair apiece, and it isn't in the least likely that we shall have more than four visitors at a time. Even if we should, they could sit on the sofa."

"Or the bed," Warren had suggested; and then the silly young couple laughed again. So four of the prim little chairs had been duly installed in the "parlor," two of them to come out to the dining-room at meal-time; but on other occasions, when the dining-room became a kitchen and washroom, they would simply be in the way. Those four chairs, with the meek little oval table and the home-made lounge, constituted the furnishing of that parlor.

"Oh, yes, there was a carpet on the floor, a pretty pattern, small figured, and pleasantly harmonizing colors; not very fine, it is true, but decidedly pretty. Mrs. Callie Spafford had studied over the pattern long enough to drive the impatient carpet clerk nearly to distraction.

"For an upper hall, ma'am?" he had asked her, civilly enough, when, after long waiting,

and many thoughtful steppings from one roll to another, she made the selection, and named the number of yards, astonishing the clerk by the smallness of the cut.

She had answered him quickly: "Oh, no!" with heightened color, and then had turned quickly and bent over a roll of stair-carpeting, to hide the laugh in her eyes, and also to avoid looking at Warren, for she knew, by a peculiar little cough which he gave, that he was laughing inside.

"Can I sell you a stair-carpet to-day?" the watchful clerk had asked her, as he briskly rolled away the chosen carpet, and gave orders concerning it to the cutter.

"Oh, no!" said Mrs. Spafford again, speaking as quickly as before; the idea of their buying a *stair-carpet*! And this time they did look at each other and laugh.

"Two young things just getting ready to play housekeeping," said the clerk to himself and he grew interested and sympathetic; and carpet clerk though he was, followed them down-stairs, through the many departments of the great store, advising, suggesting, reducing

prices whenever it was possible, and as interested in all the purchases, as though they had been his friends for a lifetime. He was gray-haired, and he remembered the very morning he went with his wife and helped her buy dishes. He sold dishes on this occasion with great care, and by his timely bits of advice, saved the young couple from several mistakes.

So, little by little, had the little house been furnished. Their sleeping-room was guiltless of a carpet; one had been as much as their purse would allow, and of course that must be given to the parlor; but a bright rug of Grecian pattern, and of Callie's own make, occupied the bit of space between the pine-board washstand and the neat little bedstead. These, with the two chairs, filled the room. I have forgotten one article of furniture; down-stairs in the parlor, over the mantel, there hung one of those old paintings, done in oil, whose subdued colors and graceful outlines tell the touch of the true artist. So did the eyes — those soft, tender, almost speaking eyes — which smiled down on you as soon as you entered the door, and turned and followed you, into whatever

corner of the room you went. A womanly face; kind and tender and pure, with certain lines about the sweet old mouth that told of quiet firmness and strong resolve, and certain lines in the forehead which indicated that the resolves had been carried into action. A motherly face; placid now, but suggesting the sort of rest that comes after one has gotten above the storms. A rare work of art it was — fit to grace the parlors of the wealthiest; but the original was a rarer work of God, fitted to grace the palace of the King, and she had long since gone to take her place in the “mansion prepared;” — Callie Spafford’s mother. A woman who had lived, and suffered and endured, and come off “more than conqueror through Him that loved” her, and gone away to abide with him forever; leaving the memory of the strong, true life she had lived, to brood over the little new house where her daughter Callie, with the husband of her choice, were to begin life together.

They sat down under the shadow of the dear face that first evening in the new home. It had been a busy day, and everything now was

reduced to spotless order. The little new tea-kettle had been tried, the small, round table had been drawn out, and Callie had placed on it her finest table-cloth—none of the finest, though—and they had sipped their tea and eaten their bread and butter, and pretended to pass the cake and sauce to each other, and laughed merrily over the absence of both, and enjoyed to the utmost, this, their first meal alone together.

They were old married people; that is, it had been fully three months since they had publicly pledged themselves to each other! Since which time they had been as busy as bees, getting their new home ready, or getting ready for it; hemming and hammering of evenings; for all day Callie had spent at her duties in the school-room, and the husband stood behind the desk and worked at his rows of figures; both husband and wife dreaming of the day when they should begin housekeeping. Now they had begun. They sat in the pretty little parlor—it did look wondrously pretty to them, despite its barrenness—and watched the play of light and shadow made by the dancing

flames in the open grate, and talked; gaily at first, then, as the evening waned, more quietly, of their plans and prospects and hopes; saying nothing, either of them, of any fears. Why should they have fears? They had furnished their house, and bought twenty-five pounds of flour and a bushel of potatoes, and paid a month's rent in advance, and they owed no man anything.

"There is one thing, Warren, that I want to talk to you about, right away at the beginning of our life," Callie said, drawing what she called their one extravagance, a small, light rocker, of delicate workmanship, closer to her husband's side; "and that is about our giving."

"About our giving!" repeated her husband, with a bewildered air and tone.

"Yes; don't you think we ought to begin right, about that as well as in other things?"

"Assuredly, little wife; we want to begin as right as we can; but what do you want to give away, and who needs it? What are you driving at?"

"Why, Warren, I am not speaking about any particular person, you know; I mean system-

atic giving; I want to begin as I hope we shall continue, and give regularly to whatever Christian people should support."

Her husband tried to maintain a becoming gravity.

"That is a very large desire of your large heart," he said. "Don't you know that Christian people should support about a hundred charities, more or less?"

"I know," she said, speaking quickly; "and I know of course, it is very little we can do; perhaps we can not include them all, but the more prominent ones. We can give just a little to each of those, can't we?"

"Always provided we have anything to give," he said, speaking lightly; "you are to be provider, you know; I'll furnish the monthly installments; every penny of it shall go into your hands. I have enough to do with figures for other people, don't want to make any for myself, so I give you leave to contrive and scrimp and twist and turn ourselves and our clothes, and if, at the end of the month, you have a blessed shilling left, which I more than doubt, you shall have my full permission to

divide it equally on all the benevolences of our Boards.”

The comical side of this idea, which had seemed to grow on him from the beginning of the sentence, finally controlled him entirely, and he closed the sentence with a ringing laugh.

“I beg your pardon Callie,” he said, at last, seeing that she joined his merriment, only by a quiet little smile. “I began as soberly as a judge, but the fun of the thing got hold of me; why see here, dear, I believe I shall have to figure a little for your benefit, after all. Now let’s put it in black and white. Twelve dollars a month for this little nest, and you know it was impressed upon us that it was ruinously cheap, that is one hundred and forty-four dollars a year to begin with. Now take coal, these grates burn up a good deal, one, two, well — mind you, I don’t believe it possible to get through a year for twenty dollars, but we’ll call it that; now suppose we put down our board at six dollars a week, three apiece, you know — we cant keep it as low as that, because there will be a friend dropping in, now and then, and accidents occurring whereby

things will be spilled or spoiled; oh, I know you are a capital housekeeper; I don't say I expect such things oftener than would occur in any well-regulated family, but it is reasonable to expect a few such leaks; there are fifty-two weeks in the year, but we'll play that we go a-visiting for two weeks, or fast, and call it a round three hundred, without any calculation for leakages; too low, you see; you would wear yourself into a shadow trying to keep within such figures, but for the sake of the argument we'll put them down. Now, clothes, even wedding ones, will wear out, and dishes will break, and pumps will grow leaky and have to be repaired; allow a hundred dollars for clothes and repairs, yours and mine, and the pumps, you know; it wouldn't furnish some of the ladies with one new gown, but it will you. Now, what is the sum? Just five hundred and sixty-four dollars, counting out those two weeks that we are to visit — I don't know who on earth we'll visit, do you? But when you add to that an estimate for sickness and accident and car-fare — I declare I forgot car-fare — that will be, let me see, up and down,

morning and evening, eight cents a day, three hundred and — what a pity there are so many days in the year! But then, it is a blessing there are so many Sundays to take out. Eight times three — twenty-five dollars as sure as I'm a mathematician! Who would have supposed it? Well, now, my dear benevolent little woman, when you sum that all up, and add something for ten thousand million things that we haven't thought of at all, and that will spring up and insist on being paid for, and subtract the amount from the enormous sum total of six hundred dollars, what do you fancy will be left for us to be benevolent on?"

During this rapid estimate of their worldly affairs, Callie had listened intently, and laughed with her husband over the queer way of putting things, but when he confronted her with that appalling sum total, she met the laugh in his eyes with an undismayed face, and with no abatement of the earnest look in her steady eyes.

"That is all very true, I suppose, only my dear husband, I think you began at the wrong end!"

He regarded her with a good-humored inquiry. "If there is any end to begin at that will make this sum total look more inviting, I'm ready to be convinced," he said, gayly.

"Don't you see, dear, that you have planned for the daily living, even to the burnt meats and sour bread, and you have left the duty of *giving* subject to the accident of having something left after all our wants are supplied. Is that really the way?"

Her listener looked more and more bewildered:

"Callie, dear," he said, speaking gravely, "I really have made a very low estimate, and of course there will many expenses occur that we do not think of now; do you see any way that we could plan to avoid any of these? Or, what have you in mind; what is it that you think we ought to do?"

"I can tell you just what I would *like* to do; I have been thinking a good deal about this subject of late, studying about it, and what I should be glad to do would be to begin now, even with our little income, to lay aside one-tenth of it for the Lord."

“One-tenth!” Not even the solemnity of the conclusion could arrest the unbounded astonishment in his voice. “Why, Callie, dear, have you thought what you are saying? That would be sixty dollars! How could we possibly spare it from our income and live? We *must* live, you know.”

“I know it, Warren, and the Lord knows it, too; and yet I believe if we should start out with that determination, and adhere to it closely, he would own and bless the offering.”

“I don’t know, dear; I don’t think I have your faith; it seems to me that I ought to provide for my own household first; isn’t there something about a man being worse than a heathen who neglects to do that?”

“Oh, Warren! I don’t feel in any danger of starvation; and I do want to try this way; it lies very near my heart. I believe it is the right way to do. That one verse has lingered in my mind ever since we were married—ever since we planned this little home, and thought of all the delight it would be. I think we can do it; your estimate of clothing I believe

was larger than necessary; I know how to be very economical in my dress."

"What's the verse, Callie?"

"Oh the verse, it was Jacob's vow: "And of all that, thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.'"

"Jacob! well if I remember the circumstances he wasn't a very reputable party to imitate; I never approved of his proceedings about that time, nor for years afterwards."

"Oh but Warren, you remember how the Lord blessed and prospered him. I believe that one thing that Jacob did was right; and it is that I want you to imitate, not the other part of his conduct. Warren, I'll tell you, I don't want to influence you unduly in this thing. I should like it very much, and I believe it is the right way, and that we could accomplish it; of course we could, you know, if it is the right thing for us to do; but I won't urge it any further. I'll just ask you to kneel down now, while we set up our family altar, and make it a special subject of prayer; ask the Lord Jesus if he would like to have us give that sixty dollars back to him."

It seemed to the young husband a very startling way to put it; he could have argued somewhat longer, on logical grounds, but to ask the Lord Jesus what he thought about it was making the thing a tremendously earnest one; sort of obliging a man to abide by the reply which should be received. Nevertheless, he felt unwilling to say that he was not ready to pray over it; so they bowed before the Lord for the first time in their new home. It was an earnest prayer that followed. A listener would have felt sure that the young man who prayed was very sincere and would certainly abide by the decision which should be reached. And the tone of the prayer changed gradually from that of inquiry to something very like assurance, so that Callie was not surprised to hear him say as soon as they arose: .

“We will try it, Callie, and see whether we can pull through.”

But she promptly shook her head at this.

“Don’t put it in that way, Warren, as if we were willing to try the Lord for a little while, and see whether he would do as he said; I know you don’t mean that, but perhaps it

sounds like it to him; let us take Jacob for our model, for this time at least. 'I will surely give the tenth unto thee.' Let us say it with the 'surely,' very prominent."


"But Callie, dear, that is very serious business—an absolute promise you know; it is of the nature of an oath, and I am afraid—we are poor."

To this, his wife made no sort of answer, only stood, with hands clasping his arms, looking up into his face with very grave eyes. A moment of silence, then he laughed.

"I see precisely how that sounds, Callie, as though I was willing to make a trial of the Lord's service, but unwilling to swing off entirely, without a rope to cling to. Come now, I swing off; let's repeat it, Callie trusting in strength from Him to make it good." And seizing her hands he clasped them in his own, and raised them in the attitude of prayer, while both voices repeated the words; "And of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

CHAPTER II.

THEIR JEWELS.

ONG Mrs. Callie's wedding presents had been an elegant velvet-covered, gold-mounted jewel-case, the gift of one of her school friends. Callie had smiled when she saw it, and speculated as to the amount it had cost, and wondered when she would be likely to possess jewels elegant enough to repose in such grandeur. The plain gold watch she wore, and the simple pin and cuff-buttons that did duty every day, comprised the extent of her stock.

On the very morning after the new covenant relations had been entered into, Callie went, with bright eyes, to the clothes-press shelf,

where, for want of a better place, she had set the beauty, carefully wrapped in many papers, took off its wrappings, turned the tiny golden key, and looked in on the delicate pink cotton reposing there, with intense satisfaction. She had suddenly fallen heir to jewels which she meant should sparkle therein. She took it down-stairs with her and set it on the parlor mantel, while she robed the little dining-table and prepared the morning meal. The tea-kettle was already singing, and the aroma of coffee and faint odors of delicately browning toast presently filled the air. It was as complete a little photograph of Eden as Warren Spafford cared to see. So he thought at that moment, as he pushed open the side door, letting in the fresh, morning air, and bearing in either hand a scuttle of coal and a pail of water, that were to save the steps of the presiding genius of Eden during the day. These were fresh healthy young lives, and the prose, which had constantly to interfere, in no way jarred the poetry that they felt sure they were living.

His wife turned toward him with sparkling eyes.

“Oh, Warren, I have such a nice idea! Isn't this the day your month's salary is due?”

“The very day, you small miser! I expect to bring it home with me this evening. Do you burn to spend it?”

“Just as fast as I can,” she said, gayly; “but see here,” and she brought out the blue velvet treasure. “Warren, don't you know how we laughed over poor Florrie's gift, and wondered what use we should ever make of it? I have thought of a use. You know that five dollars, the tenth? Well, could you bring it to me in little bits of gold dollars and let me keep it in here for our jewels? Then I'll wear the key on my chain, and whenever we want to give, the money will be at hand.”

“Until it is spent,” he said, in a tone of intense amusement. “Five ‘little bits of gold dollars’ every month! Our Boards can surely pay off their debts when they hear of it. My dear Callie, I hadn't the least idea you were so sentimental! Wouldn't it be a great deal more prudent to keep the money in the savings-bank, and draw it as you have need?”

“I will be prudent with it. I truly don't

think it is a fortune, and I presume the idea is just as silly and unbusiness-like as possible, but I do so like the thought of seeing our little gold offering nestling in that pretty box, and thinking that they are the Lord's jewels, and he will guide the using."

For a moment her husband was entirely silent; then he said, in a low tone:

"Whether it is sentimentality or not, it moves me strangely; perhaps we are both sentimental, and perhaps it is, even in so small a thing, the Lord's leading. We will put the jewels there, dear, and they shall be his."

It was the next morning that Mrs. Spafford, having set her small house in completest order, arrayed herself for the street, and then sat down in the parlor, opposite that box wherein she knew gleamed five golden jewels, pencil and paper in hand, prepared to plan her battle with life at forty-five dollars a month.

At her feet sat the small market-basket, in which was to be placed her purchases for the day; the question to be determined was, what could she afford to buy? "Let me see," she said, making small, swift figures. (she was as

rapid an accountant, in her way, as her husband was in his); "thirty-one days in a month; I mean to count in that way, then I shall have a little surplus for extras when those good months come that have only thirty, and on that blessed February we'll have a real feast!"

"I entered into a speculation," her husband had explained the night before, when the monthly salary was talked over. "I discovered that by buying a month's car-tickets in advance I could get them for two dollars; that is a saving of eight cents a month, ninety-six cents a year, I want you to understand, and you will have the goodness to give me credit for the same on your day-book!"

This sentence, gotten off with many a flourish, ended in a laugh, in which Callie joined before she said:

"Now we can laugh, but really that is worth a good deal; suppose by careful management we can save a dollar a year on each of our expenditures, we could keep a savings-bank account against the rainy day that people are so fond of getting ready for. I know I have met

people who it seemed to me, would rather trust their 'rainy day fund' than the Lord."

"Keep a bank account by all means, if possible," her husband had answered, and he had gone away with a laugh that he did not mean his wife should know covered a little sigh. No one would have liked better than he, to so fill her purse that she should have no need to puzzle her brains about the small economies with which he thought he foresaw her life was to be filled. But she, with serene brow, sat this morning fingering the bills that all told, amounted to forty-three-dollars.

"Forty-three dollars, to be divided between thirty-one days, gives me one dollar and thirty-eight cents a day, and almost one cent over; that one cent shall be counted on the savings'-bank fund; I will have one if Warren does laugh at me; he shall not know anything about it until some dreary day, when the wind is blowing and the rain is driving against the windows, he staggers home and tells me he is on the eve of failure, and I bring out my savings'-bank book and show him that the sum exactly meets his awful needs — *a la* dime novel

style!" Whereupon she laughed aloud—a free, glad laugh, that covered no thought of a sigh; she even rejoiced that her husband's position, as a mere clerk, saved him from any fear of bankruptcy. Callie Spafford had that sweet, rare spirit, which knows how to find cause for joy in each of the appointments of life. "Seventy-five cents a day ought to buy our food and the fuel to cook it with; I wonder if it will? Dear me! I am forgetting Warren's lunch down town! What a pity he has to do that; I could furnish him with a so much nicer one at cheaper rates. Well, twenty-five cents a day for that is seven dollars and seventy-five cents a month. What dreadful creatures figures are! They go and multiply themselves so unfeelingly before one. Now I just wonder if we *could* have breakfasts and suppers each day on the fifty cents left? As for my dinner that won't amount to much. Who wants to eat dinners all alone? I don't mean to starve, and I don't mean to have Warren think anything looks starved, but what is the harm in my experimenting as to what *can* be done? I've wanted to try it

ever since I boarded with poor Mrs. Perkins and she gave us tough beef-steak and sour baker's bread, or, at all events, baker's sour bread, at three dollars and a half a week; and 'lost money every blessed week.' I don't believe a word of it. I mean I don't believe she managed matters as she might, if she hadn't spent so much time weeping over the hardness of her lot. Now, Callie Spafford, shoulder your market-basket and see what you can do for a hungry family at fifty cents a day; it shall be that, until further notice at least."

"Oh, there is Callie Howell!" a clear voice exclaimed, as the young matron, market-basket in hand, entered the narrow court, which, at that end of the city, served as a market-place.

The voice belonged to one of the dear five hundred friends of her maidenhood; none of them so very dear, yet she was glad to see them all. This one, Jennie West by name, was one with whom she had, perhaps, been least familiar, so far as real friendship goes;

but there was a ring of gladness in the voice; everybody had liked Callie Howell.

The brisk young book-keeper, near whom she was standing, was the first to respond:

“Miss Jennie, I am shocked at your familiarity! Don't you know that is not Callie Howell at all, but Mrs. Warren Spafford?”

“Yes, she is Callie Howell: I am going to forget that she has gone and spoiled our circle by consenting to be an old married woman.”

And, market-place though it was, Miss Jennie, who was perhaps at all times a trifle too loud-voiced, came forward eagerly and bestowed her hearty greetings, even to kisses, upon the little market-woman.

“A market-basket!” she said, still speaking in loud tones. “Do you do your own marketing? How very funny!”

“Why, who would do it, my child?” the matron said, in nowise discomposed, and she looked at the yellow feet and pink ruffle of a chicken lying near, with the air of a skilled market-woman. “Mr. Spafford has to take the

seven o'clock car down; he has little time for family duties. What is poultry worth to-day?"

"I'd make him get up early, then, and do it all before seven o'clock," Miss Jennie interposed. "Isn't housekeeping horrid, Callie? I know all about it; mother was away for three weeks, and I had all the care of the house; I thought I should die, certainly; and things got themselves into the *awfullest* confusion while she was gone! Oh, my! It makes me shiver to think of those three weeks. Mother said she never saw such a house."

"How much hired help does your mother keep?" queried Mrs. Spafford, with an amused smile.

"Why, we only keep two girls, and you know we have a large house to look after, and quite a family. It is too much; I wonder that mother doesn't die. It nearly killed me; now honestly, Callie Howell, you needn't laugh at me; you always did laugh at me, you know; I was completely worn out, and had to come up here to rest. Mrs. Evans is trying to nurse me up. Do you know Mrs. Evans? You ought to, she belongs right here in your

neighborhood. Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Spafford; she is my dearest friend, Callie, or she used to be before she was so foolish as to get married, and wear her life out with house-keeping! How you girls can do it is beyond me!"

"I don't believe we feel in the least like martyrs," Mrs. Spafford said, laughing, as she acknowledged this public introduction by a cordial clasp of the hand.

The slight, fair-faced woman, with a somewhat perplexed face and unnaturally flushed cheeks, was the same who had attracted her admiring attention in church the Sabbath before. The market-place was an unpleasantly public one in which to form new acquaintances, but very little in the way of propriety could be expected from Jennie West, so she accepted the situation; laughing meantime over the thought that the gay young girl, the very picture of blooming-health, had come up to be nursed by this fair, frail woman. Meantime Jennie had jumped to an entirely different line of thought.

"Oh, Eva! here are strawberries! Don't they look perfectly lovely? Who would have expected to see them so early? Why, they

fairly make my mouth water! You must have some of them for desert; they will be delightful with cream and sponge cake. Eva, my dear, attend to business; don't you see the treasures will all be gone in a few minutes?"

This last, with a touch on the lady's arm, and a pretty affectation of importance, as Mrs. Evans with cheeks heightened in color, appeared to be absorbed in examining some scaly fish; meantime the class of customers who are always eager for things out of season, was surrounding the strawberries.

Mrs. Spafford, meantime, seemed to have forgotten her chicken, and was watching Mrs. Evans with thoughtful eyes. She turned at Jennie's peremptory summons, with the flush still deepening and with a hesitating air.

"I don't know," she said, doubtfully.

"Well, you will know in a few minutes," with a half-impatient little laugh. "They will all be gone, and that will settle the question for you. Callie, don't you want a box of these strawberries for your market-basket?"

Mrs. Spafford was glad for this question, and answered promptly:

“No, indeed; I am too wise a house-keeper even to inquire the price. The idea of any but millionnaires buying strawberries at this time of year! Even then I fancy I could find happier ways of disposing of my money.”

“Oh, you horrid little miser! You were always saving your pocket-money in school. I thought you would get over that habit when you took a husband to support you.”

Callie paid no attention to this sentence, though the tone was so loud that ordinarily it would have annoyed her, on the score of good breeding. She was engaged in watching the effect of her words on Mrs. Evans, and was glad to see a little letting up of the look of pained perplexity, and to hear her answer her gay tormentor's next appeal with something like decision.

“I believe, Jennie, the strawberries are too expensive for my purse to-day. I didn't get enough money from Dane for any special extras this morning.”

“Oh, you horrid housekeepers!” said Jennie, with a becoming little pout. “What a prosy life you must live, counting the pennies

and asking your husbands whenever you want even a strawberry! I wouldn't be in your shoes for the world!"

"It is well you are a privileged person, Jennie," Mrs. Spafford answered her laughing.

For herself, she was as indifferent as possible to what the saucy, foolish tongue might say; but it was evident that Mrs. Evans winced under it. She looked worn and harrassed; and Callie, as she watched her, felt an unaccountable pity stealing into her heart for the pale woman, and made a sudden resolve to shield her further, if necessary, from Jennie's attacks. "Perhaps she hasn't made a pencil and paper calculation this morning as to what she will spend and what she *won't*, and so feels weak." This she told herself by way of excusing her championship, and then plunged boldly in.

"Isn't poultry unaccountably high this morning? I was going to indulge in a nice little chicken for our dinner to-night, but really I can't afford it much better than the strawberries. You see," with a bright little smile, "although I have been keeping house for myself but one day, I am, nevertheless, a practical housekeeper,

and I don't like to waste money on extravagant purchases. I don't believe I should if I had the money to spend, which I hav'n't."

Mrs. Evans regarded her with a sudden accession of interest.

"*Are* you really a practical housekeeper?" she asked. "I wish I were. I have been keeping house for three months, but I didn't know anything about it when I commenced, and I don't seem to have learned a great deal. How did you learn?"

"Mother and I kept house together for ten years. I was a school-girl most of the time, and a teacher during the last two years; but still I was my mother's market-woman, confidential clerk, and, a good deal of the time, her cook and table waiter; so I learned all about it. My mother was a wonderful teacher."

"And does your mother live with you now?"

A swift, tender shadow passed over the bright face, and the voice dropped lower.

"She went away to her home a little more than a year ago."

Mrs. Evans reached forth her hand and laid it impulsively on Callie's.

“My mother died nearly two years ago, but I miss her so!”

There was a real heart-cry in the sentence.

Jennie's loud voice recalled them to practical life.

“Come, you two are sentimentalizing, I believe, and the result will be you will neither of you have anything for dinner, unless I help. After all, I believe I would make a better housekeeper than either of you. Will Coleman, can't you come here and figure out the respective dinners of these two matrons? They are in danger of starving unless some judicious person comes to their aid.”

Thus challenged, the young book-keeper got down from his perch, came over and shook hands with Mrs. Spafford, and chatted with Jennie. He was a recent importation to that end of the city, from the main store down town; he had known Callie Howell in their set as a teacher, and he had the same feeling of hearty respect for her that she had always inspired. He did not feel sufficiently intimate with her to suggest her bill of fare; still he was in no sense averse to a chat with Miss

Jennie. Truth to tell, he had been no uninterested listener to the queer snatches of conversation that had been going on. He was a rapid accountant, and, if Miss Jennie had but known it, a good deal of mental arithmetic had been gotten through with during the five minutes. He had speculated as to the probable amount of Warren Spafford's salary, the probable house rent he paid, the possible cost of living with such a manager as Callie Howell at the head of affairs, all the while giving certain thoughtful glances toward Miss Jennie, that showed whither his hopes were tending; and then, as she acknowledged her dislike for the cares of housekeeping, her ignorance of details, and exhibited her utter disregard for small economies, not to say her contempt for the same, he had drawn a little sigh and plunged into the column of figures before him. Still, he liked to get down from his stool and come and talk with Miss Jennie. He liked also, to think that she was a friend of Callie Spafford. That lady, meantime, had really not been idle. She had given certain swift glances up and down the rows of eat-

ables, made her mental calculation, determined what she could have and what she couldn't, and was now prepared to act accordingly.

"Is the poultry very high?" questioned Mrs. Evans, in a sudden confidential whisper. "I think Jennie is fond of it."

"Ruinously high, and not very good at that." If Jennie were my guest, she would have to wait for prices to lower."

"That is true," she added, brightly, as Jennie caught the sentence and shook her pretty, curly head.

"Spoil all my plans," said Jennie, with another pretty affectation of a pout, while Mrs. Evans looked in admiring awe at her new friend for daring to avow her economies so boldly. Then, Jennie, with a sudden, bright smile, "if you'll buy some of that asparagus I'll desert Eva altogether and go home with you to dinner."

Mrs. Evans blushed crimson in deprecation of her friend's rudeness, but Callie promptly shook her head.

"Your tastes are simply ruinous," she said gaily. "Not even for the pleasure of having

you to lunch with me can I be guilty of such treason. You see I held a conference with my purse before I started from home this morning, and I know exactly what amount I can spend to-day; and it won't include chicken or asparagus or strawberries."

"Asparagus is good for digestion," said Jennie, pouting.

"So is a clear conscience," laughed Callie, and the trio separated.

CHAPTER III.

CAKE AND BENEVOLENCE.



MS. Evans stirred her coffee with an irresolute air, occasionally studying that portion of her husband's face which could be seen from behind the morning paper. She had that to say to him which always made his face grow more or less gloomy; she was trying to decide whether this was a propitious time, though daily growing more doubtful as to whether there would *ever* be a propitious time for like topics. Presently determining that, whether safe or not, it must be done, she entered her hesitating interruption:

“Dane, if you have a few minutes for me,

this morning, I would like to talk with you."

The paper dropped promptly, and the husband waited, courteously enough, but in silence, and with a face that told of habitual perplexity in some direction, perhaps in many.

"I think I shall be obliged to have a little more money to-day; that is, if we bake for the festival. The ladies are going around this afternoon to see what each one will do, and I suppose I shall have to say what our part will be."

"I thought they hadn't decided yet whether to have a festival or not."

"Well, it isn't quite decided; that is part of the work of the committee, this afternoon, to see whether the people approve of the festival, and, if so, what they will give toward it."

"Then if I were you I would say I didn't approve. I'm sure *I* don't. The whole thing is a first-class nuisance from beginning to end. I never approved of that way of doing business, and I don't change my opinion as I grow older."

And the husband, who could not have been more than thirty at the utmost, albeit he talked so wisely about "growing older," drank his coffee almost scalding hot, and ate his steak and baked potato rapidly, with a gloomy face.

Yes, but, Dane, I don't suppose our opinion will be asked; in fact, they have taken it for granted that we are in sympathy with them; I am on this very committee for soliciting this afternoon."

"I wouldn't have served; of all hateful business that a woman can do, I should think that would be the meanest. Talk about drudgery! *I'd* rather drudge at the wash-tub all day if I were a woman than to tramp all day through dirty streets, stopping at people's houses, begging them to give! I shouldn't say you were suited to that sort of work."

Mrs. Evans checked a troubled little sigh, and tried to smile, as she said:

"Oh, well, I don't suppose I will need to say much; I am just chosen for company. Mrs. Bacon is to go with me; or, rather, I

am to go with her. She is a good solicitor they say.”

The gloomy-faced husband sneered. “I should think very likely she would be; she has just about impudence enough for such work. ‘Well, now, Mr. Evans,’ she says to me, ‘don’t you really think you ought to do a little more, for the sake of the cause?’ For the sake of the fiddlestick! As if a man didn’t know his own business, without having Mrs. Bacon trot after him to tell him of it. She cares about as much for ‘the cause,’ as her yellow-haired poodle does. I wish, if they must put you in such disagreeable positions, they would at least send you out with a woman who has common-sense. It is wretched poor policy in them to send her, if people are any like me; I always give at least twenty-five cents less than I would if anybody else asked me. How came they to choose you, almost a stranger, for such work? Wasn’t there anybody else willing to be imposed upon?”

This time Mrs. Evans’ sigh was not suppressed.

“I hardly knew how to refuse,” she said at length, hesitatingly. “They knew I had very little to do; in fact, they mentioned me as one who had leisure, and I thought perhaps I might help a little in that way; I always used to help at home, in whatever way I could.”

“Help!” Mr. Evans’ voice was getting into a regular growl. “Who are you helping, pray? Don’t get into the habit of talking that nonsense about ‘the good of the cause,’ That will do for idiots like Mrs. Bacon to peep. I wish to goodness there was a church to be found that didn’t undertake to pay its honest debts with *cake*! I believe I’d move to-morrow and go into its vicinity. I’m tired of this eternal begging to get stuff to put into people’s stomachs, and let them call it benevolence. I would’t have anything to do with it, Eva, if I were you.”

Mrs. Evans’ naturally pale cheeks were a deep crimson now. She protested earnestly:

“But, Dane, how can I *help* it? We belong to this congregation, and I, at least, am pledged

to do what I can for its support. I thought you wanted me to help in any way that I could, and I really didn't see how to refuse."

There was a little quiver in her voice, such as always subdued the tendency to growl in her husband's. He drank his coffee more slowly.

"Oh, of course," he said at last. "I suppose you are in for it. I'm not blaming you Eva, you understand; but I hate the system, all the same. So do all honest men; that is the reason I hate to see you mixed up with it, in the name of a church, too! Well, how much money must you have?"

This question set Mrs. Evans' to cutting her steak, nervously, into little bits.

"I don't know just how much money it takes to make cake, Dane. But we are out of sugar, and the butter will not last, if I have it used for cake, too. Then I shall need eggs and raisins, I suppose, or flavoring of some sort. I never calculated the price of cake, Dane; I just used to go down to the kitchen and weigh out whatever materials I needed and make my cake, without any re-

gard to expense, so I don't know how to plan."

"I wish women ever *did* sit down and calculate the expense of cake. They would discover that it is an awfully extravagant way to be benevolent; but, Eva, how does it happen that we are out of sugar again? It can't be two weeks since I sent up that great box full!"

The fair blue eyes were swimming in tears, and the wife's voice was half choked as she answered;

"I'm sure I don't know. Kate seems to be careful with the sugar; but we have been using a good deal of fruit lately, you know, since Jennie was here, and puddings and custards take a great deal, it seems; I never used to think so, but, they do. I have really tried Dane, to look after it, and be as careful as possible; but the sugar goes in spite of me. I'm almost discouraged."

"Poor little mouse!" with an attempt at a laugh. "So you can't keep track of the sugar, eh? I have a suspicion that your husband's fondness for apples baked in sugar

may account for some of it. Besides, ants sometimes make havoc with sugar, you know; this time I think it is cousins. I never could quite understand how Jennie West happened to be your cousin! I'm glad it is two removes; third cousin isn't she?"

"Second," Mrs. Evans answered, meekly. She knew her husband was not fond of Jennie.

"Well, I wish you could teach her a few lessons in common politeness. I never supposed it was etiquette for a guest to arrange the bill of fare. When is she coming back?"

"Not until next week. Shall I make two cakes, Dane, or would you say you could only furnish one?"

"Oh, I suppose you will have to do what the rest do. If they say two, we say two; that's the benevolence of it. But, now seriously, Eva, this matter must be carefully considered. I have a pretty good salary, you know—so called—and there are only two of us, and yet we are running behind all the time. We went to housekeeping, you remember, to save money, and we are spending it as fast again as when we were boarding. In fact,

we are spending more than I get; running in debt, you understand, and nothing to pay it with, unless we begin to save, somewhere. I don't understand these things, but I suppose you women do, and it will have to be looked into closely. Kate wastes, I presume all girls do. At least that is what Will Coleman says his mother says. Will by the way, is wonderfully interested in the expenses of house-keeping. I told him it was ten times cheaper to board. Now my dear, I hate this whole business; I'd like to feed you on fruit-cake and dress you in silk velvet if I could, but you see the trouble is we can't do what we *can't*; either for ourselves, or for others. This cake matter must be attended to now, I suppose, but when we have a little time we must talk it over, and see if we can't think our way out, before another festival or fair or something of the sort pounces down on us. As to money, I haven't but two dollars to my name. I'll give you one of them and send up the sugar and eggs from Bacon's. I'll tell him to charge them to benevolence! There comes my confounded car. We must contrive

to get around earlier in the mornings. Mind, I'm not blaming you, wifie; you do your best, I dare say. I must go this minute," and he bent over her with a hasty farewell kiss, and strode through the dinning-room in haste, whistled the already passed car, and was off for the day.

Mrs. Evans sat still where he had left her; stirring the fast cooling coffee, pushed her fork into the untasted bits of steak, and drew it out again, and presently arose from her uneaten breakfast, touched her little silver call-bell for Kate, and walked away to the sitting-room, before she came, to hide the flushed face and tearful eyes. There were unmistakable tears in the eyes now. It seemed to her that she had reached the extreme limit of endurance in this matter. It was all so different from what she in her girlhood days had planned. She had been one of those petted only daughters in a beautiful home. Father and mother had vied with each other in surrounding her life with sunlight. Her tastes had been comparatively simple, her ideas quiet; therefore she had not needed what people of

wealth would call large sums of money with which to carry out her plans. So to her mind money had always been plenty; she had only to ask for what she wanted, and it was invariably forthcoming; given with a smile and a kiss. Her father was not wealthy, he was simply well-to-do; but even this she did not know. He might be very rich for all she thought about it, he certainly was not poor. It was with her in all her relations in life exactly as she had explained about the cake: when she had wanted to do anything she did it, asking no questions, giving no thought, as to expense. She had been benevolent in a sense; that is, she had taken her place in the church work; not as a leader, she was not destined by nature for a leader, and she had not grace enough to assume the position, but when the fairs or festivals or benevolent associations of any sort sprang into periodical activity, and the managers thereof talked "cake," and "cream," and "oysters," or "tidies," and "pin-cushions," and "toilet-sets," as a way out of debt or into opulence, she unhesitatingly and sweetly bore her share

of the burden; indeed, hers was apt to be among the first voices to say:

“I will make cake;” or, “We can furnish cream at our house;” or, “You can use our parlors.” All these things were pleasant to her; were in no sense sacrifices; were done spontaneously. Giving, as a matter of principle, she knew nothing about; and yet, like so many others, she thought she knew all about it.

Less than two years before this day of which I am telling you, the pleasant thread of life that had unraveled so smoothly before her suddenly snapped asunder; at least one of the main strands gave out, without word of warning. In the morning the father went away, kissing his wife, kissing his daughter as usual—in the evening he lay cold and silent in his parlor, never again to be a living presence there! From this shock the gentle mother never rallied, but sank almost immediately into a state of invalidism; nurtured and lovingly thought of day and night by the daughter, whose purse opened lavishly, as usual, to supply her needs, until one morning she awoke rudely to the frightful fact that the money was gone!

The well-to-do man of business had been, like many another, living beyond his means, and had left nothing but five hundred dollars in cash for his wife and child to live on. Even the pretty home that had been theirs ever since the daughter was born went to pay the outstanding debts. As for the five hundred dollars, it melted away like snow in spring-time, the daughter had not the slightest idea where; she had never been taught to manage money. Of one thing she was glad, at least she came to be glad, after the first stunning sense of grief was over, that her mother had no need to know of this later blow; she sank away out of life sooner than any had feared — soon enough to fondly suppose that she left her daughter mistress of the home and with plenty of money at her disposal as heretofore; and there was barely enough to furnish the requisite amount of crepe and pay the enormous bills for carriage hire!

All of these sad events, hurrying so rapidly on each other, had in their turn hastened the marriage of the daughter to the enterprising young clerk of the firm of Briggs & Bowen

— a clerk who was said to be receiving an unusually good salary for a man of his years. And his young wife, if she had thought of it at all, which she didn't, would have imagined a thousand dollars a year to be a small fortune. As for Dane Evans, he was the sort of a young man who knew that it had been amply sufficient for his wants, therefore it would do very well for both of them.

As soon, then, as the customs of society would admit—for I suppose you surmise by this time that these people were both of the class who pay careful attention to the customs of society—they were married, and organized their home very much as if they had five thousand a year to depend upon instead of a thousand. Their first rude awakening was the discovery that the fashionable boarding-house which had been a home to Mr. Evans for five years would not do for the two; or, in other words, that twenty dollars a week for board, fuel and lights extra, was simply not to be thought of. They went higher—not in price, but in stairs—and tried sixteen dollars a week, and were appalled to discover

that even this painful reduction left them in debt, and their necessities increasing every hour! What was to be done? After many talks, and some tears on the wife's part, at least, they concluded to try housekeeping, Eva being sure that it must be cheaper a great deal, for "mamma never had any trouble." At that time her husband was too young and too fond of a husband to sneer, but he smiled, and did not remind her that he himself was only a clerk, while her father was at least supposed to be the sole owner of a good business.

Then began a wearisome round of house hunting. Then too did the young couple take their first lesson in "rents." They were amazed and utterly dismayed to discover that the whole salary would not pay for what they were pleased to consider a suitable house, in a decent neighborhood. They tried other neighborhoods; they climbed higher and higher toward the limits of the city, and at last found, fully six miles away from the center, the queer little box in which they now lived. That was the husband's name for it, and certainly to them both it was unlike any house of their experience. Yet it was a

pretty enough house, and even up here the price to be paid was something that made them give doubtful glances at each other. They were growing wiser as to the capabilities of a thousand dollars a year. Yet not much, else they would never have spent nearly that sum in furnishing the house.

The young husband, who had been receiving his salary of a thousand dollars for five years, had in the days of his bachelorhood managed to save a trifle over two hundred a year, and congratulated himself often upon being a thrifty fellow. He *did* do better than many a young man of his acquaintance. This thousand, carefully invested as it had been, was drawn out, and furnished the rented house with pretty carpets and delicately upholstered furniture for the parlors and spare chamber. Eva, the wife, was gifted with rare taste in this matter of house furnishing, and if she had not been restricted in means, could have made the queer little house into a bower of beauty. As it was, she believed herself to have been a martyr—she had crucified her tastes in a dozen particulars. She had studied economy until her fair-

face was wrinkled and troubled; and yet the thousand dollars vanished in the most extraordinary manner! Long before the house was completely furnished the means were gone, and, as is usual in such cases, it was the kitchen and the every-day living rooms that had to suffer.

Then began a season of daily struggles with kitchen expenses. Sugars, and teas, and coffees, and oils, and meats, and coal, and all the long, *long* list of necessities! Poor Eva wrestled with them and tried to plan and save, and was afraid of her girl in the kitchen, and afraid of her pantry, and afraid of her pocket-book, and grew to hate the very name of sugar; and yet week by week the bills and expenses increased, and her husband's face grew graver, and his tones were growing, occasionally, a trifle sharp even to her; and she saw no way out of the problem. What was she to do? Here was this fearful church supper looming up before her. When had she ever shrank from a church supper before? She hated the very thought of it now, and this thought made her cheeks glow with shame. She hated to *have* to hate such expenditures. She wanted to give, to be benev-

olent, in her narrow understanding of the term. She liked to be able to smile and say, "Oh, certainly," when the cake or coffee question came up. It made her blush like a criminal to think that possibly the time was coming when she really must say, "I can't afford to do thus and so." Her unfortunate education had been that, some way, it was a confession of sin to be obliged to say, "I can't afford it." She was learning through bitter experience to look ahead a little. She had pored over figures enough lately to discover that even going on as they had been (and she could not see how it was possible for them to live on less than they did), would plunge them into debt. She saw that Dane's face was constantly troubled; that he shrank from any conversation or suggestion that would involve outlay; that he read the morning paper a great deal for fear she would ask him for money for dinner or to pay Kate; it seemed to the poor bewildered wife that *Kate* was always needing to be paid. It made her wince and flush to take the three dollars weekly from her delicate, gold-mounted portmonnaie and bestow it on the great good-natured Ger-

man who daily scorched their steak and served them muddy coffee. Every expenditure made her wince! Her second cousin Jennie West, had been like a long nightmare to her, during the ten days of her visit, and she shivered to think of her coming back next week. She rubbed the steam made by her breath from the window-pane with her delicate cambric handkerchief, then started guiltily to see the soil, and to remember that even that little act had added another item to the weekly wash, which was another of her trials. Church suppers looked like anything but interesting inventions to her, and there was no use to wipe the window-pane, for the tears were falling on it thick and fast.

CHAPTER IV.

CAKE MATHEMATICALLY CONSIDERED.



VIEWED from some standpoints, Mrs. Harvey Bacon dressed for a trip to secure contributions with which to carry on a church festival, for the purpose of paying a church debt, was a curiosity. As she waited in Mrs. Evans' neat little parlor, casting pleased eyes about her on the taste everywhere displayed, critical eyes also, for she could tell to the fraction of a dollar the cost of every article, an interested person might have studied her. She was arrayed in the costliest of black silks, carefully made, and more carefully trimmed; not "fussy" by any means, and, indeed, to an unpracticed eye, I am not sure but it would

have been called "very neat and plain." If you have ever heard wise gentlemen discourse on the subject of dress, selecting the individual whom they would like their wives to copy, you are aware that they are apt to select material at four dollars a yard, and lace at seven or eight, and pronounce the toilet "very neat and plain."

Mrs. Bacon's outer garments matched her dress; her silk mantle, made in the newest style and trimmed without regard to cost, and her delicate spring hat, with its long plumes and its broad satin ties, were entirely in keeping with each other, and the whole effect was pleasing in the extreme, if viewed by a person who had no occasion to think of dollars and cents in the same connection. She gave Mrs. Evans a swift, critical glance as she came down, ready for the street, and was satisfied. There was nothing in her appearance to make a discord. The dress, it is true, was not so rich, nor the sack and hat so costly, as her own, but they were rich enough to make a very respectable appearance, and were in perfect taste. On the whole, Mrs. Bacon was pleased.

"I hardly know where to call first," she re-

marked, as they carefully held their skirts from contact with the spring mud, and crossed the street, preparatory to going down Green Avenue. "I suppose it is not worth while to make any stops on this street, scarcely a person living here is able to contribute anything if they felt ever so much disposed. My dear Mrs. Evans, how came you to locate on this street? The people will be so uncongenial I am afraid; so unlike what you must have been accustomed to. Don't you find it very lonely?"

Mrs. Evans, with pink cheeks, explained that she had done very well during the short time that she had lived there, and met some rather pleasant people. She ignored entirely the question as to the reason for her choice of residence; because she actually had not the moral courage to explain that the lower rents had been the attraction to the street!

"I am sorry you live up so far," explained her companion; "I told Mr. Bacon I couldn't think what your husband meant by isolating you so from us all. Why nearly all our set live down at the lower end of Green Avenue. Such a walk! And, during the calling hours of the

day, there is never a car along at the right time. I had to wait twenty minutes for one to-day. I hope you haven't taken the house for a year, as I am almost sure you will want to get further down before the season is over."

In almost trembling haste, Mrs. Evans assured her that they had leased the house for a year. The bare thought of incurring the expense of another removal was appalling to her. Then she made haste to change the subject.

"Mrs. Bacon, have you met Mrs. Spafford? They have quite recently moved here, I believe, and live nearly two blocks above us. Wouldn't it be well for us to call there before going to the avenue?"

"Why, would you call there, do you think?" questioned Mrs. Bacon, stopping near the corner, irresolutely. "I have heard of them; and I am told that they are very poor, indeed. Not even the necessities of life! Sad, isn't it? Who was it told me about them? Oh, I know; your cousin, Miss West, was telling me last week; we were walking down town together, and we happened to meet Mrs. Spafford, and I was remarking upon what a fine walk she had —

quite as though she belonged to the cultured portion of society. "I understood Miss West that she had known her as a girl, and that she was quite a superior person. What a pity it is that she married so badly! Do you really think it is worth while to take up our time in calling there?"

"Why!" exclaimed Mrs. Evans, dismay as well as genuine interest in her tones. "Has she married badly? I did not know it. Is her husband dissipated?" And a vision of the bright face that had beamed on her so hopefully and cheerily in the market, overclouded with bitter sorrow, came upon her, calling forth sympathy.

"Oh, dear, no. I didn't mean in that sense. He is a very estimable person, I believe. At least I have heard so; but I really don't know much about him; but he is only a clerk, I mean," she hastened to explain, catching a sight of the crimson cheeks of the wife of the clerk beside her. "He is a *very* young clerk indeed, has a subordinate position and a meager salary — not a suitable one to marry on, you know; and really, from what your cousin said, I shouldn't be surprised if we should be called on to help

them before long. It is such a pity that people will foolishly throw themselves right into the responsibilities of life. Miss West said she never felt so sorry for any person in her life as she did when she met Mrs. Spafford, one day in the market, struggling to buy something for dinner. She said she had to twist and turn in order to get *anything*; and that it was really pitiable to see her, for she had been used to better things."

"Jennie talks at random sometimes," responded Mrs. Evans, speaking quickly, and feeling ashamed that her cousin had been guilty of talking over the affairs of one whom she called her friend to a comparative stranger like Mrs. Bacon. What might she not have told that worthy lady about their own affairs — hers and Dane's?

"Well, said Mrs. Bacon; still irresolute, taking slow steps forward, "perhaps it would be as well to call on her. People like to be counted in, even when they can't help any; and, as you say, she may feel hurt if we pass her by."

Had Mrs. Evans said that? She could not remember anything of the sort. Mrs. Spafford

had not impressed her as a woman who would feel hurt over the fancied slights of even Mrs. Bacon.

“What a perfectly comical little house!” was the elder lady’s exclamation as they passed around the neat grass-plot that led to Mrs. Spafford’s door. “It really doesn’t look as though there were room for even two children to play at housekeeping. Poor thing! What a doleful time she must have away up here, if she really has any culture.”

The “poor thing” looked very unlike an object of pity. She answered her own bell, appearing at the door in a neat spring suit of delicate design and careful finish, and ushered them into her bit of a parlor, with evident pleasure at the sight of their faces.

“I was wondering, only to-day,” she said, with a bright look bestowed upon Mrs. Evans, “whether your sense of hospitality would not lead you soon to call on me. Jennie promised to bring you, I remember; she is not with you now?”

While Mrs. Evans explained, the third lady regarded their hostess, with wondering eyes.

“Are you intimately acquainted with Miss West?” she asked as soon as opportunity afforded.

“Oh, yes, we were intimate in school, after the manner of school-girls, you know. We were in the same classes, and occasionally appeared as rivals in some of the examinations. I have seen but little of her since. I commenced teaching as soon as I graduated, and Jennie commenced party-going, and, both the occupations proving absorbing, we saw each other rarely.”

“A poor school-ma’am, who married for a home,” was Mrs. Bacon’s mental comment. “Poor thing; what a dismal little home she has secured! Though I must say she has done wonders in the way of disposing of her few things. What a curious parlor ornament! A jewel-case. I wonder if she has any jewels to put in it?”

The three ladies talked pleasantly together for a little, Mrs. Bacon acknowledging to herself that the unfortunate woman was certainly a person of a good deal of culture, and, finally, since she was proving herself so intelligent,

she determined to broach the subject of the church festival.

"Such persons often help a great deal by their executive ability and their skill in setting tables and the like," she told herself, before she launched forth.

But Mrs. Spafford proved not to be a person easy to explain things to; she developed into an animated interrogation point, asking questions right and left as to what had been done in the past, what was hoped for in the future, what had been the success of others in the same line, and a dozen other embarrassing questions.

"What *is* the debt?" she inquired, abruptly, at the close of a long sentence from Mrs. Bacon about "sacrificing for the good of the cause."

"What is the amount?"

"Why," said Mrs. Bacon, with an embarrassed little laugh, "it is only a hundred dollars, all told! but you would be surprised to know how long it has hung on us. You see the church is small, and by no means wealthy. In fact, I think there are very few persons in it who can really be said to be wealthy. Mr.

Bacon and I are from the Clark Place Church, and you may imagine it is a change to us, but we thought it our duty to cast in our lot here and help along what we could, though we have never taken our letters from the Clark Place Church, and, of course, have to help there, and can't do so much here; but we cheerfully give our mites."

And she brushed an imaginary particle of dust complacently from the rich silk, and looked the picture of serene benevolence, waiting for Mrs. Spafford to state her ability or inability to furnish cake.

"How much money do you hope to realize from this festival?" was the next question.

"Well, of course we can not estimate much about that; we have a very fair attendance generally, and sometimes make as much as —well, I've *known* us to clear forty dollars in an evening; but, then, we are not apt to do as well as that. Ice-cream is so expensive, you know, and but little of the cream is donated; that is almost as scarce an article as money in this region. I should say if we cleared

thirty-five dollars we were doing very well; shouldn't you think so, Mrs. Evans?"

And Mrs. Evans, who had thought nothing about it in any way, save to feel with dismay that she must bear her share of the expense, whether she felt able or not, from force of habit sweetly acquiesced in this statement.

"Thirty-five dollars net?" was the next clear-cut question. "I mean exclusive of all expenses, cake, time, and the wear and tear, if you can estimate that."

Mrs. Bacon arched her eyebrows in astonishment.

"Why, dear me!" she said at last, "we don't estimate the price of *cake*, of course; that is a freewill offering; so, indeed, are our time and strength; we don't expect to be paid for those."

"I presume not," spoken with dancing eyes, "but, as a business matter, you expect to estimate them, and discover, how much you have actually made. Of course it takes money to make cake, and of course if I can afford to make cake, I can afford to give the money outright that it would cost to make it; and if, in addition to that, I could do something with

my time, by which I could increase the amount, it behooves me, as a sensible, business woman, to discover how much net profit there is in the enterprise."

To Mrs. Bacon this was certainly a new way of presenting the entire subject. So, indeed, it was to Mrs. Evans. She looked her astonishment, mingled with genuine interest in the matter, and was betrayed into inquiring further.

"My dear Mrs. Spafford, don't you think there are some people who, having little or no money to give, can, by making cake and such things, help along?"

"Cake and such things are money," replied Mrs. Spafford, with a smile. "Therein lies the difficulty in my opinion. People who unhesitatingly tell you they have no money to give, will unhesitatingly agree to furnish a rich cake, or an unlimited number of sandwiches, without seeming to have an idea that they have thereby furnished money."

"I perceive that you belong to the class of people who do not approve of social gatherings connected with the church. Of course

we were not aware of that, or we should not have intruded."

Mrs. Bacon's voice reminded one just a little of a winter day. Her hostess turned toward her brightly:

"Oh, not at all. On the contrary, I am one who thinks the church is not social enough. I would have a great many more gatherings in the name of the Church and for the cause of Christ than there are now; but I thought you were talking about paying a church debt, and the quickest and easiest way of doing it."

"But suppose you can combine the two objects? Is there any harm in that?"

"I beg pardon, but I don't believe they combine well. People never succeed in being very social who have come together for the purpose of making money; and the people who are obliged to feel that they have contributed to the cause only by eating some of the cake and cream, and paying a fair price for the same, seem never to be able to look with comfortable consciences on the affair, and it really seems to me a waste of effort.

I have often helped in these enterprises, and we almost invariably fell short of the amount we had hoped to make, and offended one or two persons, and tired ourselves out, and went home disheartened."

This was so entirely Mrs. Evans' experience that she could not help bestowing a smile of approval upon the bright-faced lady. While Mrs. Bacon, still with the air of one who had been defrauded of her position as leading speaker, asked:

"Pray, how would you raise this church debt if you had your way?"

"Well," said Mrs. Spafford, briskly, "in the first place I should make an estimate. Wait, let me get pencil and paper. I have been a school-teacher for so long that I am very fond of actual estimates put in black and white. Now, how many cakes for instance, did you propose to secure?"

"We calculated about twenty, I think, did we not?" was Mrs. Evans' timid appeal to Mrs. Bacon, who chose to maintain a dignified silence.

"Isn't that a very large number?" ques-

tioned the mathematician, stopping, her pencil poised in air.

Mrs. Bacon was tempted to explain. "We are liable to have quite a large attendance, and our young people are apt to try two or three kinds, and it is so unpleasant to run out of cake that we decided to secure as many as that number. Some of the committee always stand willing to buy them if there are any left."

"Well, twenty cakes then, of twenty different people."

"Oh, dear, no! We haven't more than ten people on whom we can depend in the matter of cake making. It is by no means a large church; Mrs. Spafford."

"Very well; ten persons, twenty cakes. Of what sort, Mrs. Bacon?"

"Well," said that lady, growing interested despite her determination not to be, "we let each person make what she chooses. We want nice rich cakes, of course, and that is generally understood, so we don't dictate as to the precise kind."

"Frosted?"

“Why, yes, generally our cakes have been frosted; they look prettier, you know, for a festival.”

“And what price would you set as the valuation of each cake?”

Then the two ladies looked at each other doubtfully.

“I haven’t the least idea,” said Mrs. Evans, who, nevertheless, was deeply interested in the question, being anxious to know whether it would be possible that Dane was right, and cake was an “extravagant way of being benevolent.”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” said Mrs. Bacon, with a little laugh. “Who ever heard of estimating the cost of *cake*?”

“Oh, I’ve estimated it often,” said the mathematician, making neat little figures on her paper. “It is very easily calculated—the average expense, you know. Suppose we say half a pound of butter to a cake. That is a fair average, for some of the cake makers will be sure to use more, and some less. Butter is forty cents a pound now, so we have twenty cents. Next we have eggs, and I

suppose six to a cake is as low an average as frosted cake will admit of; or, to be very economical, shall we say four? Eggs are somewhat scarce now, you know; thirty cents a dozen; a third of a dozen, ten cents. Now the sugar. I'm always amazed at the way sugar disappears! It is such insignificant looking stuff, and costs so little by the pound, that you think it is hardly worth calculating; yet most housekeepers find that it insists on being calculated."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Evans, with a sympathetic laugh, and a bitter memory of her constantly emptying sugar-box.

"Let me see, frosting takes a great deal of sugar, and pulverized sugars are expensive. I don't think that allowing ten cents for each cake is too much; in fact, I'm inclined to think it is hardly enough, but we want to make the estimate as low as possible, so I'll put it ten. Now, counting flour and flavoring and milk, do you really believe a fairly good cake can be made for fifty cents? I don't."

To this both ladies agreed, and each of

them knew so much or so little about money that they felt slightly triumphant. Certainly fifty cents was a very small sum to give for benevolence!

“Very well. Then, Mrs. Evans, if you make two cakes you give one dollar to the cause, counting out entirely your time and strength, which, in this age of the world, should certainly be worth something to every woman. Ten other ladies do the same, and the cake is secured; then come the coffee, and the cream, and the sandwiches, and the pickles, and the fruits, and so forth, and ever so many *other* ‘and so forths,’ besides the dishes that will certainly get broken and have to be replaced, and the dresses that will be sure to get stained with coffee or something. That is part of the programme, you know, to tip something over, and when you have made a conscientious estimate of the whole matter, how much net profit have you?”

CHAPTER V.

INTERROGATION POINTS.



HEN the ladies looked at each other again. Mrs. Evans could not resist the temptation to laugh a little; she had never been statistical before, and she was vaguely surprised and a good deal amused that the results were so small.

As for Mrs. Bacon, her face expressed as much annoyance as a well-bred face allows itself to show in a lady's parlor. It is possible that she had been brought face to face with inexorable figures before.

"I think I must be obtuse," she said, speaking coldly: "but I fail to see as yet any plan

proposed by which more can be raised than we can secure in this way."

Mrs. Spafford laid aside her pencil and paper.

"I beg your pardon," she said courteously. "I did not propose to interfere with your plans; I was talking for my own information as much as anything; I have been led to think a good deal about these matters of late, and I was wondering whether a much more comfortable way would not be to raise the money at once."

"Oh, undoubtedly; you need not fear any opposition as to that opinion," Mrs. Bacon said, with a little laugh that was almost disagreeable. "I assure you we don't bake cake and prepare refreshments merely for amusement; we are capable of entertaining ourselves in pleasanter ways. We would very much prefer to raise the money outright if it could be done; but the lamentable fact is that it can not."

"I don't see why."

Mrs. Spafford was not one to be turned aside from her purpose by a bit of sarcasm. What would have flushed Mrs. Evans' cheek and

hushed her voice, only roused in this woman a determination to prove her point.

“Now let me suppose, for the sake of the illustration, that you have twenty ladies who will assist in getting up this entertainment, at an expense to themselves, exclusive of their time, of fifty cents each. Is that sufficiently low, Mrs. Bacon?”

That lady, under direct appeal, was obliged to admit that she should be surprised to get off with so little personal expenditure as that. “That is,” she added, “if you count cake and such things. I have never been accustomed to taking note of such trifling expenditures.”

Whereupon Mrs. Evans immediately thought of her husband, and of his stormily expressed wish that people *ever would* calculate such expenditures.

“Then, according to your estimate, something of this sort must be resorted to four or five times before the amount is raised. Now, why would not the twenty ladies rather pledge themselves to give, say fifty cents a month,

for ten months, and save their strength and their dresses?"

"My dear madam, I am afraid you are a novice in church work. Mrs. Evans, how would you like to go around to our ladies and make such a bold proposition as that? Wouldn't you be afraid of being told that they were capable of expending their own money without our assistance?"

Mrs. Evans' cheeks were crimson, and she evidently knew not what answer to make, so her hostess, feeling sorry for her came to the rescue.

"I don't believe she is afraid of any such thing. Surely no lady would be guilty of such language. Besides it is really a trifle less than you are preparing to do, if I understand your mission. You propose to ask the ladies to take the fifty cents and spend it on a cake, and spend their strength in making it, and then come and wait on people while they eat it! Surely my proposition is the simpler of the two."

"But then, you know, we only ask it for once," ventured Mrs. Evans.

“Ah, yes; but that doesn't pay the debt — doesn't begin to pay it; and of course their penetration is equal to seeing that they will be called upon again and again in the same direction.”

But, my dear Mrs. Spafford, you don't understand. People who would be annoyed by the very suggestion that they ought to give money will bake beautiful cake for us; you see they don't realize that it is the same as money, and so they are willing to help in that way, when you cannot get a cent of money out of them.”

Mrs. Spafford, who had been conducting the conversation up to this point, in a half laughing way, was grave enough now as she said, gently :

“Isn't that one of the objections to these ways of raising money? Self-deceived people who have never given much thought to domestic economy, are led into cake-makings that they can ill afford, under the mistaken impression that they are giving for the cause of Christ; and other people come to festivals and buy their cake and cream and mats and tidies, under the mistaken impression that they are

giving to the church, when in reality they are receiving a full and fair equivalent for their money. Where is the real *giving* in any of these plans?"

"Well," said Mrs. Bacon, "I'm sure I don't profess to understand all these nice points. Mrs. Evans and I have been appointed by the church to do its drudgery, and I suppose we must do it, leaving to you school-teachers the discussion of metaphysics."

Mrs. Spafford's eyes danced mischievously; her caller's ideas regarding metaphysics were evidently mixed. But she saw that it would be wisdom to leave the subject.

"Well," she said, brightly, "I didn't mean to discuss domestic economy, or church economies either, when I commenced. I hope you will have success in your mission. As for myself, I will bake the two cakes or give the dollar, whichever you say. Of course, as a matter of economy, I would rather give the dollar; yet I am willing to do the other way if it will please you better. And if you decide to make an effort for the money instead of the cake, you may count me as one, of ladies pledged

to fifty cents a month for ten months. Or, let me see; you are paying interest, I suppose? Then we ought to say for twelve months; that would cover the interest and leave a little bit of a surplus for something else."

Then she turned at once from the entire subject, and began to question in regard to other matters. What sort of benevolent work was the church doing? Had they a sewing-society? She saw a great many poorly-clad children as she went up and down the streets. Were they in the Sabbath-school? Didn't they need clothing? Were their parents attending any church? Was the church interested in home mission work? Were the prayer-meetings well attended? Had they a ladies' prayer-meeting? A perfect storm of questions.

Mrs. Evans gave up the slightest attempt at answer, and sat a silent and interested listener, while Mrs. Bacon attempted to impart information. As to poor children, there were swarms of them belonging to worthless people for whom nothing satisfactory could be done. She was not aware that any organized effort had been made to reach them. Oh, dear, no!

The parents never thought of attending church. Home mission work? Oh, yes; of course an annual collection was taken for Home Missions. She really didn't know how much was contributed. No, it wasn't sent to any special field, so far as she knew — just applied for the general good. A ladies' prayer-meeting? No, their ladies, not being Quakers, had no objection to attending prayer-meeting in company with their husbands. She really could not say whether the general prayer-meeting was well attended or not; it was such a long walk for her, and Mr. Bacon was so late in getting from the city, that they rarely got to prayer-meeting. A trifle embarrassing were many of the questions. It was so apparent even to Mrs. Bacon that, efficient woman that she was, when put through a regular course of cross-examination she knew very little about the practical work of the church.

“Did you ever hear anything like it!” was her exclamation to Mrs. Evans, almost before their hostess' door had closed after them. “Calculating the price of the sugar and flour and milk that are used in cake! She must be

a mercenary little body anyway; but then I suppose, poor thing, her circumstances make it necessary. That is one of the difficulties inseparably connected with poverty; people grow so small in their reasonings, narrow down their lives to such trivial calculations. The price of a cup of sugar and a few eggs. Dear me! isn't it depressing?"

Mrs. Evans' answer was an inarticulate murmur; she was unaccountably interested in the brisk little accountant and her deft figures.

What if she should be able to learn of this woman so as to make figures that their weekly expenses would come within the week's legitimate allowance, and so remove the wrinkles from Dane's forehead? If she thought that, she would certainly ask to become her pupil. Thinking it over, she gained courage to offer a timid demur.

"But Mrs. Bacon, she seemed very willing to help, after all; and was as liberal as most people. You know she said she would pledge herself to give fifty cents a month until the debt was paid. I don't believe we could find a great many other ladies who would do the same."

Mrs. Bacon laughed:

“*She* doesn’t believe we would either; she is entirely safe in making the proposition. That sort of giving is easy; for instance, I would just as soon as not offer to be one of fifty to give a thousand dollars for a new church to be built this season. Do you suppose I would ever be called upon to pay it?”

“But fifty cents a month isn’t so *very* much,” said Mrs. Evans, doubtfully; disturbed by the speciousness of the illustration, yet unwilling to give Mrs. Spafford over as a quick-witted hypocrite.

“Oh no, it isn’t much; it sounds like a very business-like suggestion, but would involve endless rounds by committees, and much talking, and amount to very little in the end. Some of us, of course, will have to give a great deal more than that, to make up for the delinquencies of others; but as I said, it *sounds* well; besides, teachers are so accustomed to a sort of red-tape arrangement of matters, you know, that it seems to them, reasoning from their narrow spheres, as though everything in life could

be reduced to figures and added and subtracted."

Poor Mrs. Evans thought, with a weary sigh, that almost everything in her life had been reduced to figures, and that an alarming subtracting process was always going on, but she had said all that in her timidity she dared to say in defense of Mrs. Spafford; save this, born partly, of her own mental wanderings over the matter, and partly because of an earnest desire to suppress gossip:

"Cousin Jennie must have been mistaken in her surmise that they were *very* poor; for she was as ready to make the cake, or give its equivalent, as any lady could be."

"Oh, as to that, I don't know; she is probably one who has resolved to make as good a showing as she can out of nothing; and what she lacks in funds, make up in argument. Some people will do almost anything to maintain, before the public, a position that is not theirs by right."

This sentence made her companion wince inwardly; truth to tell she was sometimes troubled with grave doubts as to whether she

and Dane were not trying to do that very thing; and she wished, within her weary soul, that she could find her own level, wherever it was, and step down into it and be at peace.

But she went home, and in due time went into her kitchen, and measured her flour, and weighed her butter and sugar, and beat her eggs, and stirred her rich compound with skillful hand; there was one redeeming feature about cake, she knew how to make it. She felt almost certain of the result; her practiced eye could tell by a critical glance at the sticky compound whether there was just flour enough, or whether it needed a trifle more; and her practiced hand could tell by the very "feel" of the spoon in the mass whether it had been stirred to just the right degree of lightness.

The obnoxious Kate was engaged at that very hour in molding the bread, and as she looked with doubtful eyes on the soggy lump that Kate was tossing and rolling, and thumping her red knuckles into, the mistress wished, from the depths of her heart, that she knew as much about that suspicious looking lump as she did about the batter before her; she felt certain

that the results of such knowledge would have brought smiles to Dane's face. But, alas! she knew nothing about bread; so Kate pounded away, making her sour mass of dough grow every minute more "soggy," and the skilled mistress prepared her tins, and dropped her batter skillfully into it, and "felt of" the heat in the oven, still with a practiced hand, and held like a general at her post, through all the processes, until her loaves came out just the requisite shade of creamy brown; then, while Kate went to the cellar for coal, she hurriedly lifted the cloth and gave a surreptitious glance at the lump of dough. It looked discouraging and smelled uninviting, and she turned from it sighing, and went away.

By this time you are aware that the project for raising the money without the cake was not carried out. In fact, it was not considered for a moment. I am not sure that any besides the cake committee even heard of it. Mrs. Bacon chose not to say anything about it, and Mrs. Evans had not moral courage enough to do so unhelped by others. Therefore Mrs.

Evans' skillful figures, so far as she knew, dropped uselessly into oblivion.

It was not so; they lingered in the troubled young housekeeper's heart. Her perplexities did not lessen. She was inclined to think, before she finished her rich cake, that Mrs. Spafford's estimate had been entirely too low; and so indeed it was, for her individual cake; she knew nothing about averages. The weekly accounts loomed up before her larger than ever; the wrinkles in her husband's forehead seemed daily to grow, and he studied the morning paper more industriously and conversed less. The festival was held, and Mrs. Evans' dishes were lent to help set the table, and two of her delicate cups were dashed into fragments; she had not the courage to suggest that they be replaced before the pattern became obsolete; besides she was one of the unfortunate victims on whom the traditional cup of coffee spilled, and of course she wore to the festival a dress that coffee stains hopelessly ruined. She looked at it ruefully — one of her bridal stock of dresses — and calculated what it would cost to replace that in her wardrobe, and

her eyes opened by Mrs. Spafford's figures, she could not help sitting down and deliberately calculating how much she could have paid toward the church debt, supposing she had known that two of her cups and one of her dresses were to be added to the cake, and was alarmed at the sum total; and resolved, then and there, that at the very first opportunity she would certainly learn from Mrs. Spafford exactly how she managed both the household expenses and the cake question; for Mrs. Spafford came to the festival, and with her came two cakes, as carefully made, and as satisfactory in results, as were Mrs. Evans' own.

She belonged to the class of workers who, failing in leading in what they firmly believe would be a better way, are able gracefully to drop into the accepted way, doing heartily their share, often more than their share, even though the way of doing it is not of their choosing; biding their time, and looking steadily to an improved future. Such people invariably become leaders in the end.

One bit of information did Mrs. Evans' seek.

“Do you know Mr. Spafford?” she asked her husband, on one of those mornings when he read his paper less than usual.

“Spafford, who clerks it for the Holdens? Yes, I know him when I meet him on the street-car. We have never been formally introduced, but we chat together coming up; he is an intelligent fellow; I enjoy talking with him.”

“Do you know what his salary is?”

This question was timidly put; whatever had to do with money, either directly or remotely, was sure to bring the wrinkles. They came creeping up his forehead at this moment, as he answered in a changed tone:

“I do, to a penny; he gets six hundred dollars a year.”

“Six hundred!”

“Exactly that, and commenced house-keeping on a surplus of two hundred and fifty, which he had saved, goodness knows how; and doesn't owe a penny; and I get a thousand a year and run behind all the time.”

“Perhaps his wife has money?”

This was Mrs. Evans' tremulous suggestion and at that moment she almost felt as though she would sell her right arm for the sake of being a wife who had money.

The gloomy-faced husband shook his head vigorously.

"No, she hasn't; I knew Carrie Howell, by reputation at least; she supported her mother for years, and was considered a marvel for the way in which she managed. People used to wonder how she kept herself and her mother looking so trim and comfortable, and their little home sunny. There is witch-work about some people's lives; I never could understand it, and I don't want to try. Just pass me that paper, please."

And he gave himself to the study of current items.

CHAPTER VI.

A SOCIAL PROBLEM.



ELIEVE in it, Callie?"

They were having a family council in the evening. The wife had her bit of sewing, in which she was now and then taking stitches while she talked, and the husband, as he asked the question, arose and walked to the window to throw out the stump of a cigar, smoke from which still curled about the pretty parlor. She did not "believe in that" at least. It had been a surprise to her, and a pain, when she had discovered, after their marriage, that her husband "occasionally smoked a good cigar;" that was his way of putting it. She had not known quite what to say, so had said

little, until a day or two after the serious compact had been entered into, to consecrate their "tenth" to the Lord. Then she had, half playfully, but with an earnest undertone of meaning, said to him:

"By the way, Warren, we have made no allowance for cigars in our schedule of expenses, and yet I smell the odor of smoke, how is that?"

And he had flushed, and there had flashed over his face and manner a slight touch of haughtiness, gone the next instant, as he explained:

"I saved the amount from the sum allotted for my dinner, Callie. I found I would rather have the cigar, and go without the cup of coffee I am in the habit of taking. Don't be afraid, dear; I shall not break our compact for the sake of personal indulgence."

Then she hastened to explain that she feared no such thing, and tried to impress him with the belief that the coffee would be so much better for him than the cigar, and he had laughed and assured her he was in perfect health, and needed no coffee for a stimulant;

that the cigar was a mere habit, company, sort of; he cared comparatively little for it, and should never be tempted to inveterate smoking; and the wife had believed that she must drop the subject and bide her time. None the less did she disapprove of the cigar. It was rarely that it found its way into her parlor, but the fact that it appeared there at all showed how entirely ignorant her husband was of her true feeling on the subject. Meantime she answered his question:

“Why, yes, I believe in social life. Perhaps those things are not as well managed as they might be, but I have always recognized the importance of the social element in society; indeed, it has seemed to me that we were not, as Christians, doing half that we might in that direction.”

“Do you suppose Christian culture is at the bottom of Mrs. Bacon’s social scheme?” her husband asked, with laughing eyes. “Still,” he added, answering himself, “we have no right to pick flaws in her motives.”

“Especially when they are plain enough, without picking,” Mrs. Spafford answered; and

then these two, who understood each other so well, and were tempted to say what they would not allow themselves to say, laughed at their own thoughts.

The fact was that Mrs. Bacon, despite the fatigues following upon her vigorous efforts to get the little church out of debt, and which, the evening proving rainy, had resulted in a net profit of only twenty dollars, had yet rallied her forces and resolved to give an evening entertainment; a select affair, attended by some of her down-town friends. To this entertainment, strangely enough, Mr. and Mrs. Spafford were invited. They had exclaimed over the invitation in genuine surprise, but had refrained from discussing the reasons for it. They each, however, in reviewing the matter, had arrived at the same conclusion, as was evidenced by the husband saying, gravely:

“I tell you what it is, Callie, it is a lucky thing for us that Gen. Ward Howell happens to be our uncle! Only, it will necessitate a new necktie just as sure as you live.”

And his wife had flushed over Mrs. Bacon's

motives, and laughed, and then answered the reference to dress.

“Now you have touched upon a bewildering point. It doesn't trouble me much, just now, because, fortunately, I am a bride, and have a toilet that will do very well. But suppose that these entertainments continue, and *we* continue to be Gen. Ward Howell's neice, it will involve expense, and I don't see how we are to meet expenses of that sort.”

“I don't either. In my opinion, we shall have to remain by ‘our own vine and fig-tree,’ finding our pleasure in domestic life. That is the reason why I asked you in a general way, whether you believed in it; not exactly in social life, but in our ability to enter into it. Ought we not to commence as we can continue?”

“I think so; and for that very reason we should arrange for some social gatherings. We can not sit down like hermits at home; at least I suppose we have no right to; we must mingle with other people, and get and give; these phases of life are opportunities, not accidents, I suppose.”

Mr. Spafford surveyed his wife thoughtfully for a moment, and then answered :

“Upon my word, Callie, I believe you have a different way of looking at every object under the sun from that of common mortals. Who, for instance, ever dreamed of finding a duty in party-going? Save the class of people to whom Mrs. Bacon seems to belong, who make a sort of affectation of the term, thrusting it in people’s faces when it means nothing; but I thought that Christian people looked upon these things as bores at the best, that must be endured, occasionally, for the sake of courtesy or custom, or something of that sort.”

“I don’t believe I look upon the ordinary party, with its dancing and card-playing, as an institution which a Christian is ever called upon even to endure; but I do look upon social gatherings as so many traps that may be set for the feet of the young and gay; good, honest traps, I mean, by means of which they may be drawn in, from time to time, to the family of Christ.”

I regret to tell you that Mr. Spafford answered this remark with a whistle.

“How many people do you suppose go to parties, or to social gatherings of any sort, with that end in view?” he asked, stopping in the midst of “Hail Columbia.”

“I am a Yankee, Warren, and so may answer your question by asking another: Do you think that Christians, whose rule of life reads, ‘Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,’ have any right to go to social gatherings, or anywhere else, separated from this end?”

“Witness declines to answer,” said Warren, with becoming gravity. Then — “Well, now, Callie, suppose, for the sake of the argument, that I am convinced, what are we going to do about this cravat and glove business? Those two articles will hardly do as illustrations, either; it will come to coats and dresses soon, because, you see, I know enough about the question to understand that the sort of dress which will do for ordinary occasions will not do for these social gatherings.”

“I don’t believe that,” she said, shaking her head earnestly. “I believe, Warren that Christian people of today ought to enter the lists resolved to battle against this foe to social

life, not only, but Christian life. I think the great trouble in our churches, or no, I won't put it that way, one of the troubles, is too much dressing. Why, look at it in this neighborhood; there are ever so many nice, respectable-looking people whom we don't see in church. I asked Mrs. Bacon about that Burns family only last evening, and she said: 'Well, the fact is, I suspect they haven't clothes that they think suitable to wear to church.' 'Why!' I said, 'I met Mrs. Burns and her daughter on the street yesterday, and they were very neatly clothed.' 'Oh, neatly; yes, of course; they are quite respectable people; but they are, like a great many others, poor and proud. If they can't dress as well as the rest, they won't come to church at all. Such sinful pride!' That is the way she finished the sentence, but it set me to thinking afresh. No doubt it is sinful pride, but I came home with this verse running continually through my mind: 'Woe unto him by whom the offence cometh.' Warren, I would like to go to this gathering of Mrs. Bacon's, and to every other gathering which we decide to attend,

dressed as simply as is in keeping with my ideas of neatness and propriety.”

“It will take a good deal of moral courage you will find, little woman. Are you equal to the buzz of tongues that will tell in confidence to their intimates: ‘Don’t you think that Mrs. Spafford wore a calico dress to the social last night! They must be dreadfully poor!’”

“I believe I am equal to it,” she answered him, laughing; “especially since Gen. Ward Howell is my uncle; but I don’t intend to wear my calico, that would excite unnecessary remark. I have a nice fresh muslin, prettily made, and as simple and inexpensive as it well can be, that I fancy will be just the thing.”

“Then you won’t even wear your black silk?”

“Too warm. These June days seem as warm to me as any that I remember in August. Besides, you foolish man, when shall I be able to have another black silk on six hundred a year? I must make this last for state occasions, until I am a grandmother at least.”

“Isn't Mrs. Bacon's tea-party a state occasion?”

“I don't mean to make it such. She assured me it was a quiet little affair, just a few friends to spend an hour or two, not a party at all. I am going to take her at her word and dress accordingly.”

“I'll venture you fifty cents that you will be the only lady there out of rich silks and real lace and things.”

“Very well. I haven't ‘real lace and things’ to appear in, and don't expect to have, and I am entirely willing to appear in what I have; but what about your neck-tie?”

“Oh, I'll appear in the old one; it will match your muslin dress. Shall you dispose of the glove question in an equally economical manner?”

“I never could see the necessity of putting on gloves in order to spend a social evening with one's friends. I don't mean to wear any gloves.”

“All right; that relieves me of the awful necessity for incasing my hands in them, to say nothing of the joy of escaping from buying

them. But, my dear little woman, this matter had better be looked at from all sides, now that we have it up. What do you think of the propriety of accepting these invitations from various sources, and never being able to return them? We can't give parties, you know, even such quiet and inexpensive affairs as your friend Mrs. Bacon proposes." This last with a gleam of mischief in his handsome eyes. "What about enjoying the hospitality of other homes and closing our own?"

"I don't want to close our own, Warren; do you? Of course we can't give parties; at present we can't even have a dozen friends at once to take tea with us, because," with a gay little laugh, "we haven't cups enough. But what is to hinder our inviting first Mr. and Mrs. this one, and then Mr. and Mrs. that one, to take a dish of tea with us? We have good bread and butter, and in fruit-time that is as inexpensive as anything; and I can even make some of the all-important cake occasionally; and I think our friends would enjoy meeting us in that way ever so much."

"Callie, my child, do you really mean that

you ever contemplate inviting Mr. and Mrs. Bacon, for instance, to take some bread and butter and tea with us?"

"Why not? If, on acquaintance, it seems to me that she would enjoy such a quiet little bit of home life as that, and we would enjoy giving it to her, why should we not? The idea that obtains in some circles of being indebted to this or that one for hospitality, was always a distasteful one to me, making a sort of barter of social life. I want to entertain my friends as often as I can, and as well as I consistently can. If they entertain me oftener, and in a better manner, why I shall enjoy it gratefully, without keeping account of the difference in expense."

Mr. Spafford seemed to feel that there was no way of expressing his feelings better than by resorting to "Hail Columbia" again, and finishing the bar he was whistling, he closed it with a laugh, and went to fasten the kitchen door, preparatory to ascending the stairs for the night.

"Warren," his wife said to him, rising and going forward to meet him as he returned,

“you have laughed and whistled, but I wonder if you know that you haven’t expressed an opinion on the entire subject. Won’t you tell me what you think? Do you believe all this is as visionary as your whistling would seem to indicate? Don’t you think that we, as Christians, and as *poor* Christians, can have our place in social life, and meet our friends, and contribute our share to their enjoyment and get their help?”

He was a tall man, and she was a little woman. He had a way of putting his hands on her shoulders and looking down into her eyes. He placed his hands so at this time, and in the handsome brown eyes, mischievous eyes, dancing half the time with a sense of the irresistibly comical, there was more feeling expressed than that of mere amusement now.

“Callie,” he said, “dear little wife, I’ll tell you what I believe; I believe in you, heartily, and in your religion. Some of your ideas are new to me, and I won’t deny are startling. I am by no means sure that you can bring other people — *any* other people, mind you — to your way of thinking. I have an idea that when

you assail the customs of society as regards dress and entertainments, you touch very tender points — come close to hearts, women's hearts, anyhow. But I like the fun of trying it. I'm with you heartily. There is a dash of the romantic about me that makes anything like a sensation especially agreeable. We will go to this 'quiet little gathering' in muslin, and gloveless, and do our best."

As they went up the stairs they severally thought this:

"I wonder," deep down in the wife's heart, where there quivered a little sigh, "if Warren really means that all these things are simply funny to him, and he sees no underlying principle in them, nor cares for them, except as they suggest a sensation?"

He on his part:

"Grand little woman! trying to make believe that her struggle to hold her own in the society in which she is calculated to shine is a matter of principle, and has nothing to do with her having married a poor clerk. I would like to shield her alike from the pity and the sneers of the miserable world; but,

since she is too brave to be shielded, we will make believe it is all a play, and push through."

And he actually thought it was all because they were poor!

Mrs. Bacon's "little gathering" was the subject of talk and thought in other homes; and that other subject, the attire in which to appear, also claimed attention.

In Mrs. Evans' home the whole matter was productive of pain. She, too, was a bride of not many months' standing, and the one rich silk, which, poor as she was, had seemed to her an indispensable accessory of marriage, would still serve her as an elegant dress. She thought of it with complacency and brought it forth. But when was a dress laid aside by even a moderately fashionable lady for a few months' time without there occurring changes that involved letting out this loop and puckering in that? Mrs. Evans' dress proved no exception; it had to go to a fashionable dress-maker's to be puckered; its mistress knew no other. She had spent her year of mourning at an uncle's house, and been married from

that home; the uncle, with an expensive family to support, had done for her what he could; namely, given her an elegant wedding, and as showy an outfit as he had dared, and the benefit of his elegant wife's and grown-up daughters' expensive advice and habits. So by nature and education Mrs. Dane Evans knew exactly how the silk should look in order to be elegant, and exactly where to go to have the elegance added; also, she knew and thought of it with bitterness, just what the bill would be likely to read, especially when it became necessary, according to the decrees of fashion, to have the arrangement of the lace trimming altered, and to add a yard and a half more to the original pattern. Several other very little additions became necessary to the eyes of the artist, and when the reconstructed fabric came home its owner surveyed it with a curious mixture of satisfaction and dismay. If only the bill for the same did not lie on the bed beside it. How could it cost so ruinously just to make a few little alterations in a dress!

Then came the question of gloves. Mrs. Evans no more thought of going to the lit-

tle gathering with ungloved hands than she thought of going in blue and white muslin, and her tormentor, Jennie West, having completed her visit elsewhere, was by her side to exclaim as to what could and *could not* be tolerated; altogether, taking into consideration the discomfort of Dane, the new wrinkles that would undoubtedly gather about his forehead, the gloom that would be a family guest for weeks perhaps, as the result of those bills, and the memory of the blush of shame that arose to her cheek when she asked the dressmaker to be kind enough to wait a few weeks till another installment of her husband's salary was due, Mrs. Evans attired herself for the gathering with a heavy heart. She was not comforted by the fact that Dane pronounced the whole affair a "confounded nuisance," and refused to get any new gloves for himself until two hours before the time for starting. To be sure, he bought them at last. Unfortunately, Dane Evans was one who, like his wife, recognized the necessity of doing as other people did.

CHAPTER VII.

MEASURING BRAINS AND HEARTS.



IT happened that the little woman in the pale blue and white muslin found herself at the small social gathering in a position not to be envied by most ladies. She had accepted Mrs. Bacon's statements in reference to the nature of her entertainment with more literalness than the result justified. The spacious parlors were quite well filled, and the larger number of the ladies were dressed as they would be for a fashionable party down town. It made the blue muslin very conspicuous. The wearer felt that she would either have compromised with the black silk dress, or remained at home, had she un-

derstood. I do not wish you to understand that she was miserable; what would have sent poor Mrs. Evans home with a nervous headache, and have held her for three days in alternate fits of weeping and indignation over the trials of poverty, only brought a heightened blush to Mrs. Spafford's cheeks. Still, no lady likes to consider herself the subject of curious remark, and for the first half hour it was hard for my friend to put away from her the pleasant occupation of contrasting the blue muslin with the delicate lavender and fawn and ecru silks that shimmered around her.

“Am I really not above this sort of thing?” she asked herself, at last, in astonishment and indignation. “Am I so accustomed to judging of others by their dress that I must needs conclude that their only estimate of me is by the cost of the clothes I wear?” and she resolutely resolved to interest herself so speedily in somebody or something that her thoughts would be diverted from this unhealthy channel. It was not easy to do; she found herself in a new atmosphere. As

a teacher, and as a niece of the well-known Gen. Howell, she had moved in what was called good society; had been accustomed to meeting people of refinement and culture; people who attended lectures and bought books and read them, and read reviews and discussed them, and kept reasonably well posted as to what was going on in the literary world, both at home and abroad. People who dressed well they were, too, and yet who much affected that form of dressing which is liable to pass unnoticed, because it quietly fits into the general whole.

Mrs. Spafford, sitting over on the low couch between the windows, tried critically to study the difference between the two poles of society, for they really seemed to her as far apart as that. These people talked, and talked well; that is, they used refined language and well-sounding phrases, but there was a curiously superficial tone to it all. She mentioned books of which she was confident they had never heard. She advanced opinions which were met with a well-bred stare, or, at the utmost, with a bewildered bow; yet

they talked glibly of the last matinee, and what a divine voice the latest musical favorite had, and how perfectly exquisite the collection of paintings was at the recent Exposition. Yet did she attempt to individualize paintings, and discover which school, or class of studies, or varieties of landscape, form, color, or style, were considered the more "exquisite," she was met with that bewildered look and half-doubting assent which may mean almost dissent, so undefined is it.

In the world of books it was much worse; she could not be sure that those with whom she chanced to talk had read *anything*, or were informed beyond the mere titles of certain, not so recent, publications; the authors of those might be foreign or American, male or female, for all knowledge that one could gain on the subject by talking with those who had heard of them.

Mrs. Spafford found herself bewildered. These ladies — some of them — talked freely with each other, and laughed much, and seemed to be enjoying themselves; but the subject was always something that she did not quite under-

stand, and that they seemed incapable of explaining. Nearly all of them were strangers to her, most of them being those who had patronized the festival more by eating its cake and oysters than by actual hand-to-hand help. Others of them being, indeed, from the city in which she had spent the last seven years of her life, yet being as utterly unknown to her, personally, as though they had occupied separate worlds. Jennie West, her schoolmate, was present it is true, but she was constantly the centre of an animated group of young ladies and gentlemen who held themselves entirely aloof from the married portion of the company, and had much merriment and much chatter among themselves.

Mr. Spafford, manlike, had found speedily a pleasant centre among certain men whom he met constantly in business life, men who gave no attention personally to the distinctions of society, therefore he felt at home, and was evidently enjoying the evening. Again and again did our bright-hearted little woman try to rouse and throw herself into the whirlpool of talk about her as one who was interested,

and had something to contribute. It seemed all in vain; she even realized that she hushed the flow of talk on one or two occasions by attempting to join. Was it the effect of her blue muslin? Back to that again!

Mortified with herself, and with the failure that she was making of the evening, she suddenly leaned forward, ostensibly to caress a sweet-scented vine that was reaching up to look in at the window, but really with one hand touching that and the other carried for a moment to her eyes, she sought refuge from her tormenting self, or, as she was fond of expressing it herself, she ran to her hiding-place. The Lord Jesus had been invited to accompany her to that entertainment; she had come in good faith, believing that he would be her companion and familiar friend; it might be that she had mistaken the surroundings; it might be that the atmosphere was not a congenial one for him; yet surely he would abide with her, and help her in honest effort to serve him even here. She leaned back again presently, and welcomed with a bright smile, the young man Will Coleman to her side. It seemed

a good omen that the first to come to her after this struggle should be Will, for she had been seeking an opportunity to talk with him.

“You are not social,” she said, cheerily, “at least not with us; you have never been to see us in our new home.”

“I’m coming, though, he answered. “My good intentions in that line have been sadly interfered with, but I am on my way. I don’t suppose you could imagine how anxious I am to see you keeping house. I can’t get over the queerness of the idea that you are actually a married woman, settled down in life. How does it seem?”

A close observer would have detected an undertone of anxiety, or at least a most unusual interest in the experiment of house-keeping.

“Why, it seems just what it always does to every happy woman, a delightful spot, and a satisfying life.”

“Do you really believe that?” There was visible eagerness in his tone now. “There is such a difference in women; most of them seem to me of the stamp who could not be

happy unless they had four thousand a year to spend on housekeeping alone, and enough more to devote to mere pin money. I don't believe ladies in general like housekeeping."

"You are slandering ladies in general. I don't think you are intimately acquainted with many true women who are happily married." She spoke earnestly enough, but not in a way to invite answer. The truth was she did not want to talk with Will Coleman in a way that would precipitate him into housekeeping; she was by no means sure of Jennie West on a salary of eight or nine hundred a year. "I don't feel like discussing domestic economy with you just now, Will," she said, speaking quickly, to ward off the question that she saw was coming. "I have been watching for an opportunity to ask you if you have settled that other question yet about which we talked so much a year ago or more."

"Oh!" he said lightly. "How can you expect me to remember which subject you mean? Didn't you lecture me on every conceivable topic that winter and spring?"

"Will, you know exactly what I mean."

“Do I? Well, then, I must confess neglect. I’m afraid your unworthy servant must still cry, ‘Go thy way for this time.’”

“And when is the convenient season coming?”

“My dear Miss Carrie — I beg ten thousand pardons! I mean, my dear madam, how can I tell? I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet.”

“Oh, Will, how you disappoint me! I am almost sorry that you have come up to this end of the city to live. There is so much here that ought to be done, and earnest-hearted young men are so sadly needed. If you were not here, it is possible that an active Christian might be put in your place, and we need him so much.”

The young man thus addressed made a profound bow, too low to be considered other than mockery, as he said:

“I’m sure I ought to express my gratitude after that. Your consideration for me, then, amounts to this, that if I were out of the way being a scapegrace, it is possible some good, pious young deacon might reign in my stead.”

The grave face did not change:

“You want to turn me away from the thought, Will, by wheedling me into explaining what needs no explanation. You know what I mean. I have said all to you that I know how to say, and you were honored with such a father and mother as few have. You know the way perfectly; you could be a power among the young men in this part of the city, and a power like what you *could* be is most sadly needed; but since you choose to be only a stumbling-block, it is natural for me to wish that in your place some one might have come who would give the needed help.”

“You have grown cross since you became a housekeeper, Mrs. Spafford. I think I have heard that domestic life had a deleterious effect on the nervous system. How can you call me such an ugly name as a stumbling-block? Don't I do my best to set your Christian young men an example? I am always at prayer-meeting; neither rain nor heat nor pleasure keeps me from the lecture-room on Thursday evening. Last Thursday three of your young members went down town to the comic lecture, but I

was faithful to my post and led the singing, if you will remember. I do the best I can. To be sure the boys will not always follow my example; but am I to be blamed for that?"

There was a grieved expression about his handsome mouth, and a sound in his voice as of one who had been unjustly arraigned, and a wicked look of unutterable fun in his eyes. Perverse young genius that he was, he knew that his moral life and exceedingly punctilious adherence to all the outward forms of religion were matters of comment among his acquaintances. He knew there was not an object in which the church was supposed to be interested that did not receive from him more hearty and patient assistance than from almost any of its younger members, male or female; and Mrs. Spafford knowing this, knew also that he prided himself upon it; that he was careful to make his life so moral, his actions so beyond reproach, as to actually bring a reproach upon the members of Christ's flock because, as he had once gayly expressed it "this disreputable wolf would persist in acting so much more like a sheep than the sheep themselves did!"

This marked feature of the young man's character had been the source of much anxiety to Mrs. Spafford. As a teacher she had been somewhat familiar with young men, and knew the rocks on which they often made shipwreck; and though this was a by no means common one, it seemed to her all the more dangerous.

"I don't think young men of the present day very often stumble over their own righteousness into the pit; but I am certainly afraid that Will Coleman will do it."

This she said to her husband in one of their confidential talks. She hesitated as to what to say to Will at this moment. He was looking down at her out of his roguish eyes, they saying as plainly as words could, that his position was perfectly unanswerable.

"Will, do you know the eleventh verse of the eighteenth chapter of Luke?"

It was apparently so sudden a change of subject and so unexpected a question that the young man regarded her with a bewildered air for a moment, then slowly repeated the words.

“The eleventh verse of the eighteenth chapter of Luke? I don’t believe I do; it doesn’t sound familiar, some way; though it may be one of those verses that I rattled off in Sunday-school a thousand times or so, between the ages of four and ten. If you would kindly start it for me, as the teacher used to do, perhaps I could go on.”

Mrs. Spafford shook her head.

“I don’t want to start it for you. I want you to find it some evening in the quiet of your own room, and read it carefully, and consider it thoughtfully, and ask your own heart if there is any reason why I should think of it when I talk with you.”

Will, with a very important air, drew a note-book and pencil from his pocket.

“I’ll attend to that item of business at the first reasonable opportunity. Give me chapter and verse again, please, in order that I may make no mistake.”

“What are you two moralizing over?”

It was the clear, ringing voice of Jennie West that asked the question—a voice that, despite his efforts to the contrary, always set

Will Coleman's pulses into quicker throbbing. She looked so pretty this evening; She was dark-skinned and dark-eyed, and knew precisely what tint to wear to set off her face to the best advantage; also, she would have compassed sea and land, had it been necessary to have secured the tint.

Will Coleman, without raising his eyes from the book, knew, or thought he knew, that the very loveliest form of flesh and blood that the earth contained stood before him. Isn't it strange with what different eyes different people see? Mrs. Spafford, looking upon the pretty vision thought only:

"Jennie is always a trifle overdressed for the occasion. I wonder when she will tone down, and what will do it?"

"I am writing out my text," Will said, in answer to the question. "I'm going into the theological line. Haven't you always had a sort of unspoken feeling that I had mistaken my vocation? I'm about to change. This is to be my first sermon, which I am to prepare in the solitude of my own thoughts,

of course. I don't know when I am to present it to the public."

"What is the text?" laughed Jennie, to whom this nonsense sounded irresistibly funny.

"As to the wording I am not quite sure. My memory is at fault sometimes, promising young theologian though I am; and, strange to say, I have forgotten my pocket Bible! But I am noting the figures, so as to be prepared for the aforesaid solitude. I presume I shall spend hours over it to-night, when I reach my home."

"Oh, I haven't a doubt of it. Meantime, come and help make up a set for a quiet little promenade. Not a dance! Callie, don't open your eyes in horror. It is to be just the tamest sort of a promenade. The minister himself might join in it if he were here."

"It is just the thing for me to take a decorous farewell of the world in," said Will, and, offering his arm with alacrity to the dazzling vision, and bestowing a deferential bow on Mrs. Spafford, he vanished.

"And Jennie is a Christian!" This is what the somewhat sad-hearted young worker thought as she looked after the two. She was so cer-

tain that Jennie's type of religion did not commend itself to the keen eyes of Will Coleman. What was the result? Why, being very deeply interested in her, and unwilling to admit even to himself that she was a poor type of *anything*, he straightway concluded that there was very little besides form and words in the whole matter. Such being the case, those who were the least trammelled by forms, and said the fewest words about the matter, were the more agreeable people to be with. Yet this young man was always having war with himself and his views, because he could not help respecting Mrs. Spafford's religion.

As for Mrs. Spafford, thus left to herself, she was at a loss what to do. Certainly she was strangely out of her natural element. Moreover, she began to doubt whether it was true that in gatherings like these there was really any chance to drop a seed, hoping for harvest. She looked over at her husband, bright, genial, apparently having a delightful time. What was he talking about? Why did those gentlemen about him seem so inter-

ested and animated, and withal so sensible? Why could gentlemen have so much better time than ladies, anyway? What should she do next? If she could get a peep at her watch unobserved, and discover whether it were not almost time to go home, she would like it; yet what had become of her views about mingling socially with people and giving and getting?

“I don’t seem to be able to give anything,” she told herself in despondent mood; and certainly I don’t find anybody who is giving to me.”

Altogether, if time could have rolled back a few hundred years, and she could have sat down beside that disheartened old Elijah during the brief hour that he halted under a juniper-tree and made his moan, she would have been in just the mood to sympathize with him.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUBTLE DISTINCTIONS.



HERE was a little rustle of silk just at her side ; silver gleams of it swept over the edges of her quiet blue muslin, and turning suddenly she found that Mrs. Evans had slipped into the vacant seat, and was holding out her gloved hand to clasp her own.

“I have been looking at you over in this corner for quite a little time, and longing to get to you. You looked so cool and still, and seemed to be having such a quiet, pleasant time.”

“Given over to the selfishness of my own thoughts,” said Mrs. Spafford, smiling brightly

on her. "I must bestir myself and try to be social."

"Oh, don't. It seems to me to-night as though every one were trying to be social. If we could all give up trying for a little while and just *be* it, without any effort, it would be such a rest."

The undertone of intensity in her voice told of such unrest that the listener was startled. Moreover, she was surprised to hear such an original and earnest sentence from this fair follower of fashion. Truth to tell, Mrs. Evans was just a little startled at herself, and made haste to add:

"Oh, I don't mean that. I beg your pardon; it must have sounded very strangely to you. I didn't think what I was saying."

"Does it really seem to you that there is no genuine sociability in the world; that it is all simply outside effort?"

"Oh, dear, no! That would be a dreadful thing to say. I don't think I know what I meant. I just happened to say it."

Mrs. Evans was manifestly frightened over the thought that she had overstepped conven-

tionalities. Mrs. Spafford undertook to reassure her.

“Oh, I know; you were simply speaking aloud your random thoughts. But I wonder if there is not great truth in it? Wouldn't you like to know, for instance, just how much genuine enjoyment there is in this house this evening?”

“I don't believe there is much.”

The tone in which Mrs. Evans spoke was so almost fierce, that it told her companion as well as words could have done of a mental strain of some sort, so great as to unfit her for enjoyment in such a place. Instantly there came to her heart a longing to speak a comforting word to this storm-tossed soul, whatever might have caused the storm. How could she do it? Where begin? Did the fair face, so flushed just now with her own inner feeling, belong to the King? If so, was the trial, or the burden, or the annoyance beyond his power of smoothing? She ventured a suggestion that, if answered frankly, would give her light.

“Oh, I don't know. Are not many of these people Christians, and are they ever other than

happy, at least in a degree, when they are doing that which seems to them a right and proper thing to do?"

Mrs. Evans looked utterly bewildered.

"Christians!" she said, repeating the word in a dazed way. "What can that have to do with an evening party?"

"My dear friend, what place in life is there that a Christian has not to do with Christ?"

"I don't believe I know what you mean."

The answer was so curiously simple and direct that it embarrassed the questioner. She hesitated what to say next. There was, however, such a troubled look on the child face turned toward her questioningly that she longed to speak comfort.

"Aren't you one of His own?"

She spoke the words tenderly, and something in the tone of the suggestion brought a rush of tears to the young wife's face.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, hurriedly. "I don't know *what* I am. It seems to me as though I am less than nothing. I haven't the kind of religion that you have—that is if you really mean that it has to do with every-

thing. I am a member of the Church, and I try to help the Church along a little, as much as I can, but I don't know how to do even that. And that makes me remember that I resolved, if ever I had an opportunity, to ask you what I am afraid you will consider an impertinent question, but I really don't mean to be impertinent; I ask it because I am in search of help."

She had turned the edge of the conversation in so skillful a manner that Mrs. Spafford was afraid they would not get back to real heart work; but she answered promptly and cordially.

"You may ask me anything you please; I will promise not to be disturbed in the least."

"Well, then, I beg your pardon, but Mr. Evans has a business acquaintance I believe with your husband, and knows the amount of his salary—all business men know those things of each other, I suppose"—spoken in an apologetic tone—"and what I couldn't help being perfectly bewildered over was your having money to give for the church debt, feeling sure that you *would* have it from month

to month, you know! I hope you will not think this unpardonable impertinence." She went on hurriedly: "I assure you it is not a matter of mere idle curiosity."

"I am sure of it, my friend. I am not in the least annoyed; but I want to tell you my answer illustrates what we were speaking of a few minutes ago, that has to do with Christ."

"What has?"

"Why, the money to give. I am not giving my own money; it is His, and he lets me spend it on his work. If it were mine I might be tempted to spend it on myself; but since it belongs to him, of course it is a mere act of common honesty to give it back to him."

Her listener looked amazed; it was as if she were listening to an unknown tongue. Then suddenly light broke over her face. "Do you mean that what you give is a sum left you in trust to use in this way?"

"That is really what it amounts to," Mrs. Spafford said, perceiving meanwhile that her companion did not understand, and that she must speak plainly. "It is simply this, my

friend; Mr. Spafford and I believe that the old direction, or rather law, about consecrating one-tenth of the income to the Lord, holds good to-day. It wasn't instituted as a type of Christ, you know, and therefore was not annulled as the types were, when he came. We think the tenth is as much his own to-day as it ever was, and therefore we use it for his work, he graciously permitting us to act according to our judgment as to where to spend it."

"But I don't see how you *can* do it," persisted Mrs. Evans. "Rich people can, of course, and people who are comfortably off, but if one can not live on his income and keep out of debt how has he a right to give part of it away?"

"Perhaps he hasn't — the part that belongs to him. But you and I are talking about the part that belongs to the Lord. I take it that I have no more right to use his money for my own needs than I would have to use yours, should you give me some in trust."

"Oh, well," and there was a shade of coldness in the tones of Mrs. Evans' voice. It

was evident that she judged her companion as a visionary person who could not or would not talk every day language. "That is pleasant to dream over, I know; but I don't understand it. So far as your argument is concerned, I can't see why it would not apply to all the money that we have; it is *all* the Lord's."

"No," said Mrs. Spafford, leaning forward and speaking eagerly. "See here. Suppose you were to give me a hundred dollars a year, with this explanation; I furnish you this, or the means of securing this, for your own needs; you are to spend it as carefully and as conscientiously as you can, for whatever you intelligently believe it ought to be spent, *with this exception* — one-tenth of it is to be given every year to the support of — whatever object you might choose to name. Would I have any right to use the entire sum and say I had no money for that cause?"

Mrs. Evans' eyes had a thoughtful, troubled look, the illustration was so simple that she could not fail to catch its force.

"I hardly know how to explain to you what

I think," she said hesitatingly. "But it seems to me if I had plenty of money, and power to do what I chose, I wouldn't impose such a restriction on your little, when it was difficult for you to make the ends meet."

"But suppose, dear friend, you were gifted with the power of foreseeing all my future, and knew it would be a world of good to me to become personally interested in the various benevolences of the day, and knew also that you could make the ninety dollars left me reach as far, or farther, than the one hundred?"

"Do you really mean that people who give systematically out of small incomes get along better than those who do not?"

"I really believe that the Lord, when he said, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom,' meant just what he said."

"I don't think many people believe in giving a tenth of their income. Do you?"

"Not many, perhaps; and yet I believe there is a larger proportion of such people than is generally supposed. But the main question,

after all, is whether the Lord Jesus believes in it. If you have not examined the Bible lately with special reference to this matter, suppose you and Mr. Evans take it up for discussion and study. I should so much like to know what conclusion you will arrive at."

A painful flush overspread Mrs. Evans' face, and, after a moment of embarrassed silence, she said, in a low voice:

"My husband is not a Christian, Mrs. Spafford. We never study the Bible together about any subject."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Spafford, and then she, too, was embarrassed; so much so, that it seemed to her there was really nothing left to say. Perhaps she had peculiar ideas. Be that as it may, she could not get away from the feeling that to be a married woman, and to have chosen for life one who could not sympathize fully with you on that most vital of all subjects, was a cause for great and lasting sorrow. What word of comfort was there that she could speak? What she felt like saying was: "How could you, how *could* you, loving Christ, link your very soul to one who loved

Him not!" But of what use to say this now. Would it not even be cruel to say it? She tried to gather her thoughts away from the revelation so painful to her, and think of something to say calculated to help this perturbed soul. How could she best remind her that there was all the more need for a close personal union between her and Christ, since the earthly union which was instituted in part to symbolize the heavenly had fallen below its mission?"

While she hesitated, and the troubled look on Mrs. Evans' face in no way lessened, Mr. Evans came over to their corner. A bow and a cordial greeting for Mrs. Spafford, but no time to tarry; his business was with his wife.

"Lovely evening, is it not, Mrs. Spafford? And this is a very pleasant entertainment. I hope you are enjoying it. Eva, my dear, come and fill out this set; two more are needed." Mrs. Evans arose reluctantly. She did not want to fill out the set; she did want to stay and talk with this quiet-faced woman, a woman whose face indicated no shadow of inward unrest. True, she did not understand her, and

had been disappointed somewhat in the turn that the conversation was taking, but she was by no means ready to leave it. Mr. Evans, however, spoke with the air of a man who was accustomed to have his wife answer promptly and with alacrity the call to dance, and led her away with a smile and a bow.

Once more Mrs. Spafford was alone, and she was still a trifle depressed. The evening was going in no sense according to her planning.

Among her hopes had been this one of an earnest talk with the young wife, whose troubles of various sorts were beginning to tell so clearly on her face. But the talk had come to naught; had refused to turn itself into the intended channel, and had finally been broken into by a dance! Some more unfinished work, with no chance to take up the scattered stitches, so far as she could see, and go on with it again :

“Content to fill a little space,
If Thou art glorified.”

The couplet said itself over and over in her thought. They had been favorite lines in her girlhood; the whole poem had been a favorite

with her mother. Well, she was content to fill the little spaces; it was what she had desired to do this very evening. Quiet corners, with here and there a word dropped for her Lord. Such had been her plan; but the plan had not seemed to work. She had tried, so she thought. And then she asked herself, *had* she tried, after all? Could she not have said better words to Will Coleman if her heart had been more in it? Could she not, even in that little moment, have helped the troubled wife — turned her directly to the great Helper. Was it possible that her effort had been half-hearted? That the blue muslin had obtruded itself in a way to distract her thoughts? It seemed to Mrs. Spafford a very discouraging evening.

But it was not yet over. She had just resolved upon leaving her retreat and mingling with the rest when it was again invaded. This time a middle-aged woman, with prematurely gray hair massed like a crown on her shapely head, and the simplest and quietest of toilets, less conspicuous than the blue muslin, dropped into the other corner of the *tete-a-tete*.

“I think I shall have to introduce myself,”

she said, pleasantly. "I am Mrs. Temple; a long-continued absence from home has been all that has prevented my calling on you; I know your husband."

Now what was there about this lady different from those with whom she was surrounded? Mrs. Spafford, even in the first moments of their acquaintance, tried to analyze the charm. Refined, cultured, exceedingly well-bred — so were all those about them — yet there was a subtle, undefinable difference; a something that drew the younger lady's heart, and made her realize even at this early moment that she was talking with one in sympathy. What a delightful half-hour it was that followed! Their talk took a wide range and touched upon a great variety of subjects. On every one they were in sympathy. Thinking of it afterward, Mrs. Spafford tried to recall how the lady made known her connection with the great family of Christ. She certainly did not say in so many words, "I am a Christian," and yet it was apparent from the very first. "She is a person to study," Mrs. Spafford told herself; "she carries the atmosphere about with her. She almost wears

a uniform; yet how simple and becoming it is."

"By the way," said the new acquaintance, half rising to leave her, then dropping back, "have you organized as a church yet, for the foreign work?"

"I am not sure that we are organized for anything unless it may be festivals," Mrs. Spafford said, laughing; "but I don't believe I know what you mean. Is there any special organization?"

"My friend, didn't you know that we women had taken a stride into the centre of things, and are moving on the ranks in a thoroughly organized and impressive manner?"

Mrs. Spafford promptly confessed her entire ignorance, whereupon her new friend launched forth into a description of the first beginnings of the "Woman's Board." She found Mrs. Spafford a ready listener and an eager questioner, promptly possessing herself of details with the manner of one who means to use them.

"But ten cents a month is such a very little sum," she presently objected; "how can you hope to accomplish much?"

“My dear, that is one of its beauties; not the accomplishing little, but the smallness of the sum; don't you see it admits almost every woman in Christendom? I mean of course the Christian women; even the very poor, whose hearts are in the work can come into fellowship with us, and when the thousands of Christian women rise up in force and pour in their offerings of ten cents a month, unless you have settled yourself with paper and pencil and computed it as I have, you cannot make yourself imagine what a grand sum total it will be!”

“I can have some faint conception of it,” the younger lady said, her eyes shining.

Here was a work in which she could participate; she thought of the box of jewels at home, waiting for a channel through which to flow; not all waiting, it is true, for channels were plenty, but she saw her way clear to join this grand movement, and her questioning grew more eager. How did they organize, and when meet? Who conduct the meetings? How were they conducted?

“I'll tell you,” Mrs. Temple said, increasing

in enthusiasm in proportion as her listener warmed with the subject. Come down to our next meeting; we meet on Thursday, in the Twelfth Street Church; there you will see and hear, and get more than I could give you in hours of talk. We have some grand ladies on Twelfth Street who have taken hold of the work with enthusiasm, and they will be just the ones to help you; oh, you must organize, of course; every church called by the Master's name can not surely do less for him than that."

"But, Mrs. Temple don't you find among your members some who are not in sympathy with the movement?"

As Mrs. Spafford asked that question their hostess flitted past them with a smile and bow, and the questioner may have had a vision of herself trying to interest Mrs. Bacon in the new movement.

Mrs. Temple's voice dropped lower, and she laid her ungloved hand impressively on her neighbor's.

"My dear friend, we do not find one-third, even *one-third*, of the Christian women of our

church interested enough to attend to what we are saying, and discover what we are trying to do! It is this fact that has roused me to my present pitch of enthusiasm; we have need of missionaries right here at home; we must evangelize the Church of Christ, and get it to take hold of its privileges!"

"I liked that plainly dressed woman with whom I was talking when you came up better than all the rest of them put together. She is simpler and plainer than the others, more like *my* kind of women. I fancy I could go to her house and enjoy a nice quiet little tea in a very plain way and be happy in hearing her talk. With most of them I felt a sort of not-at-home feeling."

This opinion Callie confided to her husband on their homeward walk. He, as he was much given to doing when a good deal astonished, indulged in the whistling of a strain or two of music before he answered:

"My small, plain, modest little woman, do you happen to know who the lady was with whom you were conversing, and who is 'your kind of people?'"

“I only know that she is Mrs. Temple, and belongs in the Twelfth Street Church.

“Let me also inform you that her husband is Junius J. Temple, Sr., the wealthiest man in the length and breadth of the city; and their house in which you propose to take that ‘plain, quiet tea,’ is much the finest one that can be found within a hundred miles of us.”

“I don’t care,” his wife said, laughing; “nevertheless, I felt at home with her. I didn’t think of money in connection with her, nor of my blue dress. I can’t describe to you the difference, but some of the people kept me all the time thinking about my blue muslin, instead of attending to what they were saying.”

CHAPTER IX.

“YET LACKEST THOU —— ”



GREAT trial had come to Mrs. Spafford. Even the formidable one of having to say good-by to her husband for the space of thirty-six hours, and spend an entire night alone in her pretty box of a house! The firm by whom he was employed, having flinty hearts, had directed that the husband should take the first morning train to a certain inland town, there to transact some business, and the earliest return train he could hope to make was the evening one, thirty-six hours afterward!

Years afterward Mr. and Mrs. Spafford were wont to look back upon this first sharp experi-

ence with laughter, that it had really been so sharp. Not that they learned to like separation one whit better than on that first day, but simply that all the strong, stern lessons of life were behind instead of before them, with their wealth of discipline, and they had come to take calmly, philosophically, even thankfully, because they were no worse, the little every-day crosses that at first seemed so hard. But this first day in which Mrs. Spafford ate her lunch alone as usual, but without being able to look forward to the six-thirty car, and the cheerful little dinner that she should have ready for two, seemed to her one week long.

They had had a great time, her husband and herself, planning for that lonely night. Callie Howell had spent many a night alone in her boarding-house, up in the third story, almost as far removed from neighbors as she was in this little box, with neighbors close on every side. But Callie Howell alone and unprotected, and Mrs. Warren Spafford with a husband to look after her comfort, were two very different beings. The said husband very peremptorily decided that she must on no account stay alone.

Then they cast about them for the proper one to stand her protector during that long night.

Viewed in the light of a protector, the one whom they finally selected, or, more properly speaking, who selected herself, was an amusement to Callie. It happened that Jennie West was among their afternoon callers, and on being told of the circumstances, promptly offered her services as night watchman. Thus it came about that on Thursday evening it was Jennie, who, with beautiful unbound hair flowing far below her waist, sat in Mr. and Mrs. Spafford's private room and talked, while Mrs. Spafford moved around closing blinds, turning down fastenings, and examining bolts and key-holes in that restless manner which comes over lovingly-guarded wives when the protector is away.

"Oh, do sit down," said Jennie, at last. "You have slipped that bolt and slipped it back again three times. I'll warrant it is as safe now as you can make it. Do you fidget around this way when Mr. Spafford is at home?"

Whereupon Mrs. Spafford admitted, with a shame-faced laugh that that particular bolt had not been drawn before since they had occupied the house.

"Well, then, what are you about to-night? I didn't know you had a cowardly streak in your nature. Come and sit down; I want to talk with you. I will be responsible for any robber who comes through that key-hole without your looking at it again."

Mrs. Spafford laughed and came away from the key-hole, and let bolts and locks alone; but she did not sit down. She felt too restless and lonely to settle herself for a talk with Jennie. She stood before the dressing bureau and began to draw the pins out of her own hair, and Jennie, apparently considering her as settled as she could be under the circumstances, commenced her "talk."

"Callie, have you seen Will Coleman since the evening of Mrs. Bacon's party?"

"Only in the distance. I bowed to him at the foot of Green Avenue yesterday."

"Well, did you know he was half vexed with you? He thinks you were unnecessarily

hard on him the other night. You are apt to be severe, you know, Callie."

"Am I? Still, I can't recall anything I said to Will that sounded hard. Did he particularize?"

"Why, he said you called him a hypocrite, outright."

"I guess not, Jennie."

"Well, a Pharisee, then — something of the sort. You as good as told him that he had too high an opinion of himself. He said perhaps he had; he knew some other people who were troubled, in his estimation, with the same fault; but it wasn't exactly the thing to tell them so to their faces. Oh, he was real cross. I had all I could do to make him believe that you couldn't have meant a word you said."

Mrs. Spafford turned an amused face toward her champion. She was so indifferent as to what Will Coleman thought of her personally, that she could afford to laugh.

"My dear Jennie," she said, "did you consider that complimentary to me? Don't you know I *always* mean what I say? Will is evidently a little confused in his statements. I

said not a word to him about hypocrites or Pharisees. By the way, there is a shade of difference in the meaning of the two words, don't you think? What I did was to refer him to a certain Bible verse which I said reminded me of him when I read it. If he sees more personal likeness there than I do, surely I am not to blame, and he should not attribute the knowledge to me. I am sorry I offended him. Tell him to come and see me, and explain what ought to be apologized for, and I'll attend to it. What I tried to do was to have a serious talk with him; he disappoints me in so many ways.”

“Disappoints you! I don't know why he should. You must be very hard to suit if Will Coleman disappoints you. He is one of the most moral young men I know.”

“Jennie,” said Mrs. Spafford, after a thoughtful pause, “I want to ask you a question now: if you think it is rude you need not answer it, you know. Are you engaged to Will Coleman?”

“Engaged! What an idea! And he a clerk on a starving salary. Why, he can hardly sup-

port himself. You don't suppose he thinks of marrying?"

"My dear, his salary is larger by several hundreds than my husband's."

"Oh, well, *you!* People are not all like you. I never could manage things as you do — plan about every match I struck, and all that sort of thing. Callie, why on earth don't you burn gas? The idea of your poking around here with a horrid, ill-smelling kerosene lamp, when the gas is in every room! Now, what is that for?"

"Economy," said Mrs. Spafford, with a smiling face. "If you were a housekeeper you would be aware that the gas in this region is extremely expensive, and makes really a startling difference in the week's accounts. But my friend, don't be guilty of slander. This is a little gem of a lamp; never thinks of smelling badly unless some ignorant person turns the wick too low, or ill-treats it in some way."

"Oh, well now, it's horrid, and you needn't pretend you don't think so. The idea of having to fill and trim the vile thing! I tell you what it is, Callie Howell, I think you have a harder

time than when you were a poor school-teacher and took care of yourself. And you see I never could do it for anybody. I'm not used to it. It isn't as though I had money of my own. That horrid life interest which my mother has just spoils everything; she can't give away any of her money, even to *me*. Oh, there's no use in talking; I never could be a poor man's wife.”

“I by all means advise you never to become one until you have changed your present views. There are trials in the lot which you would undoubtedly find hard to bear.”

“There now, Callie Howell! I don't think it will do for you to talk about folks being hypocrites. Every time I have hinted at your position as being cramped or discouraging, a great deal harder than you were accustomed to, you have put on the most complacent and provoking smile, as if you were the most satisfied of human beings, and here you as good as own that you are sorry you ever undertook it.”

Mrs. Spafford turned entirely from the toilet bureau and let her hair fall suddenly, and gave

Miss Jennie the benefit of a pair of dangerously flashing eyes, as she said :

“ You need to give very close attention to what I say, Jennie, otherwise it is unsafe to talk to you. Your habit of seizing a piece of a sentence and jumping at a conclusion makes it difficult to carry on a conversation. I hinted nothing of the kind. I advised, and do advise most earnestly, that you never marry a poor man until you change your present views of things ; or, in other words, until you value wealth less and hearts more. For myself, I am not in the habit of spreading abroad my satisfaction ; but it seems necessary to speak very plainly to you, and I have no hesitation in telling you that I would have married Warren Spafford if his salary had been *three* hundred a year instead of six, and that every day of my life I go on my knees and thank God that I am his happy wife. And I expect to thank him, through whatever trial or perplexity that may come, and I presume we shall have perplexities and trials ; I never supposed that married life was made up of continuous beds of roses ; but whatever happens or can happen

I shall continue to thank God that I am Warren Spafford's wife. Until you can be sure of such a feeling as this toward the man whose name you are to bear, without regard to the accidents of wealth or poverty, I do most earnestly advise you never to marry. Am I understood?"

"Bless my heart," said Jennie West. "I do believe, Callie Howell, that you would have made a good actress! I didn't know that you had so much fire. What a pity you couldn't have had the chance to try it. I shouldn't wonder if you could have made your fortune."

The blazing-eyed young matron turned back to her glass and her hair, the light dying out of her eyes, and her mouth breaking into a smile; she believed she had been a simpleton for showing, or trying to show, Jennie West a glimpse of her heart.

"So you do not mean to marry Will Coleman?" She asked the question in her usual, quiet tone.

"Not until he asks me, at least," with a nervous little laugh. "What makes you talk so much about his marrying? I believe

he has as little idea of it as I have; he knows he cannot afford to support a wife. It would make him miserable to bring a woman down from a station in which she was fitted to shine, and oblige her to live from hand to mouth, as you and Mr. Spafford are obliged to do. He as good as said so."

"Mr. Spafford and I are very much obliged to him," the wife said, with curling lip. Then, after another thoughtful pause—"Jennie, I don't know but you might mistake my meaning, in one respect; I am far from wishing to see you the wife of Will Coleman; and I should think there ought to be insuperable objection to him from another point of view than his poverty."

"I can't imagine why"—*Jennie's* eyes flashed now—"there isn't a more perfect gentleman in the entire city. He has had the advantages of good society all his life if he is poor, and he has a real good education. I'm sure people consider him unexceptionable."

"Is he a Christian?"

“Oh, well, he isn’t a church-member, if that is what you mean.”

“It isn’t what I mean. I am talking about being a Christian. It has always seemed to me almost as plain as the ten commandments that the Bible pronounced against a Christian marrying an unconverted person.”

“I think that is all nonsense!” burst forth Jennie, with burning cheeks. “How many people do it? Half of our church, I do believe, is made up of women whose husbands hardly ever come to *church* even; they are not members, anyway; and yet they support the church with their money, and all that.”

“My dear Jennie, does your Bible read, ‘Do as half of our church does about these matters,’ or does it individualize responsibilities?”

“Well, I don’t care. If I wanted to marry a man I would, whether he was a church-member or not.”

“Whether he was a Christian or not, do you mean?”

“Yes, I do.”

“But, Jennie, you don’t mean that you

would not try first to discover what the Bible said about the matter, and what Christ wanted you to do?"

"The Bible doesn't say anything about it."

"How can two walk together unless they be agreed?"

"We are agreed," said Jennie, softly, with deeply flushing cheeks. "I never saw any person who suited me more perfectly, met my ideal more fully, than Will Coleman. And as for his being a member of the church, what difference does that make? Look how regular he is in attendance; always at church and at prayer-meeting; he told me himself that he hadn't missed a Wednesday evening since he came up to the branch store, and that he was a regular stand-by; the people depended on him as much as they did on the minister. Look at that for an example! Bless me! I've missed half a dozen Wednesday evenings this spring, and Will told me himself that you and Mr. Spafford were both away one evening."

"Yes," said Mrs. Spafford, quietly; "my husband was detained down town until nearly

nine o'clock, and I had no one to go with.”

“That’s it,” (spoken in triumphant tones); “church-members are always being detained, but you never hear Will Coleman making such excuses. I heard him myself once decline an invitation to a club-meeting on the plea that it was prayer-meeting evening.”

“And boasted over it to the next half-hearted Christian he met, I am almost certain.” This Mrs. Spafford thought, but did not say. What was the use in talking with Jennie?

The next question was put hesitatingly, as one who was feeling her ground:

“Jennie, are you making Will a subject of special and persistent prayer?”

“Of course I pray for him; I do for all my friends, though I think this minute he is a great deal better than I am; I need his prayers ever so much more than he needs mine. I don’t know what you mean by ‘persistent prayer.’ It sounds rather irreverent to me.”

Then there came to Mrs. Spafford’s heart the same doubtful twinge that she had felt so often before for Jennie; as to whether

she herself had really the root of the matter in her, or was only, as she was so fond of expressing it, a "church-member." But there was still one question that she wanted to ask; she had been trying to get to it all the evening.

"Are you never a — well — a little troubled about one of Will's habits, lest it may grow on him?"

"No, I never was troubled for a minute about any habit of Will Coleman's. What do you mean?"

Then did Mrs. Spafford wish she had not spoken, but now she must go on.

"You know at these large parties that he attends he frequently takes wine? Have you never feared it might grow into a habit?"

"I wonder who doesn't! There isn't a gentleman in our set, so far as I know, who refuses it. Troubled at that! The idea! Callie Howell, I believe you would like to put all young men into a rose-lined work-box and keep the key yourself!"

"I would like to put their names on a

total abstinence pledge," she said firmly. "And I don't hesitate to say that I tremble for all young men whose names are not there, unless indeed their feet are anchored on the Rock, and their paths shielded by Christ himself; the pledge is only a crutch of course."

Jennie West was getting very angry.

"For my part," she said, haughtily, "I would just as soon a man would drink wine as to smoke cigars. I don't see the difference between them that you seem to."

Mrs. Spafford's cheeks glowed hotly now, but she steadied her voice into calmness.

"Yes Jennie, I see a difference, and I think, so do you; but I do not uphold smoking, you very well know."

"Yet you married a man who smokes cigars every day of his life; a dozen of them, for what I know. I wonder you would be guilty of marrying him since you are so particular."

"I didn't know it."

The very instant that she had said those words she wished them unsaid. Well she might.

“Didn’t know it!” repeated Jennie. “Well upon my word! He deceived you, then, this paragon of a husband! and here you have been rhapsodizing to me over the bliss of your married state! Really, Callie, I don’t think you ought to preach any more to-night.”

The hair was bound up long ago for the night, and Mrs. Spafford had nothing to do with her eyes but to give Jennie the benefit of the blazing light in them but her voice was quiet enough.

“Perhaps it would be better not to talk any more to-night, since we seem incapable of understanding each other. You ought to know that my husband is not a man given to deception of any sort, at any time. He has grown up from very young manhood with the habit of smoking one — not a dozen — but *one* cigar a day. If he thought anything about it, he supposed I knew it, but his education has been different from mine in this matter, and he regards it as a trivial thing. I do not, and had I known of it before we were married, we should have talked about it together; since

I did not, there was no way by which he could discover my views. But *you* know, and *I* know, that there is a wide difference between smoking a cigar a day, and drinking a glass of wine a day. You and I know that earnest Christian men of to-day do the one with impunity, and the other almost never. I think neither are right, but I make a wide path between the degrees of wrong. But, Jennie, even if your sneer was a true one, are not the cases very different? You are a younger woman than I by several years; you are not only unmarried, but, according to your own statement, unbound by any pledges, or even intentions; while I am married. What is proper for me to say in friendly warning or suggestion to you, about one who is only a friend, might become a gross insult for you to say to me about the man whom I have sworn to love and honor as long as my life lasts, might it not?”

Said Jennie: “Let’s go to bed. I’m sick and tired of the whole subject.”

And they went to bed.

CHAPTER X.

“THEY MEASURING THEMSELVES BY THEMSELVES ARE NOT WISE.”



MEANTIME, could you have looked in at Will Coleman's room, you would have found him, one evening, reaching to the row of walnut shelves which contained his books, and bringing therefrom a handsomely bound copy of the Holy Bible. He surveyed it with a critical eye, then blew the dust carefully from its gilt edges, commenting the while after this fashion:

“My landlady doesn't look after dust much more carefully than she does after some other things; that's a fact. I really wish she would

take better care of these books; I don't believe they have been disturbed in a week!"

Then he opened it, naturally first, to the fly-leaves; there had been times when it annoyed him to have the habit of looking at the fly-leaf so frequently that it had learned apparently to linger of its own accord. There was the writing, a trifle irregular, as though by a hand which, from age or hard work or emotion, trembled a little:

"To my dear son William, on his nineteenth birthday. From his loving mother, Eunice Coleman." Then, underneath, still in the same, somewhat unsteady hand: "Search the Scriptures,' that they may 'make you wise unto salvation,' is the constant prayer of your mother."

It is a sad truth that, irreproachable life as he had lived, there had been times when Will Coleman wished heartily that his Bible would get over its habit of opening to that leaf; for he was uncomfortably conscious that in certain things, and things which she considered vital, he disappointed his mother. He opened quickly into the middle of the book, having no desire

on this particular evening, to linger over home memories ; besides, he was curious to know what verse in the Bible he reminded Mrs. Spafford of. It was several days since he had made a memorandum of the verse ; matters which he considered of more importance had for the time being driven it from his thoughts ; now, although he was dressing for an evening entertainment, having come in contact again with the memorandum, he paused in the act of fastening his cravat, and searched for the verse. Then he read it over slowly, carefully, with a deeply flushing face, and presently, with a curling lip :

“ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself : ‘ God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.’ ”

Not exactly his language, to be sure, and certainly never addressed to God ! Yet this young man was fully conscious of possessing a sort of exultant feeling when he measured his fair life with that of many — he was almost inclined to say most young men. He knew it was irreproachable from a dozen standpoints, where others, who made more pretensions than

he, failed. "I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess."

Had not Mrs. Spafford more than once heard him say, with a complacent air and smile, that he was as regular in attendance at the young people's prayer-meeting and the general prayer-meeting as the minister himself? Had he not, in the presence of her husband, only last week, said, with a smile and a bow, "Certainly, I always lay aside a trifle for that purpose," in response to a paper which was presented him for some benevolent object. A paper, too, that had just been peremptorily, not to say haughtily, refused by his employer, himself a church-member? Young Coleman felt the blood coursing through his veins in a very unpleasant manner.

"Well," he told himself, "what if I have said those things? Aren't they true, I should like to know? What does Callie Howell mean by calling me a hypocrite? Whatever may be said of me, I certainly am not that. Thank goodness, I make no professions that I don't live up to; and that is more than can be said of two-thirds of the church-members." There

it was again: he thought of it even while he was excusing himself to himself: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men." Was he actually disposed to say that to God? If he prayed at all, would such be the language of his prayer? Strangely fascinated by the simple story, he read on:

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Then all the pride in this young man's heart rose up in rebellion, and his lip curled in scorn. He did not believe that he was a sinner! That is, not much of a sinner; a nice respectable one he was, he supposed, judged by certain narrow theological rules, but not such an one as would make the language of that prayer applicable to him. Certainly, if to be what people like his mother and Callie Howell called Christians, it was necessary to use such language as

that, he couldn't see how he could ever accommodate them by being one. "For I honestly don't feel it, so how can I say it?" he said aloud, adding, "Thank goodness, I'm no hypocrite." Then he closed the Bible with a bang, and went on with his interrupted toilet in hot haste, and it was that evening that Jennie West had been obliged to labor with him to convince him that Mrs. Spafford had not meant a word she said.

Then was this the end of Mrs. Spafford's effort to speak a plain word to the young man? It was by no means the end, though Will Coleman did his best to make an end to the matter. He grew angry exceedingly over the persistency with which those verses clung to him, starting up to repeat themselves on the slightest provocation, until all comfort in his superiority was well-nigh quoted out of this young man.

It was, perhaps, nearly a week afterward that he seated himself deliberately in his room, one evening, with a determination to think this whole matter out and be done with it.

What was there in it all that so annoyed

him? When he really sifted out the truth, Mrs. Spafford had not told him he was hypocritical, she had merely said he reminded her of the man who was better than his neighbors; no, who *thought* himself better. This was a sore spot; here he winced. Was he, then, mistaken in his estimate of himself, and did his better self really recognize it, and did that make the hurt? In truth, Will Coleman was puzzled over his own heart!

“I *am* better,” he boldly declared, and he said it aloud. “Now, what’s the use in mincing matters? I’m ahead of all those fellows who belong to the church and they know it; why shouldn’t I? Why should I be expected to go around smiting my breast, and calling myself a miserable sinner, when I am no such thing?”

No sooner had he said the words than that hot, convicting blush rolled into his cheek again. Away back in his childhood there had been a Sabbath afternoon when he stood at his mother’s knee and recited his verse, preparatory to going to Sabbath-school:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."

"Willie," the mother had said, "do you understand that verse?"

"Yes'm," had Willy replied with the delicious indifference of childhood to the deeper meanings of the truth. But the mother had continued:

"You see, Willie, whatever else you may do, however obedient you may be to mamma, and kind to the poor, and good-natured and all that, if you don't love God, love him so much that you will want to please him all the time, want to find out his will, it all goes for nothing."

This idea in varied language had been taught him so thoroughly that there was no use in these, his later days, of trying to ignore it, and act as one who had not been taught. The question was, did he wish to swing loose from the teachings of his childhood as one who had grown beyond them? No, he had no wish of this kind.

Fortunately for him, his education had been

fair, and he was possessed of fair average talent, was an average logician, had looked into the various isms of the day, deep enough to see their utter want of logic and common-sense, and had smiled in a superior manner on them all. "A man who is an infidel is a fool," had been his composed and satisfactory method of sweeping away all these ideas from his brain. He went farther than this, he took rather more than a superficial look into the evidences of Christianity, the authenticity of the Scriptures, and kindred studies, the consequence being that he asserted emphatically, "the man who rejects the Bible is a fool!" On occasion he could argue in favor of these positions, and argue well. He was rather fond of arguing. Is it strange, then, when he deliberately for almost the first time in his life sat himself down to give the matter earnest thought, that a voice at his elbow seemed to repeat the sentence: "Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee?"

Was it a bit of bewildering sophistry, or was it solemn truth and the deep conviction of his own conscience that seemed to oblige him,

reasoning from analogy, to say: "The man who, believing fully in the Bible, and in Christ as he is revealed in the Bible, fails to follow his plain directions, is a fool!" Was it possible that he, Will Coleman, the gentleman and the logician, was obliged by the force of his own logic to condemn his hitherto much admired course in life? He shifted his position impatiently and tried to rid himself of his conclusion. "What folly!" he said aloud. "What utter folly, anyway! As if a man could *will* himself to love a being. I *don't* love God; I suppose there is really no doubt of that; such being the case, how am I to help it?" But those Bible verses, recited at his faithful mother's knee, recited again and again to a faithful Sabbath-school teacher, but dimly understood then, even with the most careful explanation, clear as sunlight to-day, trooped up before him. "A new heart will I give you, saith the Lord, and a new spirit will I put within you." "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." Will Coleman had been entirely familiar with the theory of conversion.

almost since his babyhood. He knew perfectly well that his affections, so far as God was concerned, were dead, that he was powerless to move them, that they needed a resurrection, and that it was the Spirit that quickened. He knew also, that this quickening, according to the unalterable laws of the unchanging God would never take place until he himself deliberately went to God through Christ, and asked for new life in his soul. "Ask and ye shall receive," he knew and believed that it was just as simple as that. Yet he had never asked! Why not? The simple and unpalatable truth that stared him in the face was because he did not desire. He actually did not *want* to love God.

Then he shifted his argument, or tried to. "Well," pettishly, as a spoiled child might answer one who was arguing with him, "how can I help that? If I don't want to, I don't. Shall I pretend that I do?" Even as he said it, his face flushed, and he was sensible of being glad that no one was by to hear such folly. Instantly his reasoning mind took up a parallel and showed it to him:

"I don't want to go to the store to-day; shall I then go, and thus be guilty of pretending that I do? Is this matter of going to the store a duty? If it is, shall I be so puerile as to shake it off, and stay at home, because I happen not to want to go?" What have whims to do with a reasonable man's business? Since he was a reasoning being, could he avoid seeing where such logic led him? "I ought to go to God on my knees, and tell him frankly that I see the way clear enough; I see that I am not a Christian, and that I ought to be, and that I have no special desire to be, and let him do with me as he will. Shall I do it?"

Awful question! "I ought to give back this thousand dollar draft which I have stolen. Shall I?"

When a young man reaches the point where he will deliberately say, "I ought," and then questions, "Shall I?" he is trying to stand on slippery places. Not for one instant would Will Coleman have put the claims of the owner of a stolen draft in the balance and weighed them thus, but the claims of the Son of God he hesitated and argued over. As he walked

the floor and thought of the matter, he found himself unwilling to say "I will do it." And yet, so clear was his sense of danger, almost equally unwilling to say, "I will not do it." When Satan cannot succeed in making deliberate decisions on his side, he at once suggests compromise. "What is the use in trying to settle such an important question as this to-night? Suppose I sleep over it? Suppose I talk it over with some one to-morrow? Some Christian?"

"What for?" asked his conscience. "Isn't the way perfectly plain to you?"

"Hush!" said he sternly, to his conscience. "I *will not* be driven. To-morrow evening will be the prayer-meeting; I will go, as usual; I will talk the whole matter over with some one in a reasonable manner, and settle it once for all."

"Suppose you make that long-promised call on Mrs. Spafford," hinted a voice which he did not recognize as conscience. "You have always respected her religion, and you know you respect her brains."

"You don't want to talk with Mrs. Spafford,"

said that mysterious other voice which seemed somehow to be gaining control of him. "She is almost fanatical in her notions. You know that Jennie West laughs at them, friend and admirer though she is. What is to hinder your having a serious talk with Jennie West? You never give her any opportunity to talk about these matters with you. What right have you to conclude that she is not as deeply interested in you as Mrs. Spafford is, though she doesn't keep harping on the subject all the while. Mrs. Spafford, remember, as good as called you a hypocrite. Perhaps if you should go to her she would think you were just talking for effect."

"I'll do it," he said aloud, relieved that some decision had been reached, ignoring meantime the last suggestion, because he did not want to look closely into this plan of talking the matter over with any one, for fear it would be made apparent to his own inner consciousness that effect or delay, or something of that sort, was precisely what he was after.

"I'll write a note to Miss Jennie and ask her to accompany me to the prayer-meeting to-

morrow evening. She never goes when she is up here ; I suppose because she has no one to go with. Mrs. Evans never thinks of going. She is another of your church-members ! Jennie will be glad to go, and then she and I will talk this thing up. I'd like to have Jennie talk to me. I suppose Mrs. Spafford has given her reason to think that I am not a safe person to talk with about these matters, she has such a poor opinion of me."

And there floated through this strange young man's brain a notion that for one reason he could almost say he would like to be a Christian, just to show people a few things. If he ever *was* converted, he told himself, he would certainly show that same Mrs. Spafford that he was altogether a different sort of a Christian from her cigar-smoking husband, who could be detained in the city until after time for prayer-meeting just as well as not, and who staid at home from church on Sunday with headache occasionally. He always had a sneer for Sunday headache Christians, did this young man, and there is an excusing word to be spoken for him, too. During his short life he

had come in contact with so many of them! Not that Warren Spafford by any means belonged to the class with which he had been familiar, but it is often the case in this narrow-visioned world that people are classified who do not in the least belong together.


Young Coleman ceased his nervous walk up and down his somewhat narrow quarters, opened his writing-desk, selected the most delicately-perfumed sheet of note paper he possessed, and proceeded, with a chirography that was almost as beautiful as copper-plate to prepare his note :

“*Miss Jennie West* : Dear Friend : — Can you be prevailed upon to give me the pleasure of your company to-morrow evening? — Bothersation!” That word is not included in the formula that was being written. It was announced in explosive tones by the writer, the immediate cause being that, as he had the misfortune to be located in the second story back of the boarding house, where the gas did not come, he was making use of a kerosene lamp, which at that inopportune moment suddenly dimmed, halted irresolutely for a second.

then disappeared, leaving him in total darkness. After which, as a matter of dire necessity, the hour being late, he stumbled and grumbled himself to bed.

CHAPTER XI.

PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR.

T was with a great many little inward flutters of satisfaction that Mrs. Spafford went about her small house one Thursday, making preparations for leaving it to its own quiet for a few hours. Perhaps it is one of the compensations to those who live simple, quiet lives, that small pleasures are intensified and enjoyed with a zest that persons who live in excitement know nothing about. The mere going down town of a pleasant afternoon, and returning again with her husband, was an event in Mrs. Spafford's life, for street-car fares were guarded carefully, therefore it fell to her lot to go rarely.

She had determined, however, to avail herself of Mrs. Temple's invitation and attend the missionary meeting. Despite her husband's revelation as to Mrs. Temple's social status, the youthful matron felt that one of the thrills of satisfaction proceeded from the thought of meeting that lady again.

"I can't help it if she is rich," she said to herself, with a happy smile, as she arrayed herself for the street. "She is very pleasant and cordial, and I am going to like her just as much as I want to. What an absurd idea that because she is rich and I am poor, there should necessarily be a gulf between us! Besides, I'm not poor; I hardly know of a person who is less so."

I am not sure that I can explain to you what a sense of satisfaction it gave Mrs. Spafford to be greeted among that company of Christian women. Directly she entered the church she felt it—that subtle atmosphere of congeniality. She was at home. She was in sympathy with the words that were being read from the Bible. She was in sympathy with the prayer that followed—the sweet,

clear-voiced petitioner was her new-found friend, Mrs. Temple. As she rose from her knees she rejoiced over the thought that all these grand, good women were friends. The truth is, if you are in sympathy with the atmosphere which surrounded her, you will know all about what she felt in being led into the circle of Christian sisterhood. If you are not, no words of mine can possibly make it plain to you. Still, life did not go smoothly even here. It transpired that there was something, some duty to perform, which in itself Mrs. Spafford judged must be a severe ordeal; for, during the singing of the hymn,

“Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there’s a cross for every one,
And there’s a cross for me,”

Mrs. Temple slipped softly from one to another and preferred some request, which Mrs. Spafford, interested as she was in the hymn, and joining in it as she did with the full strength of her cultured voice, could not but

see met with demur, with shruggings of shoulders, with distressed negatives, and, as the petitioner plead, the refusals became more emphatic in manner, until one and another, and yet another lady had been interviewed, with the same result. What could be wanted? She was soon destined to know, for Mrs. Temple, raised her head with a troubled air, and looking about her irresolutely as they began the third verse of the hymn, spied her new acquaintance and came speedily toward her.

“I’m so glad to see you,” she whispered, with a cordial hand-clasp. “And I do wonder if the dear Lord has not sent you to me just now as a helper? Dear Mrs. Spafford, I am in an embarrassing dilemma. Several of our ladies, who are nearly always present, strangely enough are absent this afternoon, and I have really no one on whom to depend. Wouldn’t you be so kind—I know it is too hard to ask you, at your first coming, and you an entire stranger in our midst—but if you would feel that you *could* offer prayer with us I would be so glad.”

Now, I shall have to admit to you that Mrs. Spafford was startled and embarrassed. It was a new experience to her. She felt the hot blood mounting in waves to her forehead, and knew that the hand which Mrs. Temple still held trembled visibly.

“Poor child,” said Mrs. Temple soothingly, as one who was more than twenty years her senior had a right to speak to the young matron. “It is too hard; I ought not to ask you.”

Yet Mrs. Spafford’s embarrassment did not proceed from the source to which it was credited. She was astonished and perplexed to discover that the cross which was pressing so heavily on this company of Christian women was simply to present their desires to their loving, sympathizing, all-powerful Lord! How *could* they shrink from it in this way? What was there that should be expected to so disturb her? Was it something different from prayer—more than prayer that they wanted? Was it expected that a missionary prayer should make wise reference to the different mission stations and their work, and present intelligently the special needs of each field?

That indeed she could not do, and she recognized a chance for embarrassment in the admission of the fact that she, a woman and a Christian in this nineteenth century, was not posted. But then, immediately she reflected that prayer was different from any other exercise, in that the one addressed needed no information, was thoroughly acquainted with the needs of all mission fields and the desires of all human hearts, and yet had chosen that the heart-cry should go out from his children, "O Lord, thou knowest. Do unto us even as thou hast said."

Mrs. Spafford, though lamentably conscious of her ignorance as regarded the work of foreign missions, yet knew that her heart desired their greatest good, and was acquainted with the One to whom to bring their case. Why, then, should it be considered so serious a thing? Thought is not unlike chain lightning, you know, and while they were singing one line of the hymn, now alarmingly near its close, this woman had gone over the ground at which I have hinted, and come back to her starting-point.

“What is it you want, Mrs. Temple? A specific prayer for some special mission and its workers, mentioning them by name? Because, if you do, I am ashamed to tell you that I do not understand the work well enough to lead you.”

“Oh, my dear child, no! We do not want an address in the form of a prayer; we want simply to have our hearts brought close to the heart of Christ, and his help asked for this meeting this day.”

“Then I will be glad to pray,” said Mrs. Spafford, simply, and she did not know that she was saying a strange thing. She had lived in another world than theirs; she had been brought up with a mother, with whom to pray was to talk with a dear and familiar Friend. She had attended from her earlier girlhood a weekly prayer-meeting with her mother where the ladies prayed together precisely as they talked together, feeling no more embarrassment in the one instance than in the other. She had begun by feeling a degree of nervous tremor, it is true, at the sound of her own voice before so many; but there had been no great gulf

placed between the thought of *conversing* before others and the thought of *praying* before them. Indeed, Callie Howell, when a girl of sixteen, had expressed herself naively to her mother after this fashion :

“ Why, mother I would rather pray than say anything to the people about any particular subject, because one cannot help thinking that they may criticise the way you are saying it, or the thought itself, but of course I remember that Jesus Christ never criticises my prayer, and that the people are all engaged in speaking to him at the same time, and therefore are not thinking of me.”

As a teacher it had for years been her privilege to lead young ladies' prayer-circles ; present for many a timid heart its cry for help, its burden of sorrow, until prayer had come to be to her what it ought to be to every human heart, a privilege and a joy. Her embarrassment you will perceive arose simply and solely from astonishment over the thought that she was expected to consider a cross and a trial what was to her a joy. A curious suggestion that perhaps she ought not to feel so ready to offer,

that which others, so much older and wiser, and in every sense better than herself, visibly shrank from, presented itself to haunt her. If Satan could command a moment of admiration from any of his tempest-tossed victims, it would surely be on account of his unwearying ingenuity.

Of course the matter was all settled in much less time than it has taken me to present its phases to you, and Mrs. Spafford received Mrs. Temple's relieved, "Oh, thank you, my dear," and she had heard her name called as one who would lead them in prayer, and she had bowed with the rest, and for the first two or three sentences her heart kept up its questioning tumult, and well-nigh drove her from her refuge. Then the force of habit and the force of will asserted themselves—nay, rather the Spirit brooded over her, "helped her infirmities," and she was enabled to shut them all out, all the questionings and embarrassments, and come as a child to its father with her simple call, "putting him in remembrance" of all the great array of promises wherewith he had

pillared her faith since her reasoning powers began.

The prayer was very simple, very indefinite so far as regarded the special mission field under consideration. But even here the suppliant was true to her true self, and made bold confession: "Dear Lord, thou knowest that I know almost nothing about this great Africa which we remember before thee to-day. I confess with shame my ignorance of what has been done or is doing, or of what thy ministers or handmaidens stand in special need of there, save that I know they need our prayers; but these thy servants who have taken up the work here at home know all about the field, and all its pressing needs and obstacles and triumphs, and I pray thee take from each heart before thee its special burden for this portion of thy field, and give to them a song of assurance that thou wilt 'remember thy covenant.'"

I wonder how many of "those his servants" gathered in that room, listening to that prayer, felt their cheeks burn with the thought that they knew extremely little about Africa or its missionaries, and were not conscious of any

special burdens for the Lord to lift. What was there in that prayer to move so many of those ladies to tears?

It was as simple as a child's and as direct. Perhaps therein lay the secret. It had its reflex influence on Mrs. Spafford. She was mortified and grieved to realize that she knew so little about the foreign work. The barest general outlines were all that she felt safe in referring to. The Gaboon Mission, with its different stations and strange-sounding names, were all unfamiliar; the names and circumstances of the missionaries stationed there she only knew in a shadowy sort of way. Even "dear Mr. Bushnell," to whom some of the ladies so constantly referred in their reports, as though he were inseparably intertwined with every fiber of the mission, was a name known to Mrs. Spafford only by seeing brief extracts from his letters at long intervals. Her's had been in a sense a missionary life, in that she had been for years spreading the news, and yet she realized now, as never before, that she had confined her thoughts and her aims almost entirely to the home work. So had her mother before her.

“Why did mother do it?” she asked herself with glowing cheeks, as the talk went on, for those ladies, strange to say, were ready to read their papers, and outline their maps, and give their incidents, and talk glibly and well of the work in Africa, although they could not pray.

All this seemed strange to Mrs. Spafford; to her, prayer was the first letter in the alphabet of missions, and these ladies almost seemed to have skipped it, and reached the middle. “Not that they do not pray, of course!” she said, horrified at her own conclusion. “But then it seems so strange that they know so much about it all, and can talk together so well, and can not talk with Him!”

Then she tried to find explanation for her mother’s course. Surely she had been interested in foreign mission work. For what portion of the Lord’s vineyard was there with which the dear mother’s heart had not throbbed in sympathy? Then she reflected that her mother’s life for many years had been that of a secluded invalid, that their means had been limited, that current literature had been, especially in the latter years, somewhat scarce. “She

was dependant on me for information as to what the Church was doing," this daughter told herself, reproachfully; "and how meager my knowledge was! There were no "Woman's Boards" then. Oh, mother, if you had lived, how eagerly would you have joined hands with this movement! How cruel your daughter was not to keep you in full communication with what the Church was doing!" Thus far, in sad self-reproach, and an unutterable longing for the presence of the mother whose heart had responded to every call of the Master as fast as she had heard; and then did this troubled heart suddenly remember, with a glow of comfort, that the dear mother was now in the presence of the Shepherd, and he could tell her all about the field; and who shall say that he could not give her willing heart special work to do for him there?

Directly the formal meeting was concluded, Mrs. Temple came again to the novice who had so simply and readily "taken up her cross." She thanked her again with a warmth that embarrassed Mrs. Spafford; she introduced her to a host of eager ladies, those from whose

lips the unfamiliar African names had rolled so readily. And the little lady improved the opportunity to ask numberless questions. What books or papers did she need in order to post herself about these places? Where was "Woman's Work" to be had? What was its expense? How should she secure the names and addresses of missionaries? Was there a missionary library connected with this church, or this organization?

"No, but upon my word there ought to be," said one of the ladies, struck with the wisdom of the question. "That is really an excellent idea; we ought to take it into immediate consideration."

Then another:

"Oh, Mrs. Spafford, you must organize your church; I have been hoping to hear from that church in your ward this long time. I've been trying to get my friend, Mrs. Bacon, interested; she is the only acquaintance I have so far uptown. I haven't got her started yet; but we shall have hopes of her now; you will enthuse her, and all the rest."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Spafford, smiling

a little, though there were tears in her eyes; "I think I need an infusion of general intelligence. I never realized before that I was so utterly ignorant on the subject of missions. Why, I always supposed I was interested. I have prayed for missions ever since I was born, and really I never knew until to-day, that I had almost no actual positive knowledge concerning their present work."

"That lady is thoroughly awake," Mrs. Temple said, looking after the new-comer with a satisfied bend of her head, as Mrs. Spafford, having discovered that it was nearly time for Warren's car, and she should miss that coveted ride up with him unless she hastened, took sudden leave, not before promising boldly to do her best at effecting an organization in their own church. "She is wide awake; I knew when I talked with her, last week, that all she needed was a little help to set her into a blaze; we shall hear from her, you may depend."

Yes, dear madam, she is awake. What a pity it is that you, sweet Christian lady, as you are, could not awaken to the fact, that if you

were as thoroughly enthused at this moment with the spirit of missions as the young woman you have just helped to waken, were as thoroughly consecrated in heart and pure as she is; you actually have tenths enough to so swell the coffers of the Foreign Boards that they could do more in *one year* than a long life's giving of such "tenths" as she has can accomplish. That is, counting it in dollars and cents. Thank the dear Lord for counting *above* these. "Thy *prayers* and thine alms," said he to Cornelius. Mrs. Spafford may give her tiny jewels with joy, remembering the wording of that sentence. After all it was a so-called chance word which set the pretty blaze of enthusiasm into a white heat. As she went down the aisle she came in contact with a small, fair girl, not more than eighteen, with a pretty, girlish — not to say childish — face, who grasped her hand, with an eager, tearful sentence:

"Oh, dear lady, let me take your hand. I want to thank you for that prayer. I never heard anybody pray so tenderly before for missionaries and their families."

“Dear child,” said Mrs. Spafford, stooping to kiss the fair face. She looked so small and sweet that the action was involuntary. “Do you love the missionaries so much? What has given you such a special interest at your age?”

Then the blue eyes filled with tears, as the tremulous voice said:

“Oh, dear madam, my oldest brother gave his life for the heathen.”

“And my Elder Brother gave *his* life, his wonderful life for them all!”


This was what Mrs. Spafford thought, but did not say. This was what made the flame of love to which fresh fuel had been added that afternoon burst into a glow, the light of which shall burn on and on, after Mrs. Spafford's actual earth-work shall be done, and she shall have gone home to her mother and her God. Good work was done for Christ that day, more than the workers knew.

Away under the waves of a tropical river there lay the bones of one who had given his young life for missions; a life “nipped in the bud,” it had been said, strangely cut off just

after its full consecration. And yet that consecrated life spoke to Mrs. Spafford that summer afternoon as nothing else had ever done. "And I heard a voice saying unto me, 'Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.' 'Yea,' saith the Spirit, 'they rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.'"

CHAPTER XII.

CONFLICTING DUTIES.

AVE you ever observed what a difference a night's sleep is apt to make in one's feelings and plans? Things which appear entirely reasonable in the darkness and loneliness of one's room, by night are liable to take different shape to us by daylight. The feeling works both ways, often deterring us from that which would be entirely right and wise to do, and sometimes holding us back from what would have been foolish in the extreme.

Realizing this, do you believe that young Coleman finished the letter by day-light which he commenced at night, and sent it

on the same errand that he had planned?

I think you understand his character well enough to know that by morning the entire idea had taken an absurd aspect to him. He paused in the act of dressing, and read the lines already written, and laughed. "Miss Jennie would think I had made a violent exertion to be attentive, I fear, if she had received that. I wonder what she would say to that dried-up prayer-meeting, anyway? What possesses me to go so steadily? I believe I had some notion, last night, of going into the thing a little deeper even; but I have returned to sober common sense this morning. I don't believe it will pay to let Mrs. Callie exercise such a surprising power over me. She thinks I am a hypocrite for going to meeting. Well, perhaps I am; just as well to gratify her and stay away occasionally, anyway, instead of being so alarmingly unlike the rest of the sheep, by my regularity. Pity to spoil that sheet of note paper. Miss Jennie likes very delicate note paper; I've always observed that she

buys the finest. Let me see, how could I finish that in a reasonable manner?" He sat down to this problem, and studied over it a few minutes, until apparently it was settled in a satisfactory manner, for he dashed off a few lines, enclosed the whole in an envelope, and sealed and directed it with a complacent air.

Thus it transpired that Miss Jennie West, who was again with her friend, Mrs. Evans, having come up to spend several weeks while her mother made a long-promised visit elsewhere, came down to the dining-room, where the poor, troubled housekeeper was at work trying to decide whether the remains of yesterday's roast could be made to piece out today's dinner, holding in her hand an open letter, and appealed for sympathy, delight in her voice:

"Look here, Eva, I'm invited to the opera at Bellevue Hall to-night: isn't that lovely?"

"Very," said the weary housekeeper, turning from her bone which had an alarmingly small portion of meat left on it, and trying to smile. "Who has invited you?"

“Oh, Will Coleman of course; he is the only one of my friends who penetrates to this hiding-place, so far up town. It is real splendid of him, I must say, for the tickets for this opera are awfully expensive; and I don't believe Will indulges in that way very often; I haven't seen him out at any of the summer concerts even.”

“I would like so much to go,” the young wife said, a sudden sense of the deliciousness of the music stealing over her.

The opera had an attraction for her of which Jennie West knew almost nothing, in that she tingled to her fingers' ends with music, and memories of enchanting sounds heard in Bellevue Hall, in the days gone by, thrilled her at that moment like an electric shock. With Jennie, it was a nice place to go to show one's new hat and gloves, and see the styles, and have a charming ride with one's companion, and a delightful little series of chats between the scenes, and enjoy oneself generally. The music was really the smallest part of the attraction. Nevertheless, she was prepared to sympathize with Mrs. Evans.

“You poor child! What Blue Beards husbands are! I declare, if I were you, I wouldn’t stand it! You don’t go anywhere. I don’t believe you have been down town to an evening entertainment since you moved up here out of the world. I really think Dane treats you shabbily. If I were you I would insist on being taken to-night. It is a rare opportunity. We don’t often have such an entertainment as this will be; especially in the summer.”

Mrs. Evans was painfully given to being led by the voice that last sounded in her ears, and Jennie West had, at all times, a stronger influence with her than she ought to have had, but there were some things that could bring the indignant blood to her forehead, and the ring of decision to her voice. Timid woman though she was, too much given to meek acquiescence in the opinions advanced at the moment, it was not wise for any one to criticise her husband in her presence. Yet this was one of the most ordinary rules of etiquette which Jennie West was every day violating.

Rarely so glaringly, however, as at this moment.

“Dane is not a tyrant, Jennie; nor am I a slave, as you seem to imagine. We do not go to evening entertainments very often, it is true; but it is because neither of us wishes to go; and I don't allow even a cousin to speak to me of my husband in a way that I consider insulting.”

She was really astonished at the coldness of her own voice. So was Jennie, astonished and a trifle alarmed; she did not wish to offend her cousin Eva; her house was too convenient and pleasant a place, especially since she had moved up-town.

“Mercy!” she said, with an attempt at gaiety; “how you do snap one up! Marriage isn't improving to people's tempers; you used to be as mild as a June morning, Eva, and now I declare you are enough to frighten one. I didn't mean anything either; I'm sure you and Dane may devote yourselves to each other every evening for the rest of your lives, for all objection I shall make. I'm glad you enjoy it; though I am sure I never should. Come

up-stairs, do, and advise me what to wear. I wish I had a new opera cloak, mine is really getting shabby; though to be sure, at this season of the year cloaks don't so much matter. It is almost a wonder Will would go to-night, he is so regular at prayer-meeting; I didn't know but there was some whim, or promise to his mother, or something of that sort which kept him so constant in attendance."

"Why, surely," said Mrs. Evans, "it is prayer-meeting evening; and you and I were going."

"I know it; we shall have to wait until next week, I suppose."

The plan of going together to the prayer-meeting that evening had been proposed by Jennie herself, and eagerly agreed to by Mrs. Evans, who remembered that it was her husband's evening to be late; also as the trials and burdens of home life pressed thick around her, she looked about at times almost wildly, for some sort of refuge. Constantly her mind reverted to Mrs. Spafford, and the calm which rested on her fair face whenever the storm-tossed housekeeper met her; and as often as

this occurred, she went back to the bits of conversation which she had had with her, and remembered that bright and natural as her manner had been, her words turned steadily toward Christ as the centre of all her plans, whether of housekeeping or benevolence. The aim in life seemed to be the same, whether the topics were grave or petty. Thinking of it all, it was impossible not to be forced, at times, to the conclusion that Mrs. Spafford had something connected with her religion, of which she, Mrs. Evans, knew nothing. What if she could find it, and show it to Dane, and it would unravel the snarl into which life was growing for them? For hide it as she would, from Jennie West and from every other outside eye, the daily puzzle was every hour growing more intricate, and the gloom was gathering heavier on Dane's forehead; there were times when Mrs. Evans' heart was well nigh bursting with its disappointed hopes, its loneliness, and its foreboding. She had no wish to attend an opera; it had been a momentary whim, which passed as soon as it was mentioned. She wanted the tangles of her

life smoothed out; she wanted to make a happy, peaceful home for Dane; she bitterly felt that she did not know how to do it. But she went up stairs with Jennie, leaving the roast to plan for itself, and appeared to interest herself in blue silk and white lace and natural flowers and fresh kids, and really went off into a reverie that had to do with herself and Dane only, rousing suddenly to the sound of Jennie's voice, as she said:

“I suppose Callie Spafford would think I was perfectly awful to do it; but then, if one tried to follow Callie's rule of life, one might as well turn Catholic and go into a convent and be done with it.”

“To do what, Jennie? What does Mrs. Spafford think?”

The sound of that name always had a tendency to rouse Mrs. Evans.

“Oh, she thinks everything is wrong, and everybody on earth is awry, save her own sweet self,” was Jennie's testy answer, as she twitched at the somewhat crushed artificial flowers in her hand, and tried to make them look natural and fresh.

"She is the last person I should think of calling an egotist," said Mrs. Evans.

"Well, she is self-righteous; and narrow, Eva; just as narrow as a knife-blade. She used to be so at school; the girls were always making fun of her notions; but she grows worse and worse. I don't see why, either; Warren Spafford wasn't so much more particular than the rest of the world before he became acquainted with her; so it isn't his influence."

"But what do you mean she would object to just now?"

"Why, she objects to everything. What ever *she* doesn't do is wicked; and she doesn't go to the opera; so of course, that is wicked."

"Wicked to go to the opera!"

There was great amazement in Mrs. Evans' tones: she had actually never come in contact with a class of Christians who held those views!

"But what is there wrong about going to a good opera?"

"Oh, goodness knows; I don't. If you expect me to give reasons for all that Callie

Spafford thinks is wicked, it will keep me busy. Everything is wicked, I tell you, but singing psalms and going to prayer-meeting, and eating just enough to keep you from actual starvation and giving away the rest. It is bad enough for me to go to the opera at any time, but to go on prayer-meeting evening — actually to beguile Will from his regular attendance — she will consider the unpardonable sin.”

Miss Jennie spoke with unusual asperity. Truth to tell, her conscience was somewhat troubled; not about the opera, especially; she was too shallow to have given those matters serious thought; but about herself in general, or Mrs. Spafford’s opinion of her. Like the rest of the world, she respected Mrs. Spafford. The pointed questions which that lady had asked her but a few evenings before, concerning Will Coleman, had stayed by and troubled her. What if she ought to exert a different influence over him?

She would like (she stopped twisting her artificial moss rose-buds for a full minute, and gave the matter serious consideration) — yes,

she would really like to see him a Christian; not a pokey one like Warren Spafford, never going to operas or dances or anything, but after all a prominent Christian, one who led in prayer at public meetings, and made addresses, and was put on committees and consulted, and all that sort of thing. He was calculated to shine in such a sphere, she believed, and perhaps she really ought to use her influence. In fact she did, and meant to. Hadn't she told him more than once that she wished he was a church-member? And what had he done but laugh at her, and tell her that he was ahead of her church-members now — the most of them — and so he was. But then, people would persist in not understanding his position because he *would not* join the church! She had half a mind to talk to him about it this very evening. It would be a real nice opportunity, while they were riding down town together, or on their way back; certainly a much nicer time for confidential conversation than they could have during the short walk from prayer-meeting.

By the time Mrs. Evans had turned the sub-

ject over in her mind, and was ready to speak, Jennie had recovered satisfaction with herself and was complacently managing the moss rose-buds.

“Well, perhaps, Jennie, one ought not to go to an opera on prayer-meeting evening. I never thought of it before, and I presume I have done it a great many times; but, when you think of it, it does look inconsistent. Why don't you write Will to choose some other evening, and go with you to prayer-meeting to-night?”

“Because I don't believe in any such thing. That is *a la* Callie Spafford again. I should expect to accomplish nothing more than to arouse Will's prejudices. I have seen that sort of thing done a great many times, and I hope never to make such a mistake. Eva, do you think these rose-buds a shade too pink to fit my blue silk?”

“I think not. But why should consistency arouse his prejudice, Jennie?”

“It isn't consistency. It is self-righteousness — making a parade of one's religion. People ought to yield their own wishes for the

benefit of others. Just think how absurd it would look in me to send Will Coleman word that because it was prayer-meeting evening I could not go with him to the opera, when he knows as well as I do that there is prayer-meeting every week in the year, which I can attend if I want to, while an entertainment of this sort is rather a rare thing for me, at least. You know I don't get to these expensive entertainments very often. Can't you see what a self-righteous look that would have to a young man — especially if he were not a Christian himself. If I were a married woman I would make it a point of conscience to go wherever and whenever my husband wished me to; it is the only way in which I should hope to influence him to my ways of thinking. I think you ought to try that with Dane. If you were ready to go with him to places of amusement, quite likely he would be ready to go with you to prayer-meeting."

You should have heard Miss Jennie's complacent tones. She was growing exceedingly well satisfied with herself, and had already forgotten that husbands were Blue Beards, and

her cousin a martyr to the stay-at-home propensities of Mr. Evans. Her listener found it impossible to accept theories so suddenly; neither was she ready to refute them. A radical defect in Mrs. Evans education had been that she had too few pronounced opinions of any sort. Her cousin Jennie's views looked somewhat plausible, but she was not ready to accept them, because of the reference to Mrs. Spafford and her opinions. Mrs. Evans was growing every day more sure that when there was a difference of opinion between Mrs. Spafford and Jennie West, the former was almost certain to be in the right. So now she determined to reserve her judgment, even in regard to the strange announcement that operas might be wrong, until she could hear from Mrs. Spafford's own lips why she thought so. Meantime Jennie's words set her off on another train of thought.

“I have never asked Dane to go to prayer-meeting with me.”

Jennie faced around on her in righteous amazement.

“Why, Evangeline Evans! I should think

you would be ashamed to own it; and you a member of the church these dozen years!"

"Well," said the wife, apologetically, "You know they never went to prayer-meeting from Uncle Horace's; and before that, when mamma was sick, I got out of the way of going; and so, since I have known Dane intimately, I really haven't been in the habit of going myself. It is strange. I have been thinking a good deal about it lately — about my not going. I never thought of asking Dane; perhaps he would go if I asked him. I think I shall try it."

"I should think you would," said Jennie. And she dressed for the opera in a still more complacent state of mind, feeling sure that she had set poor Eva on the right track to do some good to her irreligious husband, and more determined than ever to urge Will Coleman that very evening to unite with the church and take an active part in its public duties. "It is everything he needs," she told herself confidently, "to make him a perfect Christian gentleman." And then the carriage came, and she went away in state.

CHAPTER XIII.

SEED SOWN ON THORNY GROUND.



DURING these days Mrs. Spafford was very busy. She had undertaken what proved a Herculean task; like many another worker, it was fortunate that when she began she did not realize the magnitude of the undertaking. Indeed, to her short-sighted eyes, nothing seemed easier than to go among Christian women and enlist their co-operation in a missionary society.

“It is simply because they, like myself, have not had their attention called to it before,” she said to her husband, when she was trying to explain the lethargy of the Church on the subject; “see how I have lived all these years,

doing nothing for the cause, and it is not because I was not interested, I was brought up to consider missionaries of better blood than I, but I simply did not realize anything that I could do for them, or rather for an object so far away from home. We are just waking up as a people to understand the power of little gifts; of course, this church will join hands with the others; ten cents a month is so small a sum! Why, Warren, even *we* can give it, and have quite an amount left for other channels."

And Warren had listened, and smiled in a covert way, believing in his heart that he knew the world better than his wife, yet so resolved was he not to dampen her enthusiasm, that he resolutely refrained from expressing a doubt, but let her go on her way rejoicing.

She came home from an afternoon's campaign with plumes sadly drooping. In a degree she had gauged the spiritual atmosphere about her; it would have been impossible to be a regular attendant at the prayer-meeting and not do that—so she looked for apathy in certain quarters, and a reluctant consent in others,

and [expected to meet with many expressed fears that it would be impossible to succeed, but she had not looked for actual outspoken opposition! And to think of finding it in the very center of influence! She had by no means a high idea of Mrs. Bacon's religious life. The difficulty was that she had no conception of any sort of religious life which wasn't, to say the very least, in *favor* of missions! It was astounding to discover that Mrs. Bacon could not be said to even approve of them!

“My dear Mrs. Spafford,” she said — and to Mrs. Spafford there was always something peculiarly exasperating about this beginning — “have you ever carefully studied the entire subject, and discovered what an immense amount of money has been expended on Foreign Missions already, with what few returns? Why, to me it is actually appalling! When I look over our own fair country, and see the need for money on every hand; the miserable homes and the miserable children, and the squalor and filth and wretchedness everywhere about us, and then reflect what immense sums

we are annually sending abroad to those wretched heathen, I can not help being indignant."

Now, I suppose it would be almost impossible to describe to you what a strange, puzzled feeling this gave Mrs. Spafford. It was such a new idea, she did not know in the least how to answer it. The words she spoke were not intended for an answer. They were simply floating through her mind, suggested by, she did not clearly see what, and she thought aloud: "He hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth."

"Oh, well, I suppose so, in one sense; and yet I think you clearly recognize a difference between your own household and the beggars in the street?"

"Not in the sense that they all need feeding."

Mrs. Spafford was gathering her wits, and began to see the strangeness of the talk.

"Yes, even in that sense; you will let the beggars starve and look after your own household, if you have not enough for all."

"Dear madam, no; I have no *right* to do

it. I must share my children's crusts, even, with the children of those worse off than they? But what has this to do with the subject, after all? Has not the Church of Christ bread enough for all the family?"

"I am not good at talking in metaphor," was Mrs. Bacon's half-smiling answer: "Let us come down to plain prose. You want to start a missionary society in our church to help the foreign work, and I say frankly—I am a very frank woman—that I do not believe in the foreign work. I think we have heathen enough at home to look after, and, until they are all civilized, we ought to spend our money and our energies at home."

This time the answer came promptly, and the speaker believed that she recognized the prompting voice in her heart: "But isn't the direction, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature?'"

"That was given to the early apostles, and, of course, they went into all the world that was then known."

"Yes, but in the same breath, to comfort his children, he said: 'Lo, I am with you

always, even unto the end of the world.' And the disciples to whom he then spoke have been in his visible presence for hundreds of years, and the world is not yet ended; the comfort lasts yet, and so, therefore, must the commission. Besides, Mrs. Bacon, in our own country are there not churches enough, and Bibles enough, and praying men and women enough, so that all may know the way if they will? The seed is planted; there is no doubt but it will grow; the question is, ought we not to plant it in other lands, and give other nations of the same blood an equal chance to choose?"

"Oh, no doubt there are churches and Bibles enough!" The tone in which Mrs. Bacon spoke would have led one ignorant of her position in the church to suppose that she almost sneered at both Bibles and churches. "As if all that poor people wanted was churches and Bibles and prayers! My dear madam, they need shoes and potatoes a great deal more. Think of the money thrown away on the cannibal Africans! Enough to have fed and clothed and educated all the poor in

our own land ; and with no return at all.”

Now, indeed, was Mrs. Spafford aghast.

“No return! Why, Mrs. Bacon, whole villages among those cannibal Africans are clothed and in their right minds to-day ; and hundreds of them have gone to swell the company in heaven, which you know is to be made up of every ‘kindred and tribe and tongue and nation.’”

“Oh, yes, I know a few of them have professed conversion, though whether they understood what was meant by the word is rather doubtful, I suppose ; but think of the cost ! and of what the same amount of money would have accomplished at home !”

What was the matter with Mrs. Spafford ? It seemed to her, in thinking afterward of this conversation, that her thoughts flowed only through Bible channels. Was it possibly another proof of the faithfulness of a God who said : “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” She did not think of it at the time, it simply seemed the most natural thing in the world for her to say just then :

“‘What shall it profit a man if he gain

the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" I did not think that the worth of a soul could be estimated in dollars and cents, Mrs. Bacon. Is not that what Christ meant to teach us when he asked that solemn question?"

But Mrs. Bacon was growing irritable; she did not like to argue, except with a certain class of people. When she was irritable, she was always more or less rude. So now she said, with smiling face and stinging voice:

"My dear Mrs. Spafford, what a remarkable memory you must have! I think, during your leisure hours when you were a teacher, you must have memorized the entire Bible. It must be very convenient in conversation, when one is at a loss for words, to slip in a Bible verse. But I don't suppose if the entire Bible were repeated to me I should change my mind; I am very pronounced in my opinions. I am entirely absorbed in Home Missions, and I really believe, so long as there is anything to do for our own home land,

that at least people, who have but little to give, should not dribble it up and send it no one knows where, on the plea that they are going to reform the world."

At the commencement of this sentence, Mrs. Spafford felt her cheeks growing red, and her heart beating fast, and knew by these and certain other uncomfortable sensations that she was angry, but, before its close, the angry feelings had subsided into mirth. It was such a curious idea to her that Mrs. Bacon believed herself to be entirely absorbed in home missions. How was she proving it? "She will be the very person to visit, when we are ready for our sewing-school, and home for orphans, and several other enterprises that we ought to start in this ward," she said to herself, as she arose to go; but the time had not yet come for these, so, aloud, she said:

"I am sorry, Mrs. Bacon; some of the ladies of the Twelfth Street Church suggested you as the person to take hold of an organization such as I am trying to effect. I quite looked to you as a leader."

If Mrs. Spafford had realized it, she had

left her most powerful arguments for the last, and produced them after it was too late for them to tell. An instant flush overspread Mrs. Bacon's face, and her eyes were ablaze with a look that showed she was vexed at having made admissions that would cripple her, perhaps unpleasantly. To be a leader of *anything* was a temptation; and to be expected by the Twelfth Street Church people to lead, was a matter of great importance to Mrs. Bacon. Still what could she do now but abide by her strong words?

“When everything is done at home that ought to be, perhaps I may assume foreign responsibilities,” she said, with an attempt at a smile.

After the thrust she had received, it is, perhaps, strange that Mrs. Spafford should have quoted another Bible verse, but she felt that she could hardly have kept her lips from saying: “These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.”

It may have been those very words that tempted Mrs. Bacon to say, with her most

compassionate smile, as she arose to follow her caller to the door :

“My dear Mrs. Spafford, you ought to go more into society, and then your time would be too much taken up to leave room for any of these restless movements. I know how it is. Young housekeepers, who are commencing life in a modest, quiet way, never have much to do, and you have been accustomed to such an active life, no wonder you reach out after *something* to take your time. But there are pleasant people all about you. I presume you can make a congenial little circle right among yourselves, and have very pleasant times.”

After that, perhaps Mrs. Spafford would have been almost more than human if she had not gone home with burning cheeks and angry eyes. The truth is, this dear Christian woman was very human indeed. She got the better of the anger after a little, but the sadheartedness remained. Such people as Mrs. Bacon have their influence. In the course of a few days Mrs. Spafford was astonished to find out how far her influence extended. Nearly all the ladies of the church

were more or less affected by the fact that the leading one in their midst, so far as wealth and position were concerned, had refused to countenance the new movement. It is true they were variously affected; some declared that it was just what they would expect of her, that she was a selfish, narrow-minded woman, and gave less in proportion to her wealth than any other member of their church. At the same time these outspoken persons were by no means willing to set Mrs. Bacon a better example by taking the lead in an enterprise which she chose to ignore. Others said that Mrs. Bacon kept herself well posted, and if *she* did not think an organization of that sort would succeed, it was not worth while to undertake it. Others, still, declared themselves in sympathy with Mrs. Bacon in believing that there was work enough to do at home. In short, after a vigorous canvass of the material within her reach, Mrs. Spafford wearily admitted to her husband that she had found almost no helpers.

“Some are willing, but timid; and some are bold, but opposed,” she said, half laughing,

and yet feeling tired and discouraged enough to cry. "I don't believe it is my *forte* to work up such an organization. I have done my best, and failed at every point. I don't think I understand women. I find that they surprise me so."

"You understood girls uncommonly well, and they are the material of which women are made," replied her husband, with the air of a man who stood ready to do valiant battle with any one who dared dispute his wife's ability to understand anything, and accomplish the impossible. She gave heed only to the first part of his sentence: "You understood girls uncommonly well." This was true. As a teacher she had been skilled in the art of leading and guiding the bright, pretty, willful girls committed to her care. She had oftentimes succeeded where others failed. She knew she had a peculiar sympathy for girlhood, which seemed to give her a power over them. She was inclined to be half shy of women who were older, or even quite as old, as herself. She had a curious feeling of

youth and inexperience when with them, but with girls she felt at home.

“That is an idea!” she said, looking brightly at him. “I might do something with the girls; they have *Young Ladies’ Bands*.”

Over this thought she pondered until at last she resolved to act. No more individual calling, carrying the downheartedness from one house to be perhaps increased by her reception at another. She resolved to make a bold stroke and get the girls together. To be sure she knew very few of them. Never mind; when was she ever at a loss what to do with a company of girls? So, on the following Sabbath, bright-eyed girls gave curious, inquiring glances from one to another, wondering by whose planning they were summoned to meet at “No. 207 Chestnut Avenue, on Saturday afternoon at three o’clock, to consult together concerning a matter of importance.” There was an eager buzzing of tongues over the event.

“Girls, do you know who sent the notice? Isn’t it queer?” “Angie Powers, are you *sure* you didn’t have a hand in the matter?”


“And you haven’t the least idea what is going on? How funny!” “207 Chestnut Street. That is where that bright-looking Mrs. Spafford lives, isn’t it?” “Do you know her, girls? I do. I met her at the festival; she and I cut cake half the afternoon. I think she is perfectly lovely! If it is anything she is interested in, I’m going to take hold of it for I know it will be just splendid.” “Isn’t it queer that we can’t find out the least thing about it?” “I declare it is as good as a surprise party!” You are going, aren’t you, Angie? Oh, yes; go of course; it would be rude not to; Mrs. Spafford is a stranger. Beside, it may be something real splendid.” “I like her face. I’ve never met her, but I sit where I can look at her all the time in church, and I was wishing only last Sunday that I knew her.”

These are only a few of the questions answers and comments that fluttered broadcast wherever “the girls,” gathered in knots during the week. As the days passed and it became apparent that none of their number were taken into confidence, or knew aught

that was to transpire the interest deepened. And by ten minutes past three on Saturday afternoon Mrs. Spafford's tiny parlor was filled, even to overflowing into the dining-room, with bright, eager, expectant faces. Whatever "the girls," might decide upon after they heard what was to be said to them, they were certainly on the high tide of enthusiasm now.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PROBLEM.

LL the girls in Mrs. Spafford's parlor bestowed puzzled glances on each other, and were silent. Mrs. Spafford had been talking with them eagerly and rapidly. She was full of enthusiasm herself; she looked to find a response from at least some of them. She had unfolded her plan, to organize a Young Ladies' Mission Band, to be connected with other bands in the city, to be governed by the rules already adopted by the majority of organizations. She had explained the nature and object of the meetings; had suggested methods of conducting them; plans for interesting others; the amount of money that would be

expected from each member, and the few and simple rules by which they would be governed, and then she had asked if they were ready to enter into some such effort, modified and enlarged as time passed, according to their views of things.

It was at this point that she was met with profound and puzzled silence. Evidently the girls were astonished, and also a little disappointed; they had indulged extravagant fancies in regard to the possible object of this mysterious meeting. It was a descent into a prosaic world to have the call mean nothing but a mission band!

“I don’t know anything about missions or missionaries,” ventured at last one of the bolder spirits, with an embarrassed little laugh.

“Neither do I, I am sure,” chimed in another voice, which Mrs. Spafford afterward learned was apt to be a leading one.

Thus encouraged, each and all began eagerly to disclaim all knowledge of mission fields, all acquaintance with missionaries, and — I had almost said all desire to become educated in these directions.

“Oh, well,” said Mrs. Spafford, briskly, “then we are the very people who ought to have a mission band; one of its objects is to become acquainted with the field, and to have an intelligent knowledge of missionaries. Shall we not by all means try to supplement our educations which seem so deficient in that direction? I say ‘we,’ because I have recently awakened to the fact that I am alarmingly deficient, and I want you gay young ladies to rouse me to a pitch of enthusiasm. Come, let us vote to organize forthwith, and make a complete success of it, and stimulate others.”

Still those girls looked at each other and held back. They were not touched even with the *romance* of missions yet; it looked like the dullest of all ideas; they saw no possibility of getting any “fun,” out of it; and what do most girls at a certain age live for but fun?

“I don’t know,” Marion Wells said, slowly. “It seems to me that our mothers are the proper persons for such work. They are interested and they know what to say when they get together, and we don’t.”

Then Mrs Spafford :

“That is just the point. The mothers, some of them, know what to say, and the daughters want to learn, so that they will know. Besides, don't you know that it takes *girls* to push these things? I look to you to set the mothers an example. Doesn't it strike you as a pleasant thing to think of meeting and studying up these matters together, each adding a bit to the general interest? Mrs. Temple tells me that the young ladies in the Twelfth Street Church enjoy their meetings exceedingly.

“The trouble is,” said Addie Stowell; speaking evidently for a number of them, “or at the least the trouble with *me* is, that I really haven't any money to give. I could go to father and coax him to give me ten cents a month, I suppose, and he would try to do it; but really he has just as much as he can do to get along, and I know even ten cents a month would be inconvenient to him sometimes. Besides, I never could see any sense in girls going to their fathers for money to give, and then calling it *their* giving. It is my father who does the giving in such cases,

and why shouldn't he do it in the first place, without having it pass through my hands? It always reminds me of mother letting me carry the scissors to auntie, when I was a little thing, she taking hold of the points. I always supposed that I carried them, and was highly delighted. But I would like to feel that I had gotten beyond that stage."

Mrs. Spafford turned toward the eager, energetic speaker with a gratified face. Here was her first breath of encouragement; here was a girl who thought for herself, and had thought out certain problems sufficiently at least to desire to find the answer. Having broken the ice of reserve there were many voices to sustain her.

"I feel very much so," declared one and another, and yet another, until half the young ladies in the room had assented.

"Of course I can go to papa for money," explained Miss Lily Archer, toying gracefully with her parasol as she spoke; "but what is the sense? Papa gives for missions—always subscribes largely to the Boards, and that is just the same as our giving, of course;

so I think there is no use in asking him for more. Besides, what a miserable little drop in the bucket ten cents a month would make!"

"That would depend upon how many drops fell into the bucket," said Addie Stowell, promptly, who always came out on the side that seemed to her at the moment the logical one, whether or not it contradicted a previously expressed opinion.

"Don't you have a definite amount of your own, to spend according to your judgment?" questioned Mrs. Spafford of the fair Lily.

"Oh dear, no? I never could get along with definite amounts. I am never definite about anything. The way I do when I want a thing, I buy it, and send the bill to papa and he pays it, and that is the end of it."

And Miss Lily looked around on the group of girls less fortunately situated with a pretty little air of superiority. She was glad that her father was a millionaire.

As for Mrs. Spafford, she extended her inquiry, and found that in all that company of girls, some of whom had fathers quite

able to furnish them with small amounts of their own, and teach them how to systematically use them, only two were being thus educated. Then of course she gave some moments of thought to that useless wish, which has been wished over so many times it is threadbare. If she could only get the ear of the fathers and mothers of the church; and beg them to bring the next generation up with a due sense of the importance of individual responsibility, and the relative value of money and souls, the work of evangelization would be done! Meantime, taking life not as she would have made it if she were a grandmother, and these were all her grandchildren, brought up by her thus far, but as it was being lived before her now, in all this flutter of prettiness and silliness, what was she going to do with them? She confessed to herself that making pretty machines of them, to be used in passing ten-cent pieces from their fathers' pockets to the treasury of the church was as little to her mind as it was to Addie Stowell's.

Yet here were the facts. Those who could have asked and secured definite amounts to

use as they pleased, did not please to assume responsibilities — would much rather live in the careless, irresponsible fashion that they had been educated. Beside, even though they had caught the fancy, they were not sufficiently interested in missions to pledge ten cents a month, and conscientiously abide by the pledge. They could *promise*, oh yes and so could parrots, and she was afraid that there would be almost as much sense of the sacredness of a promise in the one case as in the other. Another fault growing out of the fact that she was not their grandmother, and had not brought them up. Another point: by far the larger majority of these girls could not have commanded definite incomes, ever so small. Their fathers were, some of them, too poor, and in other cases, *thought* they were too poor to do anything of the sort. Then there were some without fathers — a few already dependent on their own exertions for support; and most of them had so many wants, real or fancied, that given a certain sum of money to spend as they pleased, Mrs. Spafford was almost sure that they would please to spend

none of it on such an unknown cause as foreign missions.

"I don't believe in foreign missions, anyhow," murmured Lena Bacon; and though the others hushed her warningly, and shook their heads towards Mrs. Spafford, and were too carefully educated in etiquette to believe it proper to express their views on this point in such a presence, yet they were by no means too well educated not to agree with Lena. If anything was done with these girls it must be foundation work.

"First principles, that should have been learned at their mothers' knees," murmured Mrs. Spafford and then she showed what manner of spirit she was of, by saying also to herself, courageously: "Very well, Callie Spafford, they will never learn them earlier; now see if you can teach them."

How to begin? that was the question. It was not a new question to Mrs. Spafford, she had thought of it many times during the past week, and was in part prepared.

"It is very evident," she said, in a clear, business-like tone, "that the first thing we

need to do is to make some money." Now, she had the attention of every girl; a scheme for making money they were always ready to hear about. Nay, they were ready with suggestions.

"We might have a festival, or fair, or something of that kind," immediately, and with eagerness, said one of their number; whereupon equally eager voices joined in and affirmed what they thought, to meet and make fancy articles, and have a fair would be just lovely.

Mrs. Spafford was in no sense dismayed; she had not lived through twenty-five years of life, and managed many girls, without having heard frequently of fairs and festivals, and old folk's suppers, and young folk's concerts, and character parties and tableaux, and mum socials, and socials that were not mum, and oyster suppers, and strawberry and ice-cream festivals, and any and every other imaginable device for obtaining money for "the cause." She knew this disease in all of its phases had special possession of "the girls," and must reach its crisis. One thing was

certain: If "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," the hearts of these young misses were very much set on matters of this kind, for they immediately became voluble, and Mrs. Spafford had to rouse herself from her study of human nature, and plunge into the thick of it, for fear they would have a tableau party organized before her eyes.

"Why do you suppose we always think of devices of this kind whenever we talk about money for the cause of Christ?"

It was a general question, but, after a little astonished pause, Addie Stowell answered:

"Why, because we girls have no other ways of raising money; when we want to give anything, and don't want to coax our fathers to do it, and let us *call* it ours, we're just obliged to make fancy work and have fairs, and oblige people to buy. What else is there to do?"

"Why, Mrs. Spafford, do you object to such methods of raising money?"

"Let us see if we do. Miss Stowell, didn't I hear you say that you could not command

money of your own? Suppose you could use some to good purpose if you had it?"

"I'd like to have the chance once," said Addie, with prompt emphasis, and the girls laughed.

"Very well; now I propose that you make a number of fancy articles, tidies, pin-cushions and the like, and some cake and perhaps coffee, and have a fair in the course of a few weeks, at your house; and announce it in church for the benefit of Miss Addie Stowell, and on the evening in question let all these young ladies flutter around and beseech people to buy your tidies and cushions and cake; be sure a good price is set on them — perhaps just twice what they are worth will not be too much, considering the object — and let an almost persecution be kept up during the evening, by yourself and friends, for the sake of the *cause*! How would that impress you?"

"Mrs. Spafford!" said Addie, with glowing cheeks, and eyes that did not seem to know whether to sparkle with indignation, or dilate with amazement.

"Why, Mrs. Spafford!" chorused a dozen

other voices; and laughter and exclamations of astonishment and dismay were the order of the next few minutes.

Meantime, Mrs. Spafford asked calmly;

“Have I caricatured church fairs in the least, young ladies? Isn't it a true picture?”

“But, Mrs. Spafford, that would be a personal matter; so different from a church. Why, it would be a perfect insult!”

“My dear girls”—and the gravity of their hostess' voice quieted all the company—shall we be more regardful of our own personal reputations than we are of the cause of Christ?”

Utter silence for a moment, and then Marion Wells came to the front:

“But Mrs. Spafford; of course we know that church fairs, and all such things are managed disgracefully, generally; but suppose we had one that was managed right; say we worked hard and got a great many pretty things ready, and set just a proper price on them, such as everybody would own was what they were worth, and then had our entertainment, without tormenting people, just letting them buy what they pleased, and kept out all

objectionable things; there couldn't *possibly* be any harm in that?"

Mrs. Spafford hesitated; not because she had nought to say, but because she was not certain of her material. Could she take real high ground with them? "Come out from among them and be ye separate." Would they understand that? "Be not conformed to this world." Would they understand that? "If meat maketh my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world stands." Would they understand that? Studying their faces — bright, pretty faces, though they were — she much feared that it would be like speaking in an unknown tongue.

"Well," she said, thoughtfully, "I presume I shall differ with some of you, but do you know I have a tendency toward being independant, like Miss Stowell. Wasn't it you, my dear, who never liked to ask your father for money to give, and then pretend you had given it yourself? I agree with you. I don't like to work hard on — a yellow dog, we will say — curled up on a piece of canvas filled in with black or blue, or something; and then

have Mrs. Jones say to her husband at the tea-table: "My dear, you must give me some money to-night; I suppose I have *got* to go to that fair; the girls are urging me every time they see me. I shall have to buy something, of course. I think I shall get that yellow dog, that one of them has been at work at so long. They will have a horrid price on it, of course; and I shouldn't think of affording it, for a moment, if it were not for the *cause*. Of course we must help the mission work along.' So Mrs. Smith comes to the fair and buys my yellow dog, and shows it to her friends, and says it is not very well done, and was a ruinous price, and she doesn't really care for it, but, of course, she had to buy something, and so, for the sake of the cause, she took it. Now, whose money is that which the yellow dog earns? If Mrs. Smith speaks literal truth her's or mine?"

It was impossible not to laugh, and many of the girls being quick witted saw the point, and admitted that they had often been cross for days over the remarks that they had heard about work being bought, not because it was

admired or desired, but for the sake of benevolence.

“When, in fact, there was no benevolence about it,” declared Addie Stowell, stoutly. Mrs. Parsons is forever talking in just that way; always buying things at fairs and festivals, out of pure benevolence. It is no such thing; she always haggles and minces until she gets the worth of her money, and more too, and buys just exactly what she wants, and calls it charity. I don’t believe in such people.”

“I don’t believe in educating people in that way,” said Mrs. Spafford, promptly, taking advantage of Addie’s illustration. “Haven’t you often seen gentlemen eat fifty cents worth of oysters and cake and cream and fruit and celery, and I don’t know what else, and pay twenty-five cents for it all, and think they were being benevolent?”

“Hundreds of times,” said Addie. “But now look here, Mrs. Spafford, what can be done about it? There is no other way that I know of for us girls to earn money. I wish there was; I hate the whole thing myself. I never went to a performance of the kind in my life

that there wasn't a fuss of some sort before it was all over. Somebody's feelings are always getting hurt; somebody 'takes too much on herself;' or somebody doesn't do anything but 'mince around and give directions.' Oh, my! I know all about it; but I don't see any way out."

CHAPTER XV.

MEASURING CHARACTER.



“WHAT would you say to our going into business?”

It was Mrs. Spafford who asked the question, with as composed an air as though she was saying the most commonplace thing imaginable. No wonder the girls stared.

“Going into business!” repeated Addie Stowell, at last. “Why, Mrs. Spafford, what *can* you mean?”

“I believe it is feasible,” their hostess said, thoughtfully. I think it probable that each of us can do some special thing very well by which we could earn money. What is there to hinder our uniting our forces and

earning it? How is it, Miss Addie? Can't you at this moment think of a branch of industry which could be made a fair exchange for dollars and cents?"

"Why, yes," said Addie, hesitating a moment. Then, smiling, "I know how to crochet almost anything, if people were willing to buy it after it is done."

"Very well, suppose now, for the curiosity of the thing, we learn if there is not a branch of work for each of us. I, for instance, can do plain sewing—perhaps a little that is not so very plain, if I choose. Who embroiders, and who braids, and who hemstitches?"

The subject proved to be one which unsealed all lips, and the girls found, greatly to their amusement, that not one present but asserted her individuality by promptly selecting something from the great field of fancy work that she liked to do—in fact, would rather do a little of than not.

"But then," declared Addie, "I don't know what good it will do us. Who wants to buy such things? They only do it for the sake of benevolence, and we have to coax and

coax until I'm just ashamed. Besides, Mrs. Spafford, I thought you didn't believe in it at all."

"What? In going into business? Oh, yes I do. I am a firm believer in money making—legitimate business of any sort I have a great respect for. I don't propose a fair, you understand, with an evening of eager, exciting work, with spirits wrought up to fever heat, to be followed by days, and sometimes weeks, of reaction, when all the ordinary work of life becomes vapid. This that I propose is an entirely different matter."

Still the girls looked from one to another, and then back to her, and were evidently greatly bewildered.

"It is a conundrum," laughed Addie, at last "and I don't believe we can any of us guess it. If we all give it up will you tell us the answer?"

"It is just as simple," declared their hostess smiling, "as that two and two make four. I am proposing a partnership business, based from the very first on strictly business rules and regulations, without an atom of benevo-

lence about it. Why isn't it an entirely reasonable thing? Suppose, for illustration, that we had a room in the central part of the town, suited to our needs, and there we opened a — well, until we find a better name, we will call it a fancy-store, though I do hope we should develop a taste for strictly useful articles as well as fancy ones. Now, what if each of us was willing to advance — not contribute, you understand — but *advance* fifty cents each as a capital. With this capital we purchase each some material and manufacture one, two or three articles for sale. When all is ready we open our store, say for two hours on Saturday afternoons, one of our number serving as clerk for the first Saturday, another taking her place on the Saturday following, we meantime promising that the store shall be kept supplied with the article or articles which we have promised to make, provided its returns justify the purchasing of more material. We ask no one to buy for the sake of benevolence; we put no extravagant prices on anything in the name of benevolence; we conduct our business in all respects as our fathers and brothers do,

dividing the income each month amongst the stockholders, and pledging ourselves to use one-tenth of it in benevolence; if it shall amount to ten cents a month for each of us our way will be clear to organize a Young Ladies' Band."

Then what a tumult there was in that little parlor! They all talked at once, and laughed, and exclaimed, and stormed the inventor of this strange scheme with questions. She had need of all her wits.

"But, Mrs. Spafford, how could we plan so as to supply the demand? Suppose we had but one pin-cushion, for instance, and every mortal woman who appeared on some Saturday afternoon should insist on having a pin-cushion? Women are just so perverse."

"Then we would have our secretary notify the members that all the pin-cushion force were desired to put their brains and fingers to work and make pin-cushions in view of the next Saturday's onset."

"Where would we get our material?"

"We would need a buying committee — or, rather, a buying partner; that is quite common

in all large firms--some one, or two, whose duty it would be to purchase material, write orders to be sent in as to what was needed, and the money for the purchases calculated beforehand, and drawn from the funds held by paying clerk."

"Suppose she hadn't money enough for the purchases?"

"Then we should manifestly have to do without the material until such time as we could afford to enlarge our business."

"Couldn't we buy on credit?"

Both Mrs. Spafford and Addie Stowell shook their heads emphatically at this, and Addie said:

"No *ma'am!* You don't catch me launching out in any enterprise that hasn't a solid cash foundation. I should expect my father to disown me forthwith. If there is anything he *hates* it is the credit system."

"What if we become bankrupt?"

"There is no danger of it," Mrs. Spafford answered promptly. "A business done on cash principles has no occasion for bankruptcy."

"Well," said Marion Wells, when the babel

of tongues was somewhat subsiding, "it is a novel idea, certainly, and it is a great deal more fun than a fair; but, after all, I can't see what special difference there is in the right or wrong of the matter. I think fairs are all right, but if I didn't I fail to see why I shouldn't condemn this also."

"Why, you don't think stores are wrong, do you?"

This question, in various forms, was leveled at her by several of the girls at once, Mrs. Spafford sitting back a silent listener, and enjoying this sharpening of their wits.

"Oh, well," Marion said, "of course it was nice to use such phrases, but also of course it wouldn't be a real store, nor conducted on any such principles. It would just be a fair, or bazar, or something of that kind, with a different name."

This made Mrs. Spafford sit erect and speak decidedly:

"Not if you follow out my plan, girls. I warn you beforehand that I mean nothing but business. I think very likely that real "fun," as you call it, can be gotten out of the idea

but it is not to have that for a foundation. I have been proposing a strictly business transaction, and if you vote to adopt my suggestion it must be with the understanding that every member of the firm is held rigidly to business rules and regulations from the very outset. In fact, I hope one outcome from the enterprise, if you take it up, will be a discovery — if any of you need to make a discovery — that young ladies can be as thoroughly business-like and methodical in their work as men. We expect to do what is strictly woman's work, it is true, and to do it in womanly ways, but those ways should never for a moment be allowed to become a synonym for looseness or inaccuracies. Now, as to the question concerning the essential difference between such an enterprise and what is known as a church fair. One of my objections to the latter way of working is the fact that there is no legitimate place for any such work. The church — even its chapel or parlor or lecture-room, by whatever name you call its smaller rooms — is not, and, according to my idea, should never become a place of merchandise. Buying and selling may

be very legitimate transactions, but we don't want to see them carried on in a church. Even when we hire a hall for the purpose it is not actually suited for such a purpose, and the large amount that is likely to be charged for it detracts so much from the possible profits that it of itself begets in us a feverish desire to make up that leak by enormous profits, or questionable side-traps, like post-offices and lemonade-wells, even if we do not descend to the actual coarseness of ring-cakes or grab-bags."

This plain speaking produced a sensation. The girls bestowed speaking glances on each other; convenient elbows were nudged, and one or two quite loud "ahems" indicated that some portion of the audience considered another portion of it touched on sensitive points. None of these little asides did Mrs. Spafford pause to notice, but hastened to add:

"Then another and very important drawback, is the fact that preparing for a fair always brings a period of feverish haste and excitement; the eventful evening about which so much talk has been made, and of which so

much is expected, is chosen and announced, and draws near, and the gay young workers wake up at the eleventh hour to discover that they are not nearly ready for it. Then come late hours, and neglect of books and study, and duty of almost every sort, and the girls run hither and thither distractedly, unable to think of anything but the approaching crisis. Finally it comes, and the last day before the final crush, is often filled up with heart-burnings caused by mistakes made, or quick words spoken, under the impulse of haste and strong excitement. Haven't you admitted here this afternoon that such is nearly always the case? Besides, I wonder if any of you can have forgotten the distressing reaction of the next morning, when only a very few of you rise to the degree of self-abnegation necessary to helping royally in the clearing up? The rest stay at home and are miserable, because their consciences hint that they ought to be helping; and those doing the work are miserable, because they are tempted to say sharp, uncharitable things about the people who are not helping; and for days thereafter there seems

to be very little in life worth doing; while, at the same time, nothing looks so improbable as that they will ever want to go through the trials of another fair. Now, all this is unnatural and unhealthy. In business life it is very different. There is a regular routine, which never, or at least *need* never, rise to an absorbing height, to be followed by days of reaction. Besides, there is no temptation to lose all delicacy of feeling and sense of propriety, and make oneself a nuisance by tormenting people to buy what they do not want, because it is for the Church. As if the Church were a beggar, and must be supported by public charity!"

Mrs. Spafford's cheeks glowed; she was very sensitive where the honor of the Church was concerned. As she looked at the matter, it had been made, by those who should have guarded its reputation carefully to wear the "guise of a pauper" long enough.

Some of the girls laughed; they thought their leader peculiar; they were incapable of taking such high ground. Why should they not be? Their mothers before them had not taken it: had not so educated them. But there

were two or three whose thoughtful faces and earnest eyes helped Mrs. Spafford wonderfully. She could plainly see there was material here for growth. If only two or three, and those leaders, could be educated, even at this late day, to take such a stand as she was sure ought to be taken on all these questions, the generation to come would see a reform. But whether most of the girls saw the principle at stake or not, they saw the novelty, and were interested and excited over the scheme. To go into business, to make money, to be partners, and have a buying committee and a money-drawer, and a scheme unlike anything else that had ever been tried, was something that they could understand and appreciate; with but one exception, they voted unanimously in favor of the scheme. Miss Lily Archer was sure it would not meet with mamma's approval.

“Mamma has peculiar ideas,” she said, looking down with sweet shyness and toying with her fan. “I beg your pardon for saying so, but I am sure she will think it unladylike.”

Poor little Lily Archer! Mrs. Spafford had herself seen her personating Rebekah at the

well, dressed in a startlingly picturesque costume, dipping up lemonade for certain fast young men, who laughed and talked too freely with the Jewish maiden, to represent either ancient history or modern propriety, according to the views of some; but the fair Lily—as unlike the Jewish type of features, and color, by the way, as her mimic lemonade-well was unlike the spot where Rebekah watered the sheep—had never been taught that style of propriety. Also, she had seen her in a tableau, personating a richly dressed and richly jeweled dishonorable wife, receiving a tender caress from a man who was not, even in the tableau, her husband; and neither she nor her mother had considered this unladylike! What could be expected from such? Nevertheless, Miss Lily did not positively withdraw; she said she would think about it; would talk with mamma, it was all so very new and queer; nothing like it had ever been done in “our set, you know.” Oh, she would help; make pretty things, and buy them very likely, and of course she would give the fifty cents. Why did they have such a

ridiculously small sum to start with? Oh, as to giving, and all that sort of thing, *of course* she would help; but she couldn't put her name down as one committed to sustain the enterprise; at least not now.

And just here Mrs. Spafford interposed.

No, they could not take her money; if she were not ready to join heart and hand in the work, they would have none of her. It was right that she should consult her mother, of course; they were all to do that. Nothing was to be definite this afternoon except plans to be submitted to the heads at home; the only question to be settled was, "Do you agree heartily, uncompromisingly to all this, if mother and father do?" Still, Miss Lily's name would not go down; and Mrs. Spafford had discovered what she surmised and wanted to know; that "mamma" was put in, as a graceful way of saying that the idea looked dull and commonplace, and lacking in gentility to the fair Lily.

Occasionally there is a curious offshoot from the parent tree as unlike what might be expected as possible. Just such an unexpected

character did Lena Bacon suddenly develop. She shook back her gay brown curls, and flashed her bright eyes, and declared that she thought it was "just fun." Ten times nicer than any fair she had ever heard of, and she was going into it with all her heart, and could paint Christmas cards in a perfectly lovely way, everybody knew, and *they'd* see what she would do."

"What shall we do for a store?" queried one, and the question brought a sudden lull, and all eyes looked inquiringly at Mrs. Spafford, as though she were then and there expected to produce a store ready for occupancy.

"We need a room in somebody's house," she said, promptly; "a good-sized, convenient room, that some person, who has more house room than she needs, will rent to us on reasonable terms. Oh, yes, indeed, we must pay rent. This is not benevolence, remember, it is business. Who of us wishes to beg a house to live in, rent free? Where shall we find the person to appeal to, who has unnecessary house room?"

Immediately all eyes were levelled at Addie


Stowell; she lived with her father, mother and young brother, in the old family mansion which had been almost in the country in the days long ago, before the city moved up so far. The family had been old, aristocratic and wealthy. The wealth had departed, but age and aristocracy were left. Still it was no sham aristocracy; the family had no more idea of trying to profess themselves rich, now that they were poor, than they had thought of professing poverty in the days of their wealth. But a *store* in the old Stowell homestead! That was a leap *somewhere*, surely! And yet the house was so large, and so roomy, and so quaint, and so exactly what would delight every girl among them! Addie laughed.

“You all look at me as though I owned a first-class store in my own right,” she said, gaily. “I know what you are every one thinking of. You see yourselves, at this minute, selling tape and thread and pins in our big, old shut up parlor. Ought we not to have a thread and needle *and-so-forth* department, Mrs. Spafford? It is a perfect nuisance to have to take a car down town for everything

of that sort that is wanted; I know plenty of people who think so. Well, I'll ask mother and father; that's the best *I* can do. We have thought of most everything to help along, but we never thought of renting the parlor for a store before; now that's the truth. But why not? Mother'll be willing, I think; I don't know about father. Why, Lafayette was entertained in that house, you know, and General Washington himself! It *ought* to be dedicated to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, then, oughtn't it? Sure enough! Well, I'll see what I can do."

CHAPTER XVI.

“LAST NIGHT” MEASURED BY DAYLIGHT.

T was all Fairyland to Jennie West. The evening was so lovely, the carriage so luxurious, the accessories all so perfect; she was conscious of looking remarkably well, and Will was so handsome! Then, too, as they rolled smoothly down Beckman avenue, some of the very girls that she would have preferred above all others to have seen her under those circumstances, walked slowly by, casting admiring — not to say envious — glances at the occupants of the carriage.

Will was in a specially genial mood, for he was a young man given to fluctuations in his moods even when with Jennie West; some-

times he was so nearly silent as to be almost moody, and his heart would be evidently busy with perplexing thoughts, but on this evening he chatted gaily, yet with a gentleness in the gaiety and a careful attention to his companion's comfort, such as made her heart throb with gratified something—who shall say whether it was love or pride? The subjects for conversation were numerous, and sufficiently interesting, so that Jennie, while she thought of that important matter about which you will remember she intended to talk with him that very evening, she told herself it wasn't a suitable opportunity just now, she would wait a little, and as they neared the whirl of the city she said, still to her inner self: "When we are coming home will be just the time for a grave subject like that; there are too many people looking at us now, and, it is so light and bustling, it is almost like being in society; when it is dark and quiet all around will be a much more suitable time for earnest talk. Will is so full of life now, I presume he will have calmed down by that time." So she dismissed the prayer-meeting as a topic for con-

versation, and gave herself up to pleasure.

As for the opera, it was all that operas generally are, and perhaps more than some. The simple truth is that this young lady and gentleman in purity of sentiment were above the play to which they were listening. The style of dressing presented was such as covered Jennie's face with blushes, and made her attendant wish several times that he had not been such a fool as to bring her. The main reason that either of them endured in quiet that which offended their sense of propriety, was because the house was well filled with fashionable people whose position in society Jennie at least thought was such as to warrant one in being pleased with whatever pleased them. So, though she blushed, she also laughed. Moreover, there was, of course, a great deal to enjoy; the carefully studied scenery, the witching music, the exquisite play of light and shade, the exquisite toilets all combined to fascinate a wiser head than Jennie, at her best, possessed. The fact that a great deal of the singing was in an unknown tongue, was a greater source for thankfulness than at least

these two realized. However much she might have desired to admire, because it was a fashionable opera, and the fashionable world admired it, I feel sure that could poor Jennie have understood the meaning of some of the sentences, she would have blushed not only, but would have withdrawn herself from that indecent presence. Whatever may have been said of the larger portion of the audience, I am glad to be able to tell you that Will and Jennie could not translate, and never had heard translated, much that they listened to that evening.

This being the case, what was there about it all that seemed such an intoxication? Is there something peculiarly sensuous in music?

Jennie found herself yielding more and more to the spell which she did not understand. Had she been familiar with the "Lotus Eaters," she might have quoted from their story to describe her sensations. Life — real, actual daylight life — seemed horrible to her; something to shrink from, dread; to sit forever surrounded by all the soft and tender and exquisite sights and sounds, the dreamy lull of music

floating around her, Will Coleman slowly swaying her elegant fan to and fro in exquisite time with the music; this was *life*, happiness, heaven. Nothing else was worth a thought. Did she put all this nonsense into words? Not at all; she was not even conscious, save in a dim way, that she *thought* it. She did not know that her mental faculties were actually intoxicated!

Well, it ended at last, as even such hours of bliss will end, and they passed out into the darkness. Only for a moment — they made their speedy way to a refreshment-room, and Jennie daintily tasted an ice, while Will drank before her eyes a glass of wine. It was something that he rarely did before her; something that he knew she, in a sort of fashion, disapproved; yet to-night he was excited, and felt that he needed it to steady his nerves! Besides, was her disapproval so very great? She only shook her head at him and said:

“Oh, Will, I am ashamed of you.”

But she smiled, and looked so pretty while she said it, that he felt provoked to tempt her to say it again. “She is as pretty as a witch

to-night," he muttered, as he drained the last drop. "I wish I could take her to the theater, or the opera, or somewhere every night of her life, and there *were* no days between to think about. I wish I had a fortune. Hang it all! I wonder if I dare take another glass?"

It was more fortunate for Jennie than she knew that he decided another glass unsafe; his was not the sort of brain that would bear even one glass steadily, and he hurried her somewhat abruptly away from her ice, and into the carriage. In a few moments they left the brilliantly lighted streets, and were alone and quiet. No society now, nothing to prevent that earnest talk which Jennie was to have had with her friend that evening. The soft balmy air hovered around them, and the holy stars looked down on them, and every influence of nature was calming and ennobling. What was the trouble with Jennie? Every nerve was in an intense and unnatural quiver. She had by no means calmed into her ordinary self. Life was an intoxication still, not a grave, day-by-day reality. She didn't think of the *days* at all. Only the witching star-lighted nights, and soft

cushions, and careful hands to draw her wrappings about her. She hummed a bar from the most dreamy strain that the opera contained, and said:

“Wasn't it perfectly lovely, Will?”

“Did you like it?” he asked her, and he looked down on her, and she looked *beautiful* to him; neither did his voice have its usual poise. He had the added excitement of a glass of wine to combat.

“Like it!” she said, ecstatically, “it was heaven!”

The comparison did not jar her, neither was it said with an intention of being irreverent; her senses were aglow.

Do you think, during that four miles drive, she said anything to him about the prayer-meeting, or about “joining the church,” and “leading in prayer,” and taking his position as a responsible and prominent member?”

The Church! She forgot its existence. What had the *Church* in common with this entrancing star-lighted night, with the wierd strains of the opera still sounding in their ears?

Just now, would she have cared to hear his

voice in prayer? What mattered it whether he was *ever* an officer in the Church? I do not wish you to understand that any of these thoughts presented themselves for her to settle; they were simply so utterly unimportant that she forgot them all.

“Jennie,” her companion said, looking down on her as she curled in a graceful little ball among the cushions, “Don’t you wish we were a million miles from home, and it was going to take us forever to get there?”

Ah me! As *they* count distances, who understand the relative importance of things, how many million miles were those two from home? God grant that it may not take them forever to reach there! This was a speech that Will Coleman, in his cooler moments, would think silly; would sneer over. It is a pity for a man to make remarks to a woman that even he himself will have to sneer over when he remembers them afterward. But Jennie was in no mood to help him.

“Yes,” she said, with a delicious sense of dreaminess to her voice; “I wish nothing was anywhere.”

What did that mean? Not even Jennie knew, and if she didn't who should?

The young man kept looking at her; he hesitated a little, he struggled dimly with his judgment — but it was such a witching night, and she was so pretty, and — well, he was in no mood to struggle; why should he? Why should anybody do anything save exactly what he wants to do?

“Jennie,” he said, and he bent his head lower, and drew her wrapping more closely around her, and herself more closely to him, “dear Jennie,” — Do you think I am going to tell you what was said? Even over such a miserable little caricature of love as this, for the sake of the high and holy feeling which it imitates, I would draw the veil of silence.

You can imagine what was said, the impassioned words that were spoken, the solemn promises that were made. What a solemnity it is that neither of those young things — for so far as regarded their knowledge of life and its responsibilities and solemnities both were young — what a pity that they should

play with promises so sacred, nor realize that the eternal God looking down upon them heard their vows and recorded them for their eyes to meet again after *this* living is over!

It was not until hours afterward that Jennie, all her pretty things thrown wildly around Mrs. Evans' guest chamber, as she overturned a pile of laces to find a stray brush, was reminded by a glimpse of her Bible that she had designed this evening's conversation in a different channel.

"I declare," she said aloud, pausing in her search, "I never said a single word to Will about joining the Church, or any thing. I forgot every breath about it! Oh, well, how could I be expected to know what strange things he would have to say to me?" And she blushed and laughed to herself in the light of the tardy moon that was just flooding the eastern sky. Then the soliloquy went on: "I shall have opportunity enough hereafter to say what I choose, and he will be bound to heed what I say, besides. I wonder if we shall go to many operas together? Will said the music was well enough, but — Oh, dear,

what nonsense he talked to-night! I wonder if he meant half of it?"

There was a happy light in her eyes. She fully believed just then that he meant much more than half of it. But it was thus that she dismissed the subject of the Church and Will's proposed prominent part in it. No, I mistake. It was not dismissed yet; her thoughts reverted to it the moment she knelt to pray. If ever Jennie West was to pray for her friend you would think it might be on the night when she had promised to be his forever. But she found, I cannot say to her dismay, that it was even harder than usual to hold her thoughts. They would flutter around that eventful evening and live over again its scenes. If her thoughts, while she knelt there in the attitude of prayer, could have been photographed before her, I fancy they might have startled her a little. They ran somewhat after this manner: "Our Father who art in heaven'—I don't really know whether I care to have Will join the church after all; people can be good without that; he is real good I'm sure; if I ever do half as

well as he has done I shall be content — ‘hal-
lowed be thy name.’ Some people have such
over-strained ideas about a public profession ;
Callie would think he ought never to go inside
of an opera after that. I wonder what Callie
will say to the news I have to give her, as if
there could be any harm in operas ! I’m sure
the music was heavenly, and the whole scene,
the lights and flowers, and the colors and
everything, was unlike earth enough to make
one think of heaven. ‘Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.’
Will is such a perfect gentleman ; it is a pleas-
ure to have him even pick up one’s handker-
chief, he does it so gracefully. I wish Callie
and her husband hadn’t so many notions. I
fairly dread to tell her about it ; she will
have a lecture for us both. I don’t want to
be as good as Callie is, now that’s a fact ; she
is too good for this earth ; she ought to wait
until she gets to heaven. ‘Give us this day
our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as
we forgive our debtors.’ If he only had money
he would be just perfect. What a shame it
is that his old aunt didn’t leave her property

to him. I hate the sight of that prinking, red-haired neice that got it all; she thought she would get Will by the means; I'll show her that she missed her calculation in that respect. 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' Will shall take me to the theatre occasionally, anyhow; I've never been to the plays that I want most to hear. 'For thine is the kingdom.'"

Do you imagine she realized the two trains of thought which she was carrying on? I don't think she did; the form of the prayer was so familiar to her that she did not need to hold her thoughts to the words, and she was so used to letting them flutter off in that wild fashion on whatever chanced to occur next, that she did not feel the startling incongruity. At the close of the formula she did draw her thoughts away long enough to put up one sincere, if selfish, petition: "Oh, Lord, take care of my dear Will. I wonder if he has got home yet?" This last sentence not included in the prayer, but insisting on presenting itself in the same breath to be thought about. As for Will Coleman, he

dismissed his carriage at the corner, feeling the need of a walk in the cool, quiet air to calm his blood after all the excitements of the evening. What he thought he kept entirely to himself, not even expressing it by a whistle. He let himself into his boarding-house in a very quiet fashion, quietly made his way up stairs, lighted his lamp, and saw first that Bible lying open exactly as he had left it several days before ; lying on his book-shelf where he had lain it ; proof positive of the amount of daily care his room received and of the amount of Bible reading that he had since done. He seized it now, closed it roughly, without a glance at the fly-leaf, and tossed it to the topmost shelf without a word.

The next morning there was no moon-light, no star-light, no music, only for the young man a sense of exhaustion following the late hours and intense excitement of the night before, and the dull headache which always followed a glass of wine.

“Heigh ho !” he said with a weary yawn, “I’ve got to get through another day at that confounded store, selling potatoes and onions

and cabbage and cheese! I wish the world was made of rose-leaves and we dined off nectar and ambrosia. Eight hundred dollars a year, and house rent and cabbage and what not, to say nothing of opera tickets and carriage hire and kid gloves—six buttons on them, too, I counted last night! I wonder that didn't steady my nerves. What a confounded simpleton I was! The idea of my acting like a youth with ten thousand a year! Still, I don't know how a fellow was going to help it. The music and the witchery generally got hold of me, and she is as pretty as a doll. If it weren't for money it would be all right. Some people succeed in making money in this world, but they don't do it selling onions and the like for other folks to pocket the profits. I believe I must cast about for a better way."

And Jennie? Well, it was morning with her, and the flowers she wore the night before had withered; and the witching curls of her hair were one irritable snarl. Also, she heard Mr. and Mrs. Evans in their room talking—talking too loud, Dane was, when the guest-chamber had an occupant.

“The fact is Eva”—this was what she heard him say—“the fact is that we must retrench in *some* way, or I must just admit that I am a dishonest man and can not pay my bills. I have no sort of idea how I am to meet those already made, and they grow larger every day of our lives. There is mismanagement somewhere.”

“Pshaw!” said the lady in the guest-chamber, as she jerked out a whole friz which had tied itself up into a million cross little knots. “If Will ever ventures to speak to me in any such fashion as that he’ll be *sorry*, I can assure him! Bills and retrenchment and embarrassment! I wonder if I am doomed to hear that story all my life! If I thought I was I’d want to go to the next opera and have a good time, and drown myself in the river on the way home, Will and I.”

Isn’t it a sad beginning to a union of care and trial and responsibility and pain, when the first morning afterward looks just as it did to those two? And yet they thought, poor things, that they *loved* each other!

CHAPTER XVII.

AN OPEN DOOR.



E must have somebody who understands business better than we do, to sort of manage us, and things generally."

This had been Addie Stowell's half-laughing, half-serious announcement, on the day when — the Stowell parlor having been secured, and plans in general carefully matured — the now thoroughly interested girls had met to arrange plans in detail. Addie's suggestion met with instant approval, and at least a dozen voices declared that Mrs. Spafford was just the one to take care of their heads and their money. That lady who had foreseen the necessity for some such arrangement, and believed, moreover,

that it was important to select a woman, rather than, a girl, for general manager, resolved to accept the appointment without further discussion.

“Very well: I will engage to be your confidential clerk, and manage the finances of the firm to the best of my ability until such time as we shall agree to have a younger and more sprightly assistant. I make one proviso, to the effect that you will empower me to secure a helper where I choose; one who shall, under my direction, do whatever work which would naturally be in my province that I choose to give her; this will not relieve *me* from responsibility, for I will engage to be responsible for the doings of my chosen helper.”

This was agreed upon, and the “managing clerk” took the chair. From this moment the process of organizing the somewhat ponderous firm, and getting the machinery in running order, went on rapidly and satisfactorily. The truth is, the “managing clerk” had not lain awake for several nights without results. She knew exactly what she wanted her firm to do, and the way to set them at it.

It is no part of my intention to take you through the details of this unique business. You can imagine that the task was not an easy one, and that there were constant pitfalls to avoid; it is rather with an experience which—as we see events—grew out of this plan that I have to do. Mrs. Spafford, in suggesting the importance of a sub-clerk for herself, had a plan in mind. Her heart was very much set on getting nearer to her fair, and, yet so often, sad-faced neighbor, Mrs. Dane Evans; getting near enough to help her: for that she was sorely in need of help grew daily more evident. The lines on her face were deepening, and there was a pitiful pallor creeping over it, that told of a weary heart struggling with some burden daily growing too heavy for her to lift. Could she be interested in this enterprise of the young ladies? Could she be prevailed upon to give them help, by becoming associated with their leader—not to assume more responsibility, but to take certain duties easily performed, and perhaps much to her taste upon herself? And then, could it be hoped that, in the many conferences which this partnership of responsi-

bility would involve, they would get nearer to each other; so near that, in time, she would accept Mrs. Spafford as a tried friend, and let her help, if she could, in the spot where she needed special help? And then could not this servant of her Master hope to lead that tired heart closer to the great burden Bearer? Such in brief was the plan toward which Mrs. Spafford was quietly working. Not seeing her way clear, but seeing a little entering place, perhaps, she resolved to push in that direction, while she watched for more light.

It was over this entire matter that she studied, and frequently prayed, while she went about her home one afternoon. Not a word had been said to Mrs. Evans as yet; the managing clerk had been watching her opportunity. So much depended on one's first impressions of things. Having prayed much over the whole scheme, she found herself looking often from the window, watching the clouds, for the day was dull and rainy.

"I don't know why it should seem so important to go over there on this day of all others," she said to herself; "it is raining, and is

not a day when one would be likely to expect a call unless the business were urgent; mine certainly can wait several days if necessary, and yet I feel impelled to go this afternoon." She made all necessary arrangements for the evening meal, which she and Warren looked forward always to enjoying together, and settled herself at the window with her sewing. There was no use in thinking about going out while the rain came down so steadily, and the wind was blowing too; a thoroughly disagreeable day. It was easy to settle oneself outwardly, yet she found that she had not gotten away from the impression that now was the time. She sewed steadily for a few minutes, then rolled up her work with a resolute air. "I will go *now*," she said, decidedly. "Why shouldn't I? I am not afraid of the rain and she may be very lonely. I can not get away from the feeling that this may be my opportunity."

Resolved upon being as informal as possible, and have her appearance fit the day, she donned waterproof and rubbers, and, umbrella in hand, sallied forth, knocking at the little side door of the small house, instead of ring-

ing the front-door bell. There was no response to her knock. She stood dismayed; so strong had been the impression that she was to come on just that afternoon, that to find the house apparently deserted was a keen disappointment. What, then, had the pressure meant which had seemed to her so like a voice directing her steps?

“The house doesn’t look closed,” she said, still arguing with herself; “the curtains would be dropped if she had gone for the day. I wonder if I may venture to the kitchen-door? Perhaps they cannot hear a knock at this point.” So she stepped around the neat little box of a house to the kitchen-door. No, it was ajar; somebody was at home; she knocked boldly. No response; and the wind was whirling her umbrella about in an insane fashion, and the eaves were dripping on her head. It was a very disagreeable spot in which to wait, and yet, somebody in this little house was at home, and the resolute caller was unwilling to beat a retreat. “I’ll step in,” she said, boldly; “I am getting all wet standing here, and I can explain the intrusion. A

moment more and she was in the tiny kitchen. It was a scene of dreary desolation. The fire in the cooking-stove was out; not decorously out as in many a thrifty household at that hour of the day, but there was every indication that it had *gone out* ruthlessly, and with malice aforethought; the hearth was ash-bestrewn, a dish-pan half filled with greasy water occupied the top, while certain pots, kettles, and various other cooking utensils stood around in dismay; the kitchen-table, too, was a scene from which the tidy house-keeper turned quickly, appalled at herself for venturing in, and almost feeling as though Mrs. Evans could never forgive her for looking on the desolations of that kitchen. Not a person was to be seen, and the uninvited guest had just resolved to slip quietly away, and ring, perhaps, at the front door, if she could not bring herself to give up the visit, when she heard that which startled her into a change of plans. The unmistakable sound of bitter weeping came to her from the only half-closed door of the adjoining room; not only weeping, but lamentation; a voice as of one in almost

mortal agony either of body or mind. All manner of conjectures rushed through Mrs. Spafford's mind. Mrs. Evans might be ill, might be in sudden and terrible affliction, and was certainly alone. Could she hesitate any longer on the ground of intrusion? Certain it was that she could no more go home with the wail of that voice in her ears, than she could leave any other fellow-creature in distress and do nothing to help. Pausing only to set her dripping umbrella in a safe place, and close the kitchen-door, she stepped quickly across the room, pushed wide the intervening door, and stood face to face with Mrs. Evans, who sprang suddenly to her feet, a look of utter astonishment, by no means unmingled with indignation, struggling with the tears on her face.

“Mrs. Spafford!”

It was every word she said, but a whole volume of wounded pride and resentment over this unwarrantable intrusion were pent up in the voice.

Mrs. Spafford stepped quickly to her side, and laid a gentle hand on her arm:

“My dear friend, I seem to you to have been guilty of a great rudeness, but, indeed, I mean no intrusion. I came to your kitchen-door on an errand, and, finding it ajar and no one quite ready to answer my knock, I took the liberty of stepping in a moment out of the storm, and heard your voice as if in pain or distress; I feared you were alone and needed help, and I came to offer it. I will go away at once, only believe me, I had only a heart full of love, and a longing desire to help you.”

Before this sentence was completed, Mrs. Evans had sunk again in a little heap on the couch from which she had risen, and with the pitiful cry: “God knows I need help, if any one on earth does,” burst into a perfect passion of weeping.

Her visitor bent over her a distressed, doubtful face; ought she to go away from one in such bitter mental agony as this? Yet what could she say to help or comfort her that would not seem like an attempt to pry into the secrets of another?

“Dear friend,” she said — and her voice was very tender — “I think you know where to look

for help, no matter what your trial or burden ; whether it be great or very small, He is equally ready to have it brought to him and left there. Why don't you ask his help? You are one of his own."

"I am not, I am *not!*" burst with passionate tears from the poor burdened heart. "I am nothing at all but a miserable woman who has made a failure of everything that I ever undertook. I ought never to have taken the responsibilities of a wife and a housekeeper upon me. I am a *failure* in every sense of the word! I ought to die and go away out of the world and give others a chance to live."

What desperate talking was this, from a woman who had been a beautiful and treasured bride but a short time before! What could be said to her? Was not this a matter with which a stranger ought not to intermeddle? What if it were only a childish outburst of passion over some misunderstanding between her husband and herself? An outburst, the memory of which, and of the fact that there was a human eye-witness, would humiliate

her to the very dust, after it was over? Again and again, even in those few moments, did Mrs. Spafford chide herself for having entered that kitchen-door. Yet she could not leave her now and thus. Besides, what if this were a genuine sorrow, a pain which did not go away after the first outburst? She remembered the drawn look on the young wife's face, and greatly feared that the burden, whatever it was, stayed with her. Also, what did that voice mean which persistently urged her toward coming over here in the rain of this very afternoon? What was there that she ought to say to this child-woman? All these thoughts passed swiftly, then she spoke again, still in that low, quieting voice:

“Dear friend, whatever you are, no matter what mistakes you may have made, no matter how unfit you feel, you are dear to Christ at this moment: he loves you and waits for you. He has infinite power, and infinite wisdom, and infinite forgiveness. There is nothing that he can not forgive, and nothing that he can not help you to do if it is right that you should do it. I speak with authority, for I

have tried him; yes, with better authority than that, for he has said it: 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee.' It is his own voice speaking. Go to him for help, and as sure as the sun shines above these clouds you will get just what you need. Never mind whether you think you are one of his children or not; claim the place of a child because you need to be, and wish to be, and *mean* to be one from this moment."

She spoke rapidly, with a sort of eager positiveness, and yet calmness. It had the effect of quieting the bitter sobs, but she could not tell how much heed had been given to the direction.

She waited in silence a moment, then spoke again:

"Is there any way in which I could help you, or shall I go away and come at another time?"

She received no answer at all. In great doubt as to what to do next, she stood before the drooping figure with its face buried in its hands. Just as she had resolved to

slip quietly out and trust to a note in which she would pour out her heart in sympathy, Mrs. Evans raised herself to a sitting posture, brushed back the disordered hair from her swollen eyes, and said, with an effort at dignity :

“I beg your pardon, madam; I have been saying some wild and foolish words to you, I am afraid; you must not think anything of them; I do not mean what I said, whatever it was. It isn't often I give way to my feelings in this manner; but, indeed, I am so miserable and so helpless.”

The voice, which had been growing more tremulous with each word, suddenly broke into another burst of tears, and the poor lady buried her face in her hands again.

Mrs. Spafford's resolution was taken; at least she would not leave a soul in distress; afterward she might regret the intrusion, but she *had* intruded, that part could not now be helped, she would do what she could to guide this struggling heart into the light. She sat down beside Mrs. Evans and laid a tender, caressing hand on hers; after all, that seemed

the utmost limit of her power. But Mrs. Evans was trying hard to control herself. A moment more and she sat erect again.

“I hope you will forgive me,” she said humbly; “I am very weak and foolish. I really *am* in great trouble, Mrs. Spafford; and yet it is nothing that I can explain; my life seems such a failure to me. I cannot right it, because I do not know how to begin — which way to turn. I have meant right. I meant to make the sweetest, happiest home for my husband that a man ever had but — it is not my fault, nor Dane’s. Mrs. Spafford, I may as well tell you, it is the miserable money. We cannot live on our salary; we are in debt, and going deeper every day; and we see no way out; and my husband blames *me*; of course he does; why should he not? a wife ought to know how to spend the money that her husband earns in such a way as to bring him comfort and not misery; and I have not done it, and cannot do it; I have tried and tried, and made a miserable failure. It *is* my fault, you see, after all To-day, the whole dreadful sense of failure broke over me, and I felt that I could not

bear it any longer ; the troubles of this awful day have just broken down the little strength and pride that I had, and I gave way utterly. There now ! I have told you the whole wretched story, without intending to ; I have humiliated myself to the lowest depths, and dragged my husband down with me ;” and the hot passionate tears rolled down her cheeks.

Mrs. Spafford put a firm arm around the shrinking, trembling form of the excited woman, and spoke in quiet tones :

“ My dear friend, let me talk to you a moment quietly and reasonably. You have done no very dreadful thing in saying to me, as a friend, that you find it hard to bring your expenditures within your income. That is not so strange a thing that it should seem to you a startling, or even a humiliating matter. Neither is it a strange thing that you have failed. I am older than you, I think — at least in experience I am many years older — and I know just how hard a matter it is to get the whole bewildering machinery of household life into running order. I am not surprised that you should have grown utterly discouraged, and believed

yourself to be making a humiliating failure. What you need is a determination not to give way to any such feeling. A resolution to meet and conquer this problem, and show your husband that you are a general—equal to the emergency. It *can* be done. And dear friend, I want to repeat to you what I said at the outset: that no perplexity is too commonplace to take to the Lord Jesus Christ. I know people who suppose it would be almost irreverent to take their domestic bewilderments to Christ. I can not think what kind of a friend they imagine him to be, if they are afraid to go to him with everything. I should never have dared to assume the cares and responsibilities of our home if I had not known that I could go to Christ for direction as to how to wisely spend the money he put into my hands, and how to order all my affairs so that there would be no friction.”

Mrs. Evans had dried her tears, and was looking with a troubled, and yet puzzled face at her guest.

“That only makes me feel,” she said, suddenly interrupting her, “just as a number of

things you have said, at other times, have made me feel that your religion and mine were so utterly different, that they could not *both* of them *be* religion; and lately I have come to feel that, among the things that are utter failures in my life, my Christian experience stands first. I never *had* any Christian experience. I thought I loved Christ and wanted to do right, and I said so when I united with the Church. But I tell you truly, Mrs. Spafford, I have not known anything about him; I have done nothing to please him, and I shouldn't know how to commence. And besides" — she looked down, now, and a deep flush spread over her heretofore pale face — "I will tell the truth," she said, after a moment of hesitation: "I suppose it is very wicked — indeed, I know I am *very wicked* — but I will speak the truth to-day, if I never do it again. If I could please my husband — make his home what it should be — I shouldn't care whether I pleased anybody else or not — even Christ!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

SERVING CHRIST IN THE KITCHEN.



If Mrs. Spafford was shocked by this last sentence, she had resolved not to show it either by voice or manner.

It became apparent to her that Mrs. Evans was under too strong excitement to weigh her words carefully, or to have a realizing sense of what they conveyed; and while this loyal servant of Christ felt with a thrill of pain that it might be, and doubtless was, too true — that this woman was putting the earthly love before the heavenly — still, the present did not seem the fitting time to help her realize the sin and folly of this. She spoke in calm, reassuring tones :

“Christ smiles on all unselfish human love, you know, and on none more surely than that sanctioned by marriage vows; and true women love and honor you for your desire to be all that a wife can; not ignoring, as too many do, the little things of life. Now, dear Mrs. Evans, do you mind putting somewhat into detail the difficulties that just now present themselves? Possibly they are such as my longer experience can help you surmount. I do not, of course, mean a detail that will be unpleasant to you, but—in short, let us lay aside formality entirely; I am a neighbor, and I am a friend; let me help you. What is the special burden to-day? You see I am well aware that each day in a housekeeper’s life has its special burden.”

At the sound of her visitor’s quiet voice and matter-of-fact sentence, Mrs. Evans, who was not by nature a lover of scenes, and who had been really struggling to regain composure, felt her overwrought nerves growing calmer, and presently said—a vivid blush overspreading her face:

“I can hardly see how you can help despis-

ing me; I almost depise myself. The simple truth is so very humiliating; I have been acting like a spoiled child instead of a woman; nothing very dreadful; indeed, nothing *dreadful* in any sense has happened; it is just a culmination of small difficulties; they have been gathering and gathering about me for weeks, and this miserable afternoon I broke down under them."

Her lip was quivering, and she was on the very verge of breaking down again.

"It is the old story of the last straw that disabled the poor camel," said Mrs. Spafford, good humoredly, without a trace of sentiment in her voice, and yet, somehow, the voice conveyed sympathy. "I know all about that. I have had just such days; sometimes the last straw is an exceedingly hateful, ill-shaped one. In what form did it appear to you?"

A little gleam of a smile quivered for a moment on Mrs. Evans' face.

"It is ill-shaped, certainly," she said, quickly; "and I think she has been more hateful during the last three or four days than I ever thought a human being *could* be. Mrs. Spafford, my

Betty went away this morning; just before lunch time. She has only been with me four weeks, and has been by far the worst one of them all. I have had nine! This morning she served the most insufferable breakfast! Burnt toast, and dreadful coffee; I don't know what she could have done to it, nor to the chop for that matter, I know we couldn't eat it; even the potatoes were dreadful; baked potatoes! I didn't think *they* could be spoiled, but these were soft and wet and oh — miserable! Mr. Evans went to his business without so much as a cup of coffee, or a bit of bread; and when I went to the kitchen, as soon after as I dared, to remonstrate with Betty a little, and to see if she would not promise to try to do better; before I had spoken a dozen words she became fearfully angry; used dreadful language, declared she was overworked and underpaid — she was what they call a cheap girl, Mrs. Spafford" (this last spoken with a burning blush)—“I thought I would try her, and see if a little of our heavy expense could not be cut down in that way; but, indeed, I paid her what she said she had been getting, and you

know for two of us she hardly *could* be over-worked."

Mrs. Spafford hardly knew whether to laugh or cry over the anxious questioning sound in the trembling voice; its owner had evidently been terribly shaken by the formidable Betty in the morning, and could not yet speak of her with composure.

"And what was the conclusion of Betty's wrath?" she asked, resolved not to commit herself by giving an opinion either way at present.

"Oh, she went away. She said she would; declared that nothing could tempt her to be abused in this house any longer, and she would warn every girl against me; she would leave my character at the intelligence office, and I would find myself *spotted*, whatever that means. I was perfectly amazed! I had not said anything to call forth such an outburst, and I thought she was excited over something else, and would quiet down if I left her to herself for awhile, so I went away, and staid up stairs all the morning, so that the sight of me would not anger her; but when I discovered

that it was long after lunch time, I came down to see why she had not rung for me, and to make some arrangements for dinner this evening and she was gone! And oh, Mrs. Spafford, if you *could* see the kitchen she left! (Whereupon Mrs. Spafford drew a little breath of relief; then the poor lady had been too much absorbed in her grief to realize that her guest *had* seen it!) "The fire was entirely out, and the breakfast dishes not touched, and a great many dishes that must have been used yesterday and left unwashed standing around; kettles, you know, and saucepans, and ugly, greasy black dishes, with things sticking to their sides!"

Nothing more utterly disgusting than the look on Mrs. Evans' face can be imagined. Her guest's laugh rang out merrily at last; she could not help it. But her friend's trials were too real to admit of laughter.

"It is dreadful," she said, with a meek face, "to be so foolish and so dependent upon others, but I have really been in utter despair this afternoon. Not for that reason simply," she hastened to explain, while the shadow instantly deepened on her face, "but as you say, it was

a sort of last straw; not so much of a *straw* to me, either, for I never made a coal-fire in my life, and though I tried hard to set that one going, the ugly black lumps looked fiercely at me and stayed as black as before, after all the waste paper in the house had been used, and a *great* many matches. Mr. Evans certainly ought to expect his dinner when he gets home, since he went without his breakfast; but what he can possibly find to eat in this house I cannot see, and the rain was so steady it prevented my going out to find another girl. Indeed, to tell you the truth, I had a horror of trying to get another; it seemed to me I would rather starve; and so the whole miserable sense of my failure in every way as a mistress, or as a worker, rushed over me, and in addition to all the rest, just overwhelmed me. Dear Mrs. Spafford, I don't know why I am telling you all this foolish, unwomanly story, wasting your time and pouring into your ear a tale that can certainly be nothing but weariness to you! It is not like me thus to parade my annoyances; it is not, indeed; I ought to beg your pardon."

She had sat erect during this last sentence, dried away the last tear from her hot cheek, and was struggling hard to put on the sweet dignity of hostess, which was generally so becoming to her. Meantime her guest thought rapidly, taking a surreptitious glance at her watch. Should she insist upon taking this troubled wife home to tea with her, sending little Tim, who did her errands, down to watch for the car that generally brought the two husbands, and so have one of those quiet tea-parties that she was always telling Warren about? Her bread was fresh and excellent; she had made a treat for supper in the shape of a soft ginger cake, and the potatoes which she meant to warm, by the addition of a few bread crumbs and an egg, could be made into "patties," and do duty for four. Oh, yes, the way was plain enough (to carry out this project), but was it the best way? Swift thinking, even while Mrs. Evans was trying to call back her matronly dignity, then she shook her head — no, it wouldn't do; the sore-hearted young wife was not in a tea-party mood, and it was just possible that there had

words passed between husband and wife during the attempt at eating that uncomfortable breakfast, which had made wounds. If this were so, they could be better healed between husband and wife alone; she must give up her little tea. Then the other plan should be made to work. She slipped her watch back into its pocket, and spoke briskly:

“ You are telling me all this because you are a sensible woman, and paid me the compliment of believing my offer of sympathy sincere; and you know that, to a Christian woman, there is no higher privilege than to be able to help a sister in Christ. Now, dear friend, listen to me: I don't wonder a kitchen left in the plight which you describe should look formidable to *you*, but it doesn't to me; I have conquered one many a time, coal-fire and all; moreover, I can show you how to do it so that it will cease to be a hopeless thing to you. Now I want you to further prove your faith in my hearty friendship, by letting me go with you right into that said kitchen, and reduce it to a state of meek and dainty subordination; then you will get for

your husband as nice a little supper as he ever ate in his life ; get it with your own two hands, and my word for it, he will have an unusual appetite.”

With eyes that were full of astonishment did Mrs. Evans for a moment gaze on her guest. That this proposal brought her into contact with a form of friendship to which she had heretofore been a stranger was evident ; that she was puzzled to know how to receive it was equally evident. Only a moment the look of bewildered irresolution rested on her face, and then she said, suddenly :

“ I believe you do mean every word you say ; thank you ; I need help ; I believe I need just the kind that you are willing to give ; I will accept it gratefully.”

There was a happy light in Mrs. Spafford's eyes. This simple, sincere answer had shown her that she was not mistaken in her estimate of this fair young housekeeper ; she was a woman to be helped, not only, but to be loved.

Feeling still assured in her heart that this was no time for more important matters, without more ado Mrs. Spafford urged an immediate

assault on the kitchen, and thither the two women went, Mrs. Evans only pausing to say in a distressed tone:

“If I only had a large apron that would protect your dress!”

“Never mind,” her guest answered, cheerily; “my dress is only calico, and washes nicely.” Then she set to work on that forlorn stove. “You see,” she said — resolved upon working and lecturing at the same time — “coal is splendid for burning, after it has been coaxed long enough; it is very hard-hearted, needs a pretty large gathering of kindlings blazing all around it to set it a good example. I suppose this is the place where they are kept, is it not? Your house is arranged like mine.”

Saying which she opened a door, disappeared for a moment, and returned with her arms full of neat billets of wood, of uniform length; these she built up with skillful interlacing, inside the wide-mouthed monster, Mrs. Evans looking on with interested, yet incredulous face — she had had an experience with these heartless black lumps that the skillful engineer was piling in with, such composed face; she

did not believe they would burn! But they did!

“They are conquered,” the younger lady said, with a relieved sigh, as the flames shot up through the interlacings and curled themselves skillfully around the black lumps, which soon began to emit a flame peculiar to themselves. “They recognize a superior power, and do not dare to act as they did with me so short a time ago.”

Now if you are a skillful general of a disordered kitchen, possessing the ability to marshal pans, kettles and pails into orderly ranks, and make them retire to their places, you know how steadily the small kitchen yielded to the spell that was now upon it; if, on the other hand, you have the misfortune to be one of those who, though able to play sixteen pages of Chopin, or some other distinguished composer, without a mistake, yet look with absolute dismay — yes, even terror — on the interminable paraphernalia of a well-stocked kitchen, you can appreciate the feelings with which Mrs. Evans watched the rapid transformation of hers. They were such tiny places after all

— kitchen and pantry — and the water was so hot and soap so plentifully used that, to a skillful workman, it could not, you know, take much time; but it looked like magic to Mrs. Evans.

“I wish I could do it,” she said, eagerly, as she lifted the shining plates from their bath in the hot rinsing water and set them to drain, after the copy which had been set her. “How smooth they feel and how shining they are! Betty would not recognize one of them. Mrs. Spafford, I tell you truly, if I only need not have another of those girls enter my house, I should be happy enough to shout. I cannot tell you what a terror they all are to me. They do nothing right, and I know just enough to be sure of that, but I don’t know how to help it, and I am afraid of them all.”

“Why don’t you do without them?” said Mrs. Spafford, coolly; “little bits of homes like yours and mine are too small and precious for hired hands to touch, if we have strength enough to guard them from it. I just enjoy getting dinner for Warren, and we have the cosiest little breakfasts.”

Mrs. Evans' eyes brightened wistfully.

"If I were only you," she said, and she thought of the three dollars that had to be transferred each week from her purse to that of her tormentor; if it *could* be saved. "If I were only *you!* But I don't know anything about it."

"Learn," said Mrs. Spafford, coolly, as though it were a very simple matter; "you would be surprised to see how soon you could manage this nice little home to your entire satisfaction. Mrs. Evans, what are we going to get for a treat for your husband this evening?"

The bright look faded from the weary housekeeper's eyes.

"There is very little in the house," she said, her cheeks flushing; "it rained so I depended on Betty. I meant to have a leg of lamb and some vegetables."

"Too late for those," declared the cook; "besides, we want to be dainty, you know, not go into anything so gross as legs of lamb." This with a merry laugh. "I see a dish of potatoes in the pantry; do you ever stew them in milk! We used to have cream when I was

a girl and lived where milk was a necessity, not a luxury, but now I use milk and find it answers nicely; I can show you how to serve a dish that I fancy you will enjoy."

Mrs. Evans gratefully agreed to be shown, notwithstanding the fact that in her ignorant heart she was skeptical about making that ugly looking dish of cold potatoes fit to eat; still her forehead did not clear.

"I wish Betty had controlled her temper long enough to have baked bread," she said, sadly; "we have nothing but baker's bread, and my husband dislikes it so much."

"Then let us have some dear little soda biscuits, as light as puff balls; I saw a cup of sour milk on the shelf, and felt just like taking it down and making something nice."

"Sour milk!" said poor Mrs. Evans, aghast at the idea.

"Yes, indeed; you have eaten the little white puffs often, I presume; they are easy to make. It is the very thing. I'll set you to making them while I get the potatoes ready to cook; then while they are baking you can cook the potatoes."

“There is some steak,” said Mrs. Evans, hesitatingly; “Mr. Evans doesn’t dine down town, he only takes a plain lunch, so I like to have meat for him, but I don’t know that I can manage steak.”

Very meekly she spoke; she knew no more about broiling steak than she did about those biscuits which Mrs. Spafford so composedly talked of her making.

“Oh, yes, you can,” declared the brisk voice; “that is easy. Now about the biscuit. There is a quart measure, first you sift a quart of flour, now just so much butter—wait, this little plate will measure it nicely, and serve you for the future.”

Thus she moved with careful steps, putting her directions as clearly and as briefly as possible, until Mrs. Evans, her face flushed, her eyes shining, stooped and set in the oven a row of small round balls that she verily believed would never be anything but burnt *dough*! How could anything so simple and so quickly done ever transform itself into something fit to eat? But when the stewed potatoes were tested with a delicious mouthful, according to

Mrs. Spafford's direction; when the bit of juicy steak lay meekly between the wire gridiron, and was being skillfully turned, and emitted a delicious odor through the kitchen, and when the "lumps of dough" came out of the oven the plumpest, flakiest little puffs that her eyes had ever beheld; when the tea was steeping, and her husband's key was heard in the front door, and Mrs. Evans was alone, her good angel having but a few minutes before washed her hands, rolled down her sleeves, and vanished through the back door, having given this parting word: "Now, Mrs. Evans, I want you to tell me whether your husband likes stewed potatoes or not, especially of your stewing, and soda biscuit of your making," Mrs. Evans, thinking of her, of the words that she had spoken that day, of the work her hands had wrought, and of the courage and hope which she had breathed into her, had much ado to keep the tears from starting again; they would doubtless have had their way but for the fact that her delicately broiled bit of steak was ready to be served. The tears were stayed, but her heart was full


of grateful love, as she said to herself, with a resolute little pressure of her lips, as though she were speaking the words in her heart: "She is a blessed woman; I believe God sent her to me in my misery; she doesn't know *all* she has done for me today. There is something else that she can teach me; I shall know the difference between her religion and mine. She has something that I have not, and, if it is for me, I mean to have it."

"You will have to dine off bread and milk to-night," declared Mrs. Spafford, with smiling eyes, to her astonished husband, who was reviving their neglected fire, when she appeared through the rain, at the side door. "I have been out all the afternoon. I found an open door which I have entered, I verily believe, for the Master's sake."

"God bless you!" he said, looking down on her tenderly, when she had told so much of her story as she felt she had a right to tell. "If you can make a home over there like this of ours, I believe you will save *two* souls, instead of one, from shipwreck."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ENDS MEET.

T is not my purpose to give you a detailed account of my friend Mrs. Spafford's life, nor of her plans of work. Indeed, I could not if I would. The story of a life must, of necessity, be fragmentary; bits here and there from actual every-day experiences.

It may be that some have mistaken my design in telling you somewhat of this true woman's experience. I may have been expected to give in detail the management of a Christian household on small capital; all the little economies, the plans, the self-denials, the failures. Such was by no means my intention. Mrs.

Spafford's quiet economies and self-denials shall be left like those of hundreds of other Christian women, with God and her husband. I may even have been expected to prove that she found it possible to keep to the Bible doctrine of tithe-giving, and yet not starve! Thank the Lord that many and many a Christian life proves that! There is little need that Mrs. Spafford's history should be added. The truth is, I love to linger over these first beginnings, but there is need for haste, and I must ask you to step over a chasm of almost two years before you take another peep at the pretty little home. And I must own that you will find it in shadow. There has been much sunshine during those two years. There has been progress in the mission work to which my friend has devoted as much of her means and her heart as was possible. There has been a white day in her life when she went to the great reunion of Christian women, met to compare notes and devise plans for the future.

She has had the pleasure of seeing a great church filled to overflowing with Christian women. Women on the platform presiding,

planning, managing, with the skill of generals trained to the service, and enlisted "for life or during the war!" She has heard the voice of prayer from lips that once were unaccustomed to the service; and from lips that once were sure they could not speak, save in the solitude of their own rooms. She has heard addresses such as thrilled her heart, and nerved all her powers to new effort; addresses from the lips of women. She has even lived to see Mrs. Bacon appointed a district collector for the Woman's Board, and heard her offer, in silvery tones, an address of welcome to delegates from a distance. Oh, yes, she knew the world moved!

Meantime it had moved in a quieter, but no less certain way right around her. I hope you do not imagine that that co-operative business enterprise was a failure? I very much doubt whether anything begun as that was, with such an end in view, and guided every step of the way by prayer, is ever a failure. Certainly this was not. The Stowell parlor had found its level. A long, bright room, lighted with many windows, brightened with flowers in summer.

time, and with potted plants and flourishing vines in winter; brightened — the windows and the tables — with every variety of glowing color in worsted and silk. Every step of the way had been a success. That is, after they were fairly started; there are always drawbacks at first with which to contend. There were some to say that the scheme was a wild one, and would never succeed. There were some to grow weary of it very soon and abandon their efforts; there were some to sigh and predict failure because the whole world did not rush in upon them from the very first to admire and to buy. And yet it had moved steadily forward. It was on an assured footing now. There was every sort of fancy article to be had that you might choose to order; if not “in stock,” the trim white-aproned miss, with demure face and laughing eyes who waited on you with pencil and paper, and announced herself the “order clerk,” would quietly take your minute directions, taking care that they *should* be minute by becoming a skillful questioner, taking care that they should be in black and white, with your own name appended, and the

date at which you might expect the same; taking care, too, that you should have a duplicate, so that you might expect neither more nor less than had been ordered; so careful was this new firm of its reputation. There was a variety counter, where could be found pins and needles and thread and tape and buttons, of exactly the right size and color and shape. There were endless little useful articles belonging to that class of goods that people never think about until they see, and then know they must have right away. It took a little time to accustom the patrons to the fact that this unique store was only open on one afternoon of each week, and then for a limited time. For the first few weeks the partners were continually informed that if they were open every day they would get a great deal more custom.

Gradually, however, ladies began to say, "I suppose *I could* wait until Saturday for that purchase, and then buy it of the girls; it would encourage them." In the course of time this statement also changed, and took the form of, "Oh wait until Saturday and buy your buttons (or your edges or your collars) at 'The What-

Not'” (for such was the simple, suggestive name that their establishment assumed) ; it will really pay you to wait, they have such a nice variety, and are so very reasonable in their prices. Besides if they haven't exactly what you want, they will take your order, and manufacture or purchase for you. They have a buying clerk who can really suit you better in the city than you can yourself, and save all the wear and tear of running around besides.”

When Mrs. Spafford knew that this form of talk had come to be the prevailing one as regarded their place of business, she settled down into satisfaction. Of the constant strain upon time and strength and patience, that it was to this one woman to keep all the wheels of her delicate machinery properly oiled and running smoothly, I will not attempt to tell. She had one all-sustaining motive ; she knew that it was, with her, work done literally for the Master. She earnestly believed that it was not only an institution for making a little money in a legitimate way, but that it was a training-school. For were not all these young ladies connected with the firm, learning, not only to

earn, but to give, systematically, regularly, conscientiously? In Mrs. Evans she had found just the helper she needed; it was her exquisite taste, backed by the other's educated judgment, that secured to the firm its reputation for having just the very things that matched, and that one wanted.

As for Mrs. Evans, what had not the enterprise done for her? Of the earnest, active Young Ladies' Band that had grown out of this enterprise, or rather grown along with it, and become a vital element of its existence, it shall be my pleasure to tell you, more at length, some other time. For the present let it rejoice your heart to know that the scheme widened daily, not only as a business, but as a circle of influence. Nothing that she had ever undertaken, with an eye single to the glory of her Master, had so filled Mrs. Spafford's heart with joy and gratitude as did this whole matter.

Yet, as I told you in the beginning, over the small happy home there had come shadows. Not light ones, drooping low for a little, then flitting away; oh, there had been many such,

of course ; Mrs. Spafford had expected them ; she was not a child, nor yet an enthusiast ; it had not been an easy matter at all times to make ends meet. Especially had such been the case when extra expenses came upon them, for they had had many an extra expense ; who has not ? Many a time had the careful accountant rejoiced over that fund—ever so tiny though it was—which she had been able to lay aside from time to time as an extra. Many a time had she rejoiced over the monthly dividends from the little firm, which, though so small that they would have made a business man shout in derision, had added not a little to her hoarded “extra.” Out of the necessity for this “extra” had also grown great satisfaction ; for the husband, looking on, with eager eyes, helping where he could, standing in manly admiration where he could not, was one day enabled to get his eyes open so wide that he discovered even five cents for a cigar to be an expense that he certainly could avoid if he chose ; and seeing the example ever before him of self-forgetful economy he could not but *choose*. It is true his eyes were opened wider

than that; in laying it aside, he first discovered what an almost necessity it had become, and over this discovery he was so shocked that I think he would have had courage to continue the struggle even without the motive of economy; but that it was a *struggle* at all, was a mortification to him. "I declare," he said to himself, speaking firmly, "I'll never be a slave to any habit! I did not dream of such a thing! If five-cent pieces should ever become as plenty with me as flies in August—and there is no danger—I'll never smoke cigars again." Not long thereafter his eyes were opened wider. He had not thought to tell Callie; it was such a little matter, and he was half ashamed that he had not done it before; it did not seem necessary to let her know what a struggle it had been; so he kept his small secret—at least he thought so. As if such a husband could keep a secret from such a wife!

"What has become of them?" she asked him one evening.

And so innocent of her feeling was he, that he asked in astonishment:

“Of what?”

“The cigars that were to piece out your lunch?”

“Oh! Why? Become of them? I dare say they are *smoke* by this time; somebody has puffed them into thin air, though I didn't. How did you know, Callie?”

She gave him only a very searching and very happy look in answer; then, after a minute:

“How could I help knowing? Why did you do it, Warren?”

“A variety of reasons, little cross-questioner. In the first place, it occurred to me that, although a very small leak, it was one that might as well be stopped. You see you set me such a persistent example on that score that I could not well help learning—and then—well, Callie, I don't know how you discovered anything about it, but you may as well know the truth. I found the habit had grown on me—was harder to break than I supposed, *much* harder; I could hardly have believed what a struggle it would be, and that convinced me that I must break off not

only for the present but forever; of course, the Lord's freedmen can not afford to bind themselves with any sort of chains."

When they knelt together for family worship, which they did in a very few minutes after this conversation, there was that in his wife's prayer, in the words, and in the quiver of her voice, as she laid her joy before the Lord, that her husband said, directly they arose from their knees—said it with his arms clasped close around her:

"My dear, if I had known, if I had *dreamed*, that it was a sorrow to you I should have turned from the whole thing long ago. What self-gratification is there important enough for a man to be the cause of an hour of pain to his wife!"

"Then I ought to have told you long ago how I felt," said Callie, her eyes brimming with glad tears.

And I think so, too. At the same time I admit that she thought within her glad heart that not all men were like her husband in his willingness to give up self for his wife's sake; and I am afraid I think *that*, also.

Meantime, though I am long in introducing him, there was another and a very important reason why Callie was glad. Do you think she wanted the father of her son to set him an example as a tobacco-smoker? Not she! Where is the mother who does? And the boy was six months old — able to watch with very wise eyes what was going on in the world. Who is going to say how soon he might have thought the curl of cigar-smoke in the air a very pretty thing? or how early he might have become accustomed to a tobacco-tainted breath as something inseparately connected with his small world? His name, of course, was Warren, but what did the glad young mother call him for a pet name but “War.” I am not sure that there was not a queer significance to the name in her heart! What *war* there had been between her scantily-filled purse and her conscience during the days when she was fashioning his cunning little garments! Dear me! Doesn’t every mother know all about it? The lovely embroidery, the delicate flannels and muslins, and cambrics and lawns, too fine and fair and sweet for any but those who

seem to have just come from heaven—the little babies. Yet this mother had come off victor. Soft flannels? Oh, yes, indeed! they were in her estimation a necessity. Delicate white robes, many of them—they, too, were necessities; but they were not so fine, nor so long, nor so daintily tucked as the mother's fond, foolish heart would have liked, and the embroidery—that apparent necessity to baby existence, if we may judge from the wardrobes of many—was very scarce. Embroidery, such as she would have liked her darling to wear, would make awful inroads on the scanty purse, and embroidery such as she could make, she was well aware, made awful inroads on time and strength; so she made war with the wish to smother her darling under such costly folly, and as I said, came off victor. It wasn't so hard, after she went shopping one day with a lady who paid three dollars for a yard and a quarter of the pretty stuff, and would not join the Missionary Society because she *could not afford it!*

“After all,” she said to Warren, “such people help; they make one see the folly, the

inconsistencies in things more quickly than they can be shown in any other way.”

But her perverse husband answered:

“Then it is a pity they wouldn’t work a trifle faster, and let more people see it.”

Yes, I am telling a true story. They did it. Six months had there been this pretty little new body to think of and care for, and not a penny of debt incurred. Neither had a penny been borrowed from the sacred jewels in the box on the mantel. It wasn’t easy; oh, dear, no! There was much self-sacrifice, much planning, much diligent forethought and afterthought. There were quiet little self-denials practiced which cost some strength of will, but which after all left the head and heart calmer, perhaps, than they would otherwise have been. There were industrious hours over plain sewing for certain neighbors, who were glad to get a deft needle-woman so convenient to them. There was every penny of the carefully-hoarded “extra” used. Why not? They had said gaily to each other, this happy father and mother, “Isn’t he a blessed little extra?” and they had kissed him until

he cried. Ungrateful baby. It needs planning and patience and sacrifice, but *it can be done*. Don't I tell you it *was* done?

Yet the shadow fell. The hot days came and hot nights, when baby fretted and moaned, and in many ways made good — so his father declared — his right and title to his pet name. These nights were followed by weary days, when the mother toiled and toiled, and felt she had not strength to do, and so left undone, with a conscientious self-sacrifice that only those can understand who have been obliged to turn away from duties that they longed to perform. If baby had only kept well, the long warm days would have been lived through joyfully, but he grew steadily weaker and thinner. They did not tell their grave forebodings to each other, this husband and wife, and by so much more did they press heavily on each heart. Still they tried to be brave before each other; but the father's very step, as he hurried up the little walk when the business day was done, grew to have a nervous, anxious sound in it, and his eagerly put question, before the door was fairly opened, "How is he to-night,

Callie?" had such an undertone of pain in it that she, in pity, learned to watch for his step, and to say with a smile, when she could, "We are no worse, I think, papa." Yet they both knew that not to be better was in reality to be worse.

"If we could only get to cooler quarters," the father said occasionally, and directly he had spoken he turned away quickly from his wife's wistful eyes. Truly, they felt as though it would have been almost as reasonable to talk about getting to heaven.

Meantime, another anxiety menaced them. "Mr. Spafford," the senior partner of the firm had said to him, "You must hold yourself in readiness to go to Paxton at an hour's warning. There is some business pending which may result in our having to send you out in haste. The fact is, Howell & Co. are in difficulties, and I'm afraid—" At this point he pushed to the outer door and drew his chair nearer his clerk, and there ensued a business explanation, to the details of which Mr. Spafford had much ado to give attention, distracted as he was with the query as to how he would

manage about leaving Callie and the boy, and with the awful thought, what if the boy should grow worse in the night while he was away? He did not like to admit even to himself that the baby's illness was such as to justify him in asking to be excused from the trip. If he had, he was by no means sure it would have done any good. His employers were men not given to thinking of much that did not concern business. Still he made all necessary preparations for his wife. She heard the news with a dismayed face, yet promptly realized the importance of satisfying his employers.

"I wish Mrs. Evans were at home," was the instant outreach after help. She knew many people, and they were very kind, and she liked them; yet, after all, how few there are among our acquaintances whom we are willing to call in to be one with us in perplexity and trouble. Mrs. Evans had come to be such an one, but she had gone with her husband into the country during his vacation.

"Addie Stowell would stay with you," her husband said, "and Charley will sleep here to be within call, in case you should need—";

He did not finish his sentence. He knew he would be understood. There was always before them the possibility of baby growing suddenly worse, and the need of a summons to the doctor.

So all the preparations were made, though Mr. Spafford said cheerily: "After all, I may not have to go." And as the days passed, and he heard no more about it, and a little cooler weather came, and the baby seemed better, the cloud lifted. So Mr. Spafford was not prepared for his senior employer's sudden message, delivered very near the close of a busy day.

"Mr. Spafford, we have bad news from Paxton. I'm afraid our worst fears are to be realized. Still, you may be able with promptness to effect something. You will need to start at daylight. I regret that there is no earlier train; but that will bring you in soon after midnight, ready for early work the next morning. Well, sir!" This last in an inquiring tone; for, pre-occupied with business as he was, he could not fail to see the swift dis-

mayed look that overspread his clerk's face. The dismay was very apparent in the tones of his voice :

“But to-morrow will be Sunday !”

CHAPTER XX.

MEASURED BY TRIAL.



ELL," said the senior partner, irritation visible on every line of his face, "I am aware of that, of course. On ordinary occasions we are not in the habit, as you know, of infringing on the Sabbath rest of our employes, but this is a special emergency; a large amount of money is at stake, and you can, of course, see the necessity for your being in Paxton at the earliest possible hour on Monday morning."

Without doubt his clerk was listening to the measured words, every sentence of which indicated the senior's annoyance in thus being called to account, and obliged to explain his

actions. He was listening, but he seemed in doubt as to how to answer; for he hesitated, and the blood mounted higher in his face, and the silence between them was becoming oppressive. At last, raising a pair of keen eyes, he spoke in a firm, yet sufficiently respectful tone:

“I cannot engage to break the Sabbath, sir, even in a business emergency.”

“You *can not*?”

“No, sir; my principles — prejudices some might call them — are very strongly marked in that direction. I can not conceive of a business emergency which would make it seem right to me to ignore the plain direction: ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’”

For a moment the senior partner seemed to be too much astonished to speak. He was not a high-tempered man; at least not in the sense in which that phrase is generally understood; he never scolded, never descended to the level of loud words, or excited tones; yet his word was absolute, unquestioned *law*, through the entire establishment; and it had heretofore been Mr. Spafford’s business simply

to obey. In view of the long education that this man of large business had had as an undisputed sovereign, it is perhaps no wonder that he could for a moment only *look* his astonishment over the sudden rebellion.

“Very well,” he said at last, turning away and moving with his usual dignified step toward the inner office.

The words were quiet, the manner in no sense changed, yet Mr. Spafford knew that he was in great and dangerous disfavor with his chief; knew it as well as he did less than an hour afterward, when one of the cash boys gave him a note written in the senior partner’s clear, firm hand, which read as follows:

“Inclosed find check for \$50 (fifty dollars), the amount due, and accept the thanks of the firm for the faithful manner in which you have hitherto served them. We shall, of course, have no further need of your services after to-day. Hoping that you will in the future meet with the success that your industry deserves, we remain, yours truly.”

And then, through the mist that the faithful clerk felt gathering over his eyes, he could

see the signature of the firm ; he even took occasion to notice the graceful curve of the capital B, and the flourish around the D. So small were the details with which his mind occupied itself ! And yet he also saw his home, with its beloved wife, and its sick baby, and the great and increasing need that there was for money ; he saw himself out of employment for weeks — perhaps for months — and his baby growing worse — slipping away from them, perhaps, for want of those things which money could procure. He saw actual *want* staring them in the face. Yet he went on with the column of figures he was adding ; reached a result that he knew was correct, signed the name of the firm to half a dozen papers, wiped his pen with usual care, closed and locked his desk, delivered the keys to the proper authorities, said “ Good evening ” much as usual to his fellow-clerks, and went out, for the last time, from the store where he had served faithfully. Yet the weight of the trial had told somewhat on his face by the time he reached home ; must have done so, though he strove hard not to let it, and said to himself, as he

went up the walk, that he would not tell Callie until after supper; nor then, indeed, unless the baby was even better than usual. Yet he had not been in the little dining-room five minutes before she said:

“Warren, what is the matter?”

Then, of course, he told her. He spoke cheerfully, even smilingly — tried to make as little of it as possible, but she stood bewildered; she seemed unable to take the idea in.

“Discharged!” she said. “Discharged!” repeating the word in a dazed sort of way, thinking how strange it sounded connected with her husband’s name. “Why, Warren, what can you mean?”

Then the whole story had to be gone over; and, after all, it was well; it was such a short story, so simple and untragic in its details that it might almost have quieted the excitement of them both to go over it. Yet it meant to them serious business; they both knew it meant: “We have lost that which was our daily bread.” There was no bank account, however small; there was not even an “extra” laid away in the private slide of Callie’s writ-

ing-desk. There was only that last check, out of which to pay a month's rent and the doctor's bill, and provide the hundred daily necessities of life, for how long! I will not deny that there was a sense of terrible sinking in Mrs. Spafford's heart. She had never longed for money as she did just now, as she had been longing, that very afternoon, because of the white-faced darling in the crib, and she had never in her life touched so near to actual poverty! Yet the first thing she did, after she took in the entire situation, was to move her chair around the other side of the crib, closer to her husband's, and kiss his white forehead; and the first words she spoke were:

“After all, Warren, there is nothing to regret. You did just what was right; indeed, there was no opportunity for choice; you could not do otherwise; and the Lord knows all about it.”

Thus it was that the shadows in that home grew longer; the days passed strangely, that is, the first five or six. Warren took his breakfast later, lingered after it, beyond the time for family worship, cared tenderly for War,

in a hundred ways restful alike to mother and baby; did a dozen little things for their comfort during the day that he had never before had time for; then went out on a weary round of calls in the hope of finding somewhere a situation, coming back every night a trifle more disheartened than he was the night before. It was not the time of year when vacancies were plenty—if in fact in the over crowded city there is ever such a time. He got the check cashed, with a curious pitiful wonderment as to how or when he would get another, and paid the rent, and laid aside some that he hoped could be kept to give to the doctor, and brought home with him five little gold dollars that he showed after tea, to his wife.

“Oh, Warren,” she said, understanding them at once, “I was wondering about them. Don’t you suppose—do you think I mean—would it be wrong to *use* the five dollars this time? We have no income now, you know, for a little, and baby needs a few things. Shall we borrow them for this emergency?”

“Callie,” he said, and his tone was low and strangely tremulous, though there was no reproach in it, “we promised to swing off, and trust Him for emergencies.”

“So we did. And I am very faithless; put them in the box, Warren; indeed, I did not mean, to *steal* the Lord’s jewels, I only thought of borrowing.”

She spoke quickly, and had some ado to keep back the tears. But he gave the shining things to her, and with her own hands she dropped them into the blue velvet box.

Before many days they had that which put the loss of the father’s situation into the background. Without any question baby was seriously worse. Oh, the dark, dark days which succeeded each other now! How can I tell you about them? Ah me! how many hearts there are in this world that need no telling! The father made no more efforts to find a situation; indeed, there were hours in which he was able to thank God that he had none, no duty to keep him from ministering now to his child and his wife; for one

seemed to need help almost as much as the other. His days and nights were alike spent in tireless watching and waiting. That one word expresses to the initiated a whole volume in itself; alert, helpful *watching*, is sometimes not so hard; but the waiting for what may, aye, apparently *is* coming—with slow steps, indeed, but still *coming!*—that is what wears out human lives.

It was one of those breathless summer mornings which occasionally followed breathless nights. Baby lay in a limp, almost lifeless heap, in the small white crib; too weak he felt even to smile an answer to the wistful eyes bending over him. Neither father nor mother had left him for an hour of rest during the night. Indeed, there was not a spot in the house in which they could have rested had they tried; no spot where they could get away from that faint wail. Sometimes it seemed to the father's heart—when occasionally he closed his eyes for a moment to rest them—that he should hear it *always*, after this, wherever he went, whatever happened! The long summer night had stretched

its slow length along; mother and father alternately walking up and down the room trying to rest the tired baby, or sitting in the large rocker, pillowing him tenderly on one arm, and gently fanning him with the other. Now the longed for morning had come at last, and, as they looked at the pinched features of the child, and then at each other, they needed not words with which to say that the night had made sad ravages. It was plain that he had failed much. For the first time since his sickness they did not attempt going through with the form of a breakfast; that much, Warren Spafford had regularly insisted on; indeed, he had several times made the fragrant cup of coffee himself, brought it with his own hands to his wife, and with tender firmness insisted on her drinking it. This morning he sat almost as limp and wearied-looking as the baby before him, making no suggestions in regard to food or rest. The awful depression of disappointment and foreboding was upon him.

Mrs. Spafford turned to him at last, her eyes heavy, less with weariness than fear:

“Warren, don’t you think you might find the doctor before he starts on his daily round, and get him to come earlier; Don’t you think there may be need of it?”

“I am afraid there is,” he spoke in a low, hopeless tone.

It was evident to her that he had lost all heart. Her own began to give great throbs of pain, but she struggled for composure. For baby’s sake she *must not* yield now. She might soon have plenty of time for tears —when she had empty arms!

Warren rose at once. “I will try for it,” he said, still listlessly; and he sought for his hat and went away, neither of them remembering to break their long night’s fast.

Meantime, however, there had come another presence into the house. Mrs. Evans had returned home but the night before; had run over immediately to see how her friends were, and knew all about the great fear that enthralled them. She came quickly now into the kitchen uninvited, as her kitchen had been entered once. She moved with

quiet yet skillful step around the small domain where the neatness of desolation reigned. Everything was in the sort of order that betokens that very little is being used in that region. Skillfully she built up the fire in the little stove; rapid movements to and fro; one journey home, and just as Mr. Spafford entered the front door, she pushed open the door of the little parlor which had long since been converted into a down-stairs nursery.

“I found him,” Warren said; “he says he will try to be here in half an hour.”

Then Mrs. Evans; “Go right into the dining-room, dear, you and Mr. Spafford, and eat a mouthful of breakfast; you will find it all ready. Oh, yes, you *must*, for baby’s sake, you know. He will need strong arms and a great deal of care to-day. He is sleeping quietly now, isn’t he? Really resting, perhaps. I will sit beside him and watch every movement. *Go*, Mrs. Spafford, because it is right, you know.”

What winning sweetness there was in her voice. And a certain quiet persistence of

manner that carried a sort of strength to the tired hearts of father and mother.

“She is right, Callie,” Warren said, trying to rouse from his lethargy, “right and thoughtful. Don’t let us be ungrateful. Come.”

Now you know just how this suggestion sounded to Mrs. Spafford. How utterly loathsome to her was the idea of food. How much she longed to be allowed to sit by her baby’s side just as long as she could. Yet she struggled with all this that she knew was sentiment, and arose and went out quietly to the dining-room. How pretty it looked on this fair morning. Mrs. Evans had even stopped to pick three or four fresh roses just budding into bloom, and had placed them in a tiny vase beside Mrs. Spafford’s plate. The table was set for two, with much daintier care than had been bestowed on it of late. The very freshness of the napkins had a restful look to the matron’s weary eyes. There was a plate of delicately, carefully made toast, and a tiny bit of steak, broiled to a nicety, just as Mrs. Evans, thanks to her teacher, had long known how to broil. No wonder that it all reminded

Mrs. Spafford of her afternoon invasion into the kitchen across the way. Her husband was evidently thinking of it, too :

“‘For thou shalt find it after many days,’” he quoted to her, with a meaning smile, and then, as she tried to give the answering smile, the very effort to do so brought the tears, and she laid her head on her husband’s shoulder and sobbed outright. It was better to, than to try to bear that heavy strain any longer.

“Come,” he said, after a moment of tender silence, “you are to show your appreciation of this thoughtful kindness, and eat some breakfast now ; it will strengthen you for the day.” He poured her coffee, prepared it carefully, cut small bits of the tender steak for her, as if she had been a child, and although she felt perfectly confident that the very first mouthful would choke her, she sat down and ate bits of toast and steak and swallows of hot coffee, and rose up refreshed. So determined are these bodies of ours to assert their rights, no matter what the spirit is being called upon to endure.

The doctor came promptly as he had prom-

ised; but it was evident to both father and mother that he saw small need for his coming; rather, he stood powerless before the need that he felt himself unable to supply. He was kind and grave, as sympathetic as one could expect a doctor to be, who sometimes stood many times a day by the fair cribs of little babies who were slipping away from life.

“The fact is,” and he drew on his gloves as he said it, “*Nature* will have to do all that can be done for your child. He *may* rally. I have seen children lower than he pull through at last. The vitality of these little creatures is something to wonder at—stand in awe before, in fact. There is one thing I should like to see tried; if you could go to the sea-shore with him, it might do. Sea air works miracles sometimes in cases like these; and, indeed, a change of air is a most helpful thing. You may continue the medicine as before. I’ll try to call this afternoon. We are likely to have a very sultry day, I think. Good morning.” And this was all. And the dark-colored, nice-fitting gloves were on now and buttoned, and he was gone.

All their hopes went out with him. They sat in almost stupefied silence, looking, not at each other, nor at the baby, but at nothing—trying, indeed, to look the future in the face. Go to the seashore! To be sure, it was not very far away, less than half a day's ride on the cars would bring them within the sound of its eternal roar; but for all practical purposes, so far as they were concerned, it might as well have been a thousand miles away. Mrs. Spafford's eyes sought the jewel case on the mantel. There were three little gleaming dollars within, and she knew as well as though she could see inside her husband's pocket, that those and a few quarters were all the money they had in the world. Two dollars of the gold she had paid out mechanically but a few days before, when the church collector called. She thought of them now, thought of the dollars that had lain from time to time within its silken folds. One hundred and fifty, *more* than that, indeed, during the past two years. "We could take him to the seaside if we had that." She did not *speak* the words even to her heart; they just flitted through her mind, and there

was such a touch of bitterness in them that it startled her. Still, how was she to help wondering whether the money could possibly have done anybody so much good as it would be to save her darling?

“Oh, Warren!” she said, and her voice sounded like a wail, “couldn’t we borrow that money, that in the box, and I take it and go a little way with baby? He said, you know, that a very slight change sometimes did great good!”

“My poor dear wife. Don’t you remember that what is there would hardly take you to the depot in a carriage such as it would be necessary to have?”

Silence for a few minutes; then she spoke in tones that were almost desperate:

“Warren, I could *beg* for the sake of our child.”

“Darling, I would beg, if I knew which way to turn. Let us think; no, dear Callie, let us beg of our *Father*, our great rich Father. He loves our child as even *we* can not; he will show us the very best to do. Let us come right

to him as children who trust him, and beg him to show us the way to step."

Almost before the sentence was finished they were on their knees. They were alone again. Mrs. Evans had packed the dishes in a scarcely orderly pile and gone swiftly away, not pausing even to offer to sit with baby a moment longer or to inquire what else she could do. It had occurred to both husband and wife to wonder silently over the suddenness of her departure; then each had decided that some home duty must have needed immediate attention. She had been long absent. Several times since she went had the bell rung—some kind-hearted neighbor had sent to inquire after baby's health; the girls, too, had rung at the door, and inquired and offered help, "if there was anything they could do," and gone their ways. People were kind, but it was a city, where even neighbors were not specially neighborly, and the baby had been long sick, and none realized how sick he was, nor how much in need of help the young couple stood. None but Mrs. Evans, and she had gone to her own cares. So they were alone. And yet not alone; surely the


Angel of the Covenant was with them during that prayer. Mrs. Spafford had often heard her husband pray, yet the intensity of feeling, the perfect *abandon* of self, the overwhelming cry to be hidden from this awful storm that threatened them, to be held in the Everlasting Arms, was something that hushed her sobs, and almost compelled her to lay hold with strong faith upon the Arm of Power. They were both entirely calmed when they rose up.

“Darling,” her husband asked, as he held her with his arm for a minute, “Don’t you believe, don’t you *know* that he will bring to pass for us that which is *best*?”

“Yes,” she said, quietly; and at that moment the door bell rang again, a quick, emphatic peal.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ANSWER.

T is a note for you, Callie," Mr. Spafford said, as he returned from answering the loud peal of the bell. "The man who brought it is waiting for an answer."

"Read it, please," his wife said. She was on her knees beside the crib, bending over her baby. A note from some down-town neighbor expressing sympathy — this was what she thought; it was very kind, but the mother was in the mood just then to feel that human sympathy was a very little thing; some day she might be able to thank the writer for kind words; she did not think that she wanted

to take time from her baby to read them now. Indeed she expressed as much, while her husband was unfolding the sheet. "Did you say he was waiting for an answer? I can not answer notes *now!*"

Then he read:

"My Dear Mrs. Spafford:

I have but this moment heard of your trouble; we are on the eve of departure for our seaside house; expect to take the 12:20 train; I send the carriage with this, and, my dear friend, do you and your husband with all speed, get into it with that dear baby and come to us. I have known sea air to work marvellous transformations in baby lives. There is no time to lose in preparation; I would not, if I were you, delay one hour. We have a large cottage, and ample accommodations for you all; and no more desirable spot could be found for a sick baby. Dick, our coachman, the bearer of this, is entirely reliable, and will drive you with the greatest care to the train, where we will join you. The journey is a short one. Do not wait to do any packing; Mrs. Evans (through whom I learned just now of your great anxiety) will pack a trunk with whatever you can need, and express to you promptly. Meantime she is down town purchasing, under my direction, sundry articles which I know to be needful to the comfort of sick babies who travel; I am the mother of five children; I know all about it. My dear friends, I

feel so sure of your remembering that you are my brother and sister, that I do not imagine you as hesitating for a moment on the score of false pride. Our Father has entrusted me with ample means to pay all expenses of every sort, and directed me to take you, my dear kindred in Christ, under my care. I confidently expect to see you, for I know I am following the lead of Him who guides you and me.

“Mrs. Evans bade me say that you are only to throw together what may be immediately needed for baby’s comfort; bring your keys with you to the Twenty-third Street Depot; she will meet you there, take your directions, and attend to whatever may need attention in your home.

Yours in great haste,

“HELEN V. TEMPLE.”

Long before he had finished reading this remarkable letter, Mr Spafford’s voice had broken, and his eyes were so dim with tears that he could scarcely make out the words. The paper fluttered to the floor at last from his hands, and, voice too much beyond his control to check its tremble, yet spoke with intense feeling:

“Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.”

As for Mrs. Spafford, she had one of those merciful fits of really unnatural self-control

come over her at that moment; the intensely practical part of her nature rose to meet the strain, and served her well. She rose up from the crib, all the pallor gone from her face, and spoke in a clear, positive voice:

“Warren, the baby’s clothes, in the middle drawer, you know—tumble them into the large valise; his little cap and blankets are on the shelf in the clothes-press, in the blue box; my hat lies on the shelf, and my sack is hanging beside it. Is that ten o’clock? There is no time to lose! Oh, Warren!”

All the pent-up emotion, that if she had had time might have found expression, let itself out in those two words; then she lifted her sleeping baby in her arms, and made swift, yet tender, preparation for a journey. I call you to witness to the true nobility of soul apparent in these two, that not a momentary thought of shrinking back from the offered hand, stretched out with such lavish help, occurred to either of them. They were simply above shrinking away from help, sorely needed, and royally offered.

Mrs. Temple’s manner of receiving them

at the depot was perfect. A quick, tender clasp of the hand, given to Mrs. Spafford, and low-toned words :

“ I am so glad you are here in time ; we need have no confusion. He looks very quiet, doesn't he ? The ride down has not disturbed him ; I have great hope of him ; change of air is just what he needs. Mr. Spafford suppose you seat us in the car, while my husband is looking after tickets. Your wife will be able to get a little rest in the cars I think.”

Not a moment's space did she leave for any attempt at thanks. On the contrary she simply, and in a most natural manner, ignored any occasion for them, and gave herself entirely to the arrangement of details for the journey. Mrs. Evans came, at the last moment, flushed and breathless with the haste she had made, and deposited sundry packages on the seat beside Mrs. Temple, received from Mr. Spafford the keys, and a few hurried words of explanation, and the bell rang and the whistle blew, and they were off ! Even then Mrs. Temple contrived to keep their thoughts and her own absorbed by the sick

child; she was alert and fertile in her suggestions and arrangements for his comfort; and he showed his appreciation of her thoughtfulness by continuing his quiet sleep; so much more like rest than anything he had taken for days.

Oh, you don't know, and the worst of it is I cannot describe to you, how that upper room, in which before night she was domiciled, seemed to Mrs. Spafford! A large bay-windowed chamber, delicately tinted walls; casement windows reaching from floor to ceiling, hung with simple muslin curtains; India matting on the floor; the lightest and simplest of cottage furniture; everything pure, tasteful, restful. The windows were set open toward the sunset, and just before her there spread out that wonderful sight, of which some eyes never tire, the white sanded-beach, washed forever by the ceaseless waves. She sat and listened to them, as they rolled, one after another, one after another, always and always *one after another*, up and down the sands! She heard the steady monotone of their voices as they went on and on, in their tireless work;

she drank in the salt air; she watched the curtains sway back and forth in the breeze; she watched the baby in the crib, lying quiet, sleeping, breathing in like herself, the air that, it seemed to her, must be health-giving; she thought of the breathless room where they had spent but the night before; she remembered just *how* breathless it must be there at this moment, and her heart went out in unspeakable gratitude toward those who had of their abundance come to her in her sore need; to Him who had put it into the hearts of his children to do this blessed thing. The door swung softly on its hinges, and Mrs. Temple entered, her face radiant with some new satisfaction; only to look at it was like breathing fresh hope into the mother's heart.

“Don't you think, Dr. Everett is here!” she said, speaking eagerly. “He has just sent in his card, and asked if he could serve us in any way; he is an old friend. I took the liberty of sending word for him to call on us immediately; I knew you would like to have him see baby.”

Now Dr. Everett was a name well-known to Mrs. Spafford. He came from the same city as themselves, and only that very morning when she sat with such a heavy heart looking down at her baby, after her physician had buttoned his gloves and departed, she had said to herself: "If I had *only* asked him to bring Dr. Everett with him! If I had only asked Warren to go for Dr. Everett this morning! What do I care how much he charges to come away up here. I could pay him in some way; I could beg it." Then she remembered, with another dull thud at her heart, that she had heard him bemoaned as out of town. Now, barely a day intervening, here was she out of town, too, by the side of the life-giving sea, and, behold, the great doctor was within reach! Not only that, but was coming that evening to see her baby! Was not her cup of mercy full?

Isn't it a curious thing that histories which cover weeks of time to live can be grouped and put into a half-hour's story? The weeks at the seaside which followed this first evening when Mrs. Spafford sat and watched the sun

dip down beneath the waves were weeks, the memory of which she will carry forever, even into heaven. So full of sweet, constant, merciful, loving kindness were they. Do you think that Mrs. Temple's kindness exhausted itself in the first day's effort? It is not so; each passing day showed her as a marvel of thoughtful, unselfish wisdom. Thoughtfulness shown in ways, that are easy to feel, but very hard to tell. There was an acceptance of Mr. and Mrs. Spafford as her guests for the season in a sort of matter-of-course manner. She made them feel free to come and go, to take and receive, as they might have felt in the home of an actual sister; aye, as it is not possible always to feel, even *with* sisters. She made herself one with them in their care and anxiety. She almost seemed to lift half the burden from them and bear it herself.

Dr. Everett made his call and lingered beyond the time that his professional services were required, giving rather the care of a skilled nurse. He spoke hopefully, not *too* hopefully, because they, who knew so well on what a thread the baby's life hung, would not

have been able to trust an emphatic assurance of safety ; but he unbent from his grave professional air, and *expressed* as well as felt sympathy, and promised to come early in the morning, and came very early, and came several times during the day, and lingered as he could not have done had he been at home pressed with care. All this gave the Spaffords a certain relieved feeling that their baby was not merely one of the many sick and suffering babies, but a special object of the skillful physician's care. The mother expressed something of this feeling to Mrs. Temple one evening, and the manner in which that lady answered gave her a little lesson which she hugged to her heart and never forgot.

“I have often thought,” said the elder lady, a touch of sadness in her voice, “how hard it must be for the Great Physician to bear with us in our determination to think of his love and care for us as only a piece of that which he bears for the great multitude, instead of individualizing it as he constantly teaches us to do, and accepting him as caring for us with even more than the exclusive tenderness of

love which we give to our own. Of course it is only a *seeming* with human physicians, they must exclude us when they go from us to others, and think only of them; but the heart of Christ, you know, is for each, as if each were alone in all the world the object of His care."

Mrs. Spafford had no answer to make for a moment, and when she spoke she only said, "Thank you," but the words were accompanied by a look which the other lady understood. Thenceforth, the young mother thought of Christ as bending over her baby in his crib exactly as though there were no other baby on earth to claim His love and skill, and her heart was wonderfully comforted. Still, she thanked Him daily for the human help and comfort afforded through Dr. Everett. As the days passed, and he came and went, she grew to think of him as a personal friend. She looked back often upon that first evening of his coming, and smiled over her folly, and realized that it was but the vagary of an excited brain to be so glad, so very glad, that he wore no *gloves*, which he drew on and

buttoned, as he pronounced in slow, quiet words, what seemed like a death-knell to her hopes. How foolish she was! Why did she care for gloves? What difference did it make how slowly the doctor drew them on, how carefully he buttoned them? Yet she found that the scene with just those little accessories had photographed itself on her brain, and all the darkness of that breathless morning came back to her, associated with that doctor standing beside her baby's crib, buttoning those gloves. Well, as the days went by, the steady kindness of those ministering never failed. Among Mrs. Temple's other thoughtful ways, there had been introduced to the household a middle-aged, calm-faced, low-voiced woman, who came in noiseless slippers and cool, dark dress, and the first time she lifted the baby in her arms she cooed to him in so motherly a fashion that he laid his tired little head down on her shoulder and went to sleep. Then Dr. Everett, when he came, greeted her with a pleased face, and a shake of the hand, and

stepped to the piazza after Mrs. Spafford to say to her:

“I see you have Mrs. Philbrick here. My dear madam, she is worth more to a sick baby than forty doctors, or even than a mother who is tired as you. I recommend you to go to bed and sleep all night. Baby is safe in her hands, for she is the wisest and tenderest nurse I know.”

There had been no talk about a nurse, no nervous heart-rending discussion about substituting some other care for the worn yet tireless mother's; but Mrs. Philbrick stayed.

“She is an old friend of the family, and has come to spend a few days with us,” was Mrs. Temple's explanation; and she was always hovering within call, always motioning the mother to lie down on the bed and let herself be covered with the baby's blanket or a light shawl, *anything* that would not look as though she had given up the baby and succumbed to fatigue, and the rests that she took thus were many and life-giving. Also baby, with the rare wisdom common to his age, put in his powerful plea for resting both

father and mother, by taking the most obstinate fancy to nurse Philbrick, and waiting for her when she disappeared from sight. So, gradually and quietly, she came to be the recognized nurse; and the mother was learning to turn away from the crib with a great, deep sigh of restfulness, knowing that the weight of care was being lifted.

Meantime, do you think this young couple, with not a penny in their purse, and no visible means of earning one, were able to keep the bewildering future entirely from their thoughts? Yes, they were; almost entirely. But alas! that I should have to admit that the reason was not because of their conquering faith, but because all these thoughts were pushed out by a present and absorbing anxiety. They could not shut their eyes to the fact that, with all the advantages of sea air and Dr. Everett and nurse Philbrick, it was a fierce fight between life and death that was being waged over that one little baby. Ever present before them was the question; "How will it end?" They bore up wonderfully well; they made brave efforts to sustain each other, to appear grate-

ful, and hopeful, and in a sense at rest; but they did not trust themselves to any confidential talks, to any hints as to what might be; they just watched and waited.

It was at the close of a long, bright day, nearly three weeks since they first came to their seaside retreat. An eventful day it had been. Baby Warren had slept quietly through the night, had awakened in the morning, his face bright with smiles, had sat up in nurse Philbrick's arms and played a little in the old fashion, had taken his cream with a relish unknown for many a day; and the mother watching him, felt that she had surely a right to let it into her heart that he was genuinely, hopefully better. All through the day he had sustained this hope, returning to many of his pretty baby ways that they had thought laid aside forever. The doctor had spoken not only cheerfully, but almost gleefully, in his morning call, and when he came again in the afternoon, had said, as he arose to go:

“Well, friends, my unusually long play day is over, and I must go back to the city to-morrow morning. I have delayed for several

days, in order to have the pleasure of saying to you, madam, that I feel perfectly safe in leaving this young man now in your and Mrs. Philbrick's hands. I don't think he will need a physician's care any longer."

Then I think the light on Mrs. Spafford's face went a great way toward paying the doctor. There had been talk after that, much of it, of course. Careful directions given, earnest gratitude expressed, and more than a hint of the strong feeling that could never be expressed in words, and then the doctor had gone away, richer by far than when he came, for he carried a weight of gratitude from two full hearts, and he would be enriched by their prayers, so long as they lived to pray. It was just at evening and they were alone. War had given his last touch of exquisite joy to the full day by playing for a little in the old-time, rollicking fashion with his father's beard, the indescribable little coo in his happy voice speaking as plainly of returning health and strength as words could have done; then he had gone to sleep.

"Callie, see here!" her husband said, turn-

ing aside from the crib, where both had been lingering, and putting a paper in her hand, which, by the sudden paleness that spread over her face, he knew she recognized as a doctor's bill. There it was, a long, long list of visits from one of the most eminent physicians in a great city. But the last line read —

“Received payment (‘good measure, pressed down and running over’).”

“LEONARD EVERETT.”

“Oh, Warren!” Mrs. Spafford said, and then this crowning act in their stream of mercies brought for the first time a rush of tears. “I have not cried before since we left home,” she said, crying and laughing both in one as she spoke.

They showed it to Mrs. Temple, that carefully receipted bill, and, as they talked together of the doctor's skill and kindness, Mrs. Spafford said:

“But the joy is not *all* ours. I think Mrs. Temple, it must be *glorious* to have money, to be able to do royal things, such as you and Dr. Everett are doing.”

And Mrs. Temple, with her hand resting on the younger woman's head, made answer:

“Hush, dear, *we* have no money; it is all *His*. We are but stewards. Dr. Everett recognizes the kinship. Have we not all one Father?”

CHAPTER XXII.

MEASURING HUMAN INFLUENCE!



WITH careful tact did Mrs. Temple watch for just the right opportunity for checking any restiveness in the heart of her guests. She realized that, as their minds reacted from the heavy strain which had been upon them so long, the sense of dependence and poverty would assert itself, and tempt them to think of themselves as intruders. It was at the close of a lovely summer day, that they sat on the piazza which commanded the finest view of the ocean, and discussed the future. Mr. Spafford himself opened the way, by remarking that it must have been a very warm day in the city.

“Yes,” said Mrs. Temple, “and that reminds

me of something over which I have been worrying a little. You will surely not think of taking baby back to the city until summer has entirely spent itself, will you? Our first months of autumn, you know, are liable to be quite as oppressive as midsummer. Baby had such a narrow escape that, it seems to me, you would hazard a great deal in trying to return before October at the earliest."

The mother's heart gave a little thrill of satisfaction over this sentence; it was so pleasant to hear the past tense used in connection with her darling's illness. Others beside herself, then, accepted the danger as "past!" She was joyful and grateful.

But the father's mind was occupied with another problem; he was thankful for the past, and foreboding for the future! He was the bread winner of this little family, and saw no way in which to win any. The rent, too, had been accumulating, he having had only promises with which to pay the last month's balance, and now another was nearly due. Every Monday morning when Mr. Temple returned to the city, he had said cheerily:

“I will keep a lookout for you, Spafford, and I think there will be an opening of some sort soon.”

But openings in the commercial world at this date were not so numerous — at least such as would support a man with a family; young men by the dozens stood ready to absorb any opening, and be content with small salaries. So Mr. Spafford’s face was clouded.

“I must go back to the city as soon as I possibly can, and look for work,” he said, speaking quickly. “You forget, Mrs. Temple, that I have nothing but your unparalleled kindness to live upon.”

“I don’t think that is true,” she made answer in quiet tone. “You have your Father’s sure promise; but I don’t want to trammel you; when Mr. Temple comes down again, you and he, talking it over, may decide it best to go back together and make arrangements for the future, but in regard to your wife and baby, I feel exactly like meddling. I don’t think I could endure it to have *my baby* taken back to the city until I felt that it was safe. He is my only grandchild, you know, and I

may be excused, perhaps, for being selfish over him. I think, Mr. Spafford, you should lay your commands on mother and child to stay quietly here with me while you bear the heat and burden of the day. I shall not go to town until the very last of October, probably, and I need not try to tell you how lonely I should feel without the mother and baby. I suppose you and Mr. Temple could keep bachelors' hall together, if it should seem necessary?"

What answer could be made to such persistent kindness! The guests looked at each other, and felt almost embarrassed by this wealth of hospitality. How were they ever to express their gratitude? Mrs. Spafford, studying for the hundredth time the whole matter, suddenly put it into a question which she had longed to ask:

"How came you to do it, Mrs. Temple? I mean, what induced you to take us in, in this unworldly fashion, and do for us, and with us as if we were your very own?"

"You make altogether too much of it," said Mrs. Temple, speaking lightly; "is it so strange a thing that a woman with a house at her dis-

posal, and leisure on her hands, should be heartily glad of pleasant friends about her for the summer? Especially when there was a baby like our War included? Still, I know what you mean. By what line of impulse or suggestion did it first occur to me? You will doubtless be surprised, my dear friend, to learn that you were the starting point. Do you remember that first missionary meeting downtown that you attended, and your prayer?"

"I remember the meeting very well," Mrs. Spafford said, her cheeks flushing, "and the fact that I offered prayer, but what has that to do with this summer's experience?"

"Much. There was that in your prayer which set me to thinking in a new channel. I had been accustomed to think of the foreign field as very widely separated from work at home; two channels you know, each feeding the Ocean of God's work for the world, but stretched apart to such a degree that those who gave their lives to feeding one channel, could not do *much*, in any way, for the other. Something in your language and manner made me feel that they touched each other — joined

hands, indeed; that I could lay my hand on my next neighbor's shoulder, and speak a word or look a feeling, that could be made to reach to Africa or China. I can not describe it very well, nor make very clear to you, what a hold the thought took upon me. But I know I looked about on those with whom I came in contact with very different eyes from that time forth. I had felt myself consecrated—time, money and strength—to the work of Foreign Missions; my father died in the work abroad, and two brothers and a sister labor there to-day; and, in short, I *lived* for the other side of the world, and thought it right. I still think it right; but I see fresh ways of doing it. I can reach China through my neighbor that I meet on the street. I am constantly saying to myself, 'Who knows what that little girl may do for China when she grows into a woman? Who knows what millions that little fellow, playing at my neighbor's back door may give for Japan or India? Am I making my meaning plain? I don't believe I am, but it is plain to me. When I heard of my blessed little War's illness, without any idea as to how I should

come to love him as my very own, I instantly said to myself, 'How can I know but his life is to be saved, through me, so that he may, in the years to come, touch all heathendom with his influence!' I got that out of your own prayer, Mrs. Spafford; it came to me as it never had before, and I have enjoyed living twice as well since then. It is not that I love China less, you know, but my neighbor more. The Lord has opened fresh streams, and given me a chance to help swell their current, for the same great end." And her eyes were shining with tears.

Just at that moment there appeared in the door Master War Spafford, in nurse Philbrick's arms; that devoted slave of his was to leave him on the morrow, and had been enjoying a last love scene with him in the nursery. His mother arose to take him, and, as she pressed his velvet check to hers, she said, her voice slightly tremulous with feeling:

"We will try to train this little boy that the love and wealth you have lavished on him may bring an hundred fold reward to the foreign field."

After that, both parents believed that they would have been silly, as well as ungrateful, to have pressed the idea of going away, in the face of Mrs. Temple's expressed advice to the contrary. Still, the father's face was shadowed, and he was plainly growing restive. Some move he must make, or his manhood would suffer. The dignity of suffering, and the foreboding of coming sorrow that had held him prisoner, were lifted. War was able to roll in the sand, and shout at the waves, and frolic, in one way and another, during every moment of his waking hours. His cheeks were growing round and plump again, and his eyes were bright with health and the joy of living. The father felt that he must be at work.

It was but two days after the talk on the piazza that he was summoned to the parlor to meet a caller. The conference was a somewhat lengthy one, but he came away from it with a bright light in his eyes, and ascended the stairs, two steps at a time, in search of his wife.

"Callie, dear," he said, going over to her,

“I shall *have* to go to the city without you, and before the time we had planned.”

“Why?” she asked him, not startled; his face was too bright for any news that was not pleasant. “I think from your face, Warren, that you must have an opportunity for employment; and, indeed, I think from my heart that such must be the case. My faith has been stronger all the morning.”

“Then I can reward it with a bit of sight,” he said, gleefully. “Callie, do you remember that carpet clerk of whom we bought our carpet, how interested he seemed in our twists and turns to save a penny, and how patient he was with us?”

She remembered him perfectly, the wife declared, and moreover had often thought of him, and wondered whether he had a happy home.

“Well, it is he who has been calling on me; he brought great news. Mr. Temple, it seems, had heard that there was a vacancy in their house, and called in person to present my name; but there were a dozen applicants, and, but for what we are apt to term an accident, it would have done no good. Mr. Johns, the

carpet clerk, was standing by, and recognized my name; it seems he had been more or less interested in us ever since; his little sister met you at a missionary meeting in the city and fell in love with you, rushed up and kissed you—so he says. Do you remember her? He is a favorite in the house, has served them faithfully for a number of years, and they were disposed to listen to his advice. He had heard me mentioned favorably by our firm more than once, and suggested that they send to inquire into the particulars of my leaving their employ. This was done, and Mr. Burton himself told the whole story, giving me an excellent name, Johns says, and admitting that he considered himself hasty in discharging me. Well, when McCalister & Hayes heard the story, they both, being members of the Sabbath Committee, and staunch advocates of a stricter observance of the day, agreed in five minutes to give me the vacancy, and sent Johns, who was coming down here for a two weeks vacation, to interview me this morning, and tell me I might report at their establishment to-morrow morning, if I chose.”

“To-morrow morning,” repeated Mrs. Spafford, with a little sinking at her heart despite the good news; their first separation was then near at hand.

“Yes, it is sudden, dear; but, after all, not too soon for me to go to work. An able-bodied man can not sit down idly and let others feed him a minute longer than the providence of God seems to hold him there. You can come home in a little while, Callie. I can get all ready for you and the boy, and only think what a boy you will have to bring back. Besides, there is something else—you haven’t asked me as to salary? What do you say to ‘a thousand a year, Robin Rough?’” and the foolishly happy father rang out the refrain of the old tune, stopped in the middle of a strain by a warning shake of his wife’s head and a nestling in the crib.

“*Really, Warren?*”

“Really, Callie; with a prospect of increase if I succeed in meeting their requirements; which I can, for they have the name of being as fine a firm to work for as there is in the city.”

What do you think was Mrs. Spafford's second thought connected with this whole matter? She turned toward her husband, her soul shining in her eyes, her very voice radiant:

“Oh, Warren! then we will have a hundred dollars a year for the jewel-case. We had nothing for it this month, apparently, because you were earnestly trying to follow the Lord's own command; and now we have it almost doubled, and the influences can be traced back to the same cause. Isn't that wonderful?”

“That reminds me, Callie, there is another point. I don't know what you will say to this. Johns wants to come out and board with us. He says he must get away from the city. Stuffy room he has, you know, and poor board; nothing home-like. I feel sorry for him. I told him we would consider the matter and let him know. I thought possibly you would see your way clear to giving him that extra room, and perhaps use his board to pay a girl with, and so get a little leisure yourself—as much as this fellow will give you. How does it strike you at first thought?”

Mrs. Spafford's face clouded for a moment with a perplexed look, then cleared:

"I had designs on that room," she said brightly; "I thought possibly we could make it do actual missionary work for us; but then who knows but this may be the Lord's appointed way for us to do it? This Mr. John's isn't even a Christian, is he? Yet how do we know but he may be worth everything to the cause some day? Perhaps Mrs. Temple is right, and each little movement of ours *tells*, not only for the work at home, but for the great world abroad, if only our faith reaches out and grasps them all. Yes, Warren, I think we will make a home for him if he wishes. I feel as though I would like to make homes for everybody and take them all in. As for Mr. Johns, I have had a fancy for him ever since he waited so patiently while I changed my mind a dozen times about our carpet. We'll buy a pretty one for his room, won't we? Oh, see what the mail has brought me! A letter from our treasurer, with the largest remittance for my share in the business that I have ever had yet. That scheme is going to succeed roy-

ally. I feel it, more than ever. Warren, I think I feel just a *little* as David did when he said, 'My cup runneth over.'"

Now, passing over the long, quiet rest, when mother and child grew strong together, when Mrs. Spafford and her hostess grew daily more closely united in Christian love and sympathy, and took sweet counsel together, I shall let you peep into the little house deserted so suddenly on that summer morning—for this is the family reunion. All day long has the neighbor, Mrs. Evans, been moving with tireless feet about the rooms, giving them a home like air. At supper-time they are expected, and she has set the table in holiday array, in the bright dining-room, and mindful of a certain supper table which marked a new era in her home life, she has made delicate little puffs of soda biscuit for supper; and stewed potatoes in milk and broiled a steak, and she knows perfectly well, as she surveys all the nice appointments of the table, that Mrs. Spafford herself, pattern housekeeper though she may be, could not have improved upon the details of that meal.

The expected ones have arrived, and are moving about up-stairs at this moment, washing away the dust of travel. The Temple carriage brought them but a half hour ago, even as it had taken them away, but what a gay, bright, rollicking baby is returned to them in place of the wan shadow they carried away.

“I shouldn’t know him at all,” had Mrs. Evans declared, to the satisfaction of the mother. She shivered even yet over the recollection of the pitiful little face he carried away.

“How brown he is,” exclaimed the father, and the mother laughed and declared that it was the sunshine on the sand — that he had done nothing for six weeks but roll around in the sand and shout and crow. Oh yes, it had been a joyous home coming.

“We invited ourselves to supper,” explained Mrs. Evans, as she seated the lady of the house and motioned her own husband to his place. “I knew you wouldn’t be able to find things the first evening. I don’t suppose I have them in the right place; but I know where they are, and that is all that is necessary at present. To-

morrow, Mrs. Spafford your Phillis is to come. Don't you think, her name really is Phillis! She knows how to do everything, so she says; and she looks as though she might know a good deal, especially about some things. I know I am glad she is to be *your* help, and not mine."

Mr. Evans laid down his knife and fork to laugh.

"My wife retains her horror of hired help in full force to this day," he said, with evident satisfaction. "You haven't had one around since Betty left you in the lurch that rainy morning, have you?"

"Not for an hour," she said complacently, "and I confess it would give me a little twinge of disappointment to be obliged to have one. But you are mistaken Dane, about the horror. I have lost all the old feeling of utter helplessness that used to come over me when I used to try to find fault without knowing wherein the fault lay or how to remedy it. It is a very different sensation to remember, if your help chooses to get offended and leave just at dinner-time, that the dinner will not

necessarily suffer in consequence. The trouble was, I was a slave to my ignorance until Mrs. Spafford gave me a taste of freedom."

Up-stairs, after the dining-room had been set in orderly array, the two ladies moved about, Mrs. Evans turning down the blankets of the pretty crib and making it ready for its occupant, and the mother, as she laid the happy boy within, and tucked the snowy coverings carefully, turned to her friend with a sweetly solemn smile on her face, as she said :

"My friend, I have you also to thank for this hour; under God you saved my baby to me. I have never put into words how much I thank you for your swift, silent, thoughtful work, but God knows how I have remembered it, and always shall. I have lately come to feel what is to me a somewhat new idea about it. Who can tell what God may let those little hands, or that baby voice do for his glory in the turning of the nations of the earth to himself? And if he gives him great things to do, will not part of the work be yours? What wonderful rewards God may have in store for even our smallest efforts made for his sake! I

understand about the cup of cold water better than I ever did before.”

“Mrs. Evans’ eyes were moist as she answered humbly :

“It was but a very little commonplace thing that I could do. I was just a simple errand girl and carried a message to those who could and *did* ; but my motive, I think, was love for *you*, my friend ; I can claim no blessing from the Master.”

“Ah! can you not? ‘Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me.’”

CHAPTER XXIII.

MEASURING RESPONSIBILITY.



E must go home early to-night and give these people a chance to rest."

This was what Mr. Evans said in one form or another, several times during the earlier part of the evening; yet they lingered. Some absorbing topic of conversation would be immediately started by one of the circle, and the half movement to separate would be forestalled. The Evanses were so glad to get their neighbors back again, and the neighbors, on their part, were so gratefully glad to be back again, that it was hard to separate. Even when Mr. Evans actually arose and said, "Now, really, Eva, we *ought* to go," Mrs. Spafford

said just at that moment: "Oh, Mrs. Evans, I wanted to ask you about Jennie. Do you think she —" and here the ladies' chairs were drawn closer, and the tones became confidential. The two husbands looked at each other and smiled; then something in Mr. Evans' face, a sort of wistful, yet hesitating look, sent a telegraphic dispatch to the other gentleman's heart. They had been thrown much together, these two, during the weeks that had intervened since Mr. Spafford's return to the city, and he had tried to be a faithful witness for his Lord. So now he laid a detaining hand on the other's arm, and said in a voice of grave, yet winning inquiry:

"My friend, is the great question settled yet?"

Slowly and gravely Mr. Evans shook his head; yet he seemed relieved and grateful that the subject had been started, and Mr. Spafford, watching his face for a moment, ventured further:

"I wish I knew just what is in the way. It has sometimes seemed to me, when I have been talking with you, as though you came up to a

sort of stone wall, which prevented you from taking another step. I wish I could know whether there is really an obstacle, and what it is. Perhaps we could together lift it out of the way."

"There *is* an obstacle," declared Mr. Evans in an emphatic voice, after just a moment of irresolution; "you are right! I cannot take another step until an intervening question is decided."

Meantime, Mrs. Spafford who was deeply interested in the inquiries she was making, became suddenly aware that her friend's interest was elsewhere. The truth is, Mrs. Evans was in such a state of constant longing for her husband's decision on the momentous question — was so on the alert to have him influenced in the right direction — that the moment the question was presented her heart seemed to take warning, and be ready to stand sentinel. Mrs. Spafford, following the direction of her eyes, saw her giving eager, almost painful heed to the conversation which was taking place over by the window. Therefore, both of the ladies heard Mr. Spafford's next question:

“Is it anything that you are willing to tell me about?”

“The fact is,” said Mr. Evans, after another thoughtful pause, “I can’t make a profession of one thing, and live a life that is at variance with it. In other words, I can’t continue in my present business and be a Christian. At least it doesn’t seem to *me* that I can. I have always regarded the temperance question as one of the most important with which a Christian had to do; and I have always been secretly ashamed of the church because it did not take strong enough ground on this subject. Now, with my eyes as wide open as that, could I support my family from such a business, and at the same time claim myself as belonging to a master, who, I believe, hates the whole thing?”

“But Mr. Evans, you have nothing to do with the *selling* of liquor!”

It was his wife’s horrified voice that asked this question, or rather made this distressed statement. It was the first intimation her husband had that the conversation had become general. He turned toward her with a some-

what sad smile. The keener brain of the man had, years before, seen through the delicate film of respectability with which others had enshrouded his business, and which had satisfied his wife.

“No, dear, but I *buy* it; that is, I pay for it, large sums of money every month, and make out bills of it, and deal with it in a dozen different ways. In fact, I have to do with the management of liquors as much as though I owned the entire establishment.”

“Well, but,” urged his wife, distress still apparent in her voice, “you are only the *clerk*, you have no responsibility in the matter; it isn’t *your* liquor, and you get no money for its sale; the *responsibility* of selling it doesn’t belong to you.”

“My dear wife, I might say the same thing if I were a clerk for old Green, down here at the corner, and sold bad whiskey at so much a glass. You see, there is no such thing as *shirking* responsibilities in that way. I get my living from the sale of that which I believe to be a curse to the world, and whether I pour it into a glass, or count the money that is paid

for it, seems to me to have very little to do with the real question. To be sure, I can say if I don't receive the salary somebody else will and I might as well have it as anybody, but the trouble with that argument is, it proves too much. A thief can use it; there are always people enough to steal, and I might as well share the plunder as any one. How would you like that reasoning, Eva?"

She smiled a wan sort of smile. She understood the illustration, and could not help seeing that the cases were sufficiently analogous to have it fit. Still, the idea was new to her and hateful.

"I have never *thought* of such a thing," she said, drawing a long breath. "If it has seemed so to you, Dane, I wonder that you have borne it so long."

"Yes!" he said, his face darkening, and he arose and began to walk up and down the room; "that is just the difference between Spafford here and myself. He sees things and *does* them, and I see things and shirk them; and one can't be a Christian and do that last, in my opinion. So there I am. Don't you

see, Spafford, I havn't a chance to take any steps?"

"No," said Mr. Spafford, emphatically, "I don't see anything of the kind; if your reasoning is clear, you have a very serious step to take."

"Aye, that's the trouble; too serious. You see it is all we have to depend upon, my wife and I. For a long time I settled down upon the thought that it was a man's duty to take care of his family, and that I must not give up my situation until I secured another; and I have been secretly at work for months trying to find an opening; but there isn't any such *thing* as an opening; apparently I am shut up to this one place. I havn't heard of even a *possible* chance for something in the future. I told myself that it was plainly my duty to hold on here; and that it was equally my duty not to make a public profession while I was so engaged; and I've been trying, if ever a man did, to live two lives." I have tried hard to act like a Christian and feel like a Christian, and I can't do it. I feel more like a hypocrite than anything else. Still, it wasn't very plain to

me what I ought to do, until your trial hour came, Spafford, and with less to live on than I have, and more at stake, you swung off, on what looked like a very little matter, too. I heard a member of the same church as yourself criticise you sharply, classing your line of conduct as belonging to those who 'strain at a gnat and swallow a camel,' though he omitted to say what camel *you* had swallowed. Well, it opened my eyes. As soon, at least, as I would allow myself to open them. I called you a fool for a few days, but I knew all the time that you were simply an honest man with a *live* conscience; by the same sign I knew that I wasn't. I see plainly now what I *ought* to do; but I haven't advanced an inch. I shrink from it as hard as ever. How can I deliberately relinquish our only chance of support and fold my hands? Spafford, do you see how I can do it? Now, tell me, what would you advise?"

"What does Mrs. Evans advise?"

It was Mr. Spafford who asked this question. Whereupon her husband turned toward her a distressed look; it was evident that he did

not expect his wife to understand or appreciate the awful straits to which he was reduced. She was a temperance woman in a sweet and quiet way; but she had never been what her uncle had called a "temperance fanatic," and the definitions of society had heretofore given her complete, unquestioning satisfaction. How could she be expected to see what the light of God's own Spirit had made plain to his keener mind? It was evident that her husband shrank from the ordeal presented to him, for his wife's sake. During these last two years she had grown peculiarly, inexpressibly dear to him; they had been years of rest in his home. What he had supposed was a quiet little spirit had suddenly, two years before, arisen and asserted its freedom from domestic thralldom. She would have no more of the so-called help that she had hitherto endured about her; she would be her own mistress and do her own work. Her husband had laughed sarcastically, and looked on moodily, but the resolute house-keeper had held steadily on her way. She spent long hours in the Spafford kitchen, concocting mysteries which blossomed into results.

on their own table. She steadily held her own, one evening, against first ridicule and then positive annoyance, until she literally *made* her husband say just what sum he thought they could safely spare for the week's household expenses. His reluctance to tell her, arising from the fact that he knew much better than she did, how alarmingly small it was in comparison with what they had been using. But she received the figures meekly enough, and set about apportioning them after the fashion that she had learned from Mrs. Spafford, and neither then nor afterward did she call for a larger sum.

On the contrary, she steadily saved from the week's allowance, until one evening she amazed her husband by producing enough to pay a certain bill which had chafed his nerves and driven sleep from his pillow for hours together. It was not until after that event that Mr. Evans actually opened his eyes wide, to see that a thorough domestic reform had been inaugurated in his home, and that the wheels were running smoothly. Since which time he had been sure of one thing, that his

wife was a woman of rare wisdom and skill and tact, as regarded the management of a home. Great comfort had they enjoyed in their home during these two years.

A "little box of a place" it was still, but as pretty a home as one need care to see; and every night when he hastened to it, Dane Evans realized that the genius who presided within grew dearer. Yet by so much more did he want to shield her from outside winds. She had learned to use the means he brought, to make a very restful Eden of the home. Could he expect her to think it would be either wise or right to withdraw all the visible means for sustaining it? Make beggars of themselves, indeed. It was hardly fair to appeal to her for advice. Yet Mr. Spafford had done it.

At the mention of her name, Mrs. Evans arose from her seat; her eyes were bright her cheeks were glowing. She went over to her husband, and clasping both her hands over his arm, in a fashion she had when they were alone, and she was very much in earnest, she spoke exactly as though she had forgotten — as indeed she had — that there were any others present.

“Oh, Dane, how is it *possible* that you can hesitate one moment! I have prayed and prayed, and cried before God, begging him to bring you to a decision. I knew he was calling you. I could not think what stood in your way; I am not wise about these matters, you know Dane, and I never thought of this; I can not tell you how glad, how very *glad* and *grateful*, I am that it is not my miserable inconsistent life as a Christian that was holding you back; I know you had a very high ideal, and I knew I fell so far short; but, Dane, don't oh I beg of you *don't* for one moment, let the thought of how we shall live, keep you from giving yourself to Christ. He will take care that we do not starve, unless he wants us to *starve* for his sake; and I'm sure that would be no harder than many other things; we can't do just as he wishes, Dane, you and I, but don't let us for one moment go contrary to his plain directions. If he has told you that the way we get our money is wrong, don't let us have another cent of it.”

Long before these eager impassioned sen-

tences were concluded, Mr. Evans had put his arm around his wife, and drawn her closely to him, and the tears were dropping from his eyes. Mr. Spafford, also, had drawn his handkerchief, and was clearing his throat in a suspicious manner. As for his wife, her eyes were too bright for tears; she had been confident that her quiet and gentle friend had depths of feeling and heights of self-renunciation that were not suspected, even by her husband; it was just as well for him to discover what a power he had beside him.

Mr. Spafford arose and went over to where the husband and wife stood :

“Swing off, Evans,” he said, earnestly ; “there is no peace short of that. I have discovered, by my own experiences, that the Lord will have nothing to do with compromises. When he has made the right entirely plain to you, the manner in which you may be sustained, while you are treading the road of his pointing out, is in a sense not your concern; he will undertake it for you. Trust him.”

“I don't know *how* to trust,” said Mr.

Evans, tremulously; "I would like to feel trustful, but I certainly don't."

"Faith is the gift of God," quoted Mrs. Spafford, in clear, ringing voice; it was the first time she had spoken.

"Yes," said her husband; "that is one of the heart troubles which may be taken to him, too. The question just now is: Do you intend to accept Him as your leader? Are you ready to resign your will to his, and walk in the paths of his pointing out, and no other? Evans what you want is an effort of the *will*. You have been trying to do your own planning; to see your way perfectly clear, and when you had succeeded in arranging everything to your satisfaction, you were going to tell the Lord that you were willing *now* to serve him. I don't believe he would ever have opened a way for such service; what he wants is your absolute surrender into his hands."

"I don't believe I understand you, Spafford; I dare say I **am** dull, but these things are all new to me. Now I might be really anxious to trust my affairs in *your* hands,

but if my brain would keep working over them, trying to plan, I hardly see how I would be to blame, or how I could stop planning. I might resolve with all my might to stop, but the planning, I fancy, would still go on, almost in spite of me.”

“Let me take your own illustration, my friend and complete it. Suppose me to be so powerful a friend that your *judgment* justified you in placing all your affairs in my hands; and your mind said, ‘I will follow his directions in every particular; when any plan is suggested to my mind I will take it at once to him, and whether his ways seem to me wise or not, *I will follow them.*’ If that was the deliberate language of your heart, it would really, in one sense make little difference how much planning you did. Don’t you see, my friend, that your next step is to surrender your independence to the Lord, *willing* yourself to obey him?”

Then there was silence in that little parlor while one of those deliberations was taking place, such as the angels watch over with intense interest. What would the issue be?

Mr. Spafford silently pushed a chair forward, and Mr. Evans, rousing for a moment, placed his wife in it, drew a seat beside her and sat down; his face shaded by his hand, himself evidently in deep and troubled thought,

“There is one thing,” said Mr. Spafford, suddenly breaking the silence, “that perhaps is hardly necessary to say, yet somehow I feel like saying it. I know, by experience you remember, that the way looks somewhat dark when there is no apparent means of support; yet no one certainly knows better than I do — than we do — how promptly friends start up for hours of need; so I wanted to remind you, that so long as Callie and I have a home and bread, we are more than ready to share them with you, until such time as your way shines clear.”

Mr. Evans reached forth his hand and grasped that of his friend.

“God bless you!” he said; “you are a true friend to me. I realize the actual disgrace I am to God, for being unable to trust my affairs with him; I don't feel an atom of trust, the way looks as dark as Egypt; but

I plainly see what would be the *right* thing to do; and as you say, I *can* control my will, if I cannot my heart; and I will obey his directions, so far as I can see them from this time forth. So help me God."

"Amen," said Mrs. Spafford. "Let us pray."

In a moment the little circle were on their knees; and the parlor, so often consecrated by the voice of prayer, was filled once more with words of consecration and thanksgiving.

Directly Mr. Spafford's voice ceased, his wife took up the petition; and then Mrs. Evans, her voice so tremulous from pent up emotion that she could hardly syllable the words, breathed forth the hopes and desires and longings of her heart. Then, a moment of silence and a new voice was chronicled in heaven as among the list of those of whom it is said, "Behold, he prayeth!"

As they arose from their knees, Mr. Evans held out his hand again to his friend:

"It is very strange," he said smiling, "there is

certainly nothing in my outward circumstances in any wise altered from what it was twenty minutes ago, but the heaviness of spirit is gone. I feel now as though I could *trust Him* not only, but as though it were a pleasure to do so. May he bless you for what you have been to me. I don't believe I should ever have seen my duty in this matter, but for the step which you took in the dark, for the honor of his name. And now we really *must* say good-night, or rather 'good-morning.' I don't feel as though there *were* any night."

CHAPTER XXIV.

MEASURED IN PROSE.



DURING the two years' break in our story another home had been established; at least, they called it a home. It was in an upper story of one of those semi-genteel boarding-houses which abound in large cities. Three flights of stairs, a long passage, down a dimly-lighted hall, smelling of old carpeting, and you reach the door of this home. A fair-sized room, carpeted in dingy colors; a once good Brussels, of the exasperating kind which never wears into honest holes, justifying one in selling it to the rag man; but simply grows duller, grows threadbare, grows gloomy; walls hung with

large-figured dark paper to match the carpet, having grown old along with it; curtains heavy and dark and gloomy looking, grown old, too, like the dreary-faced keeper of this dreary boarding-house. A hair-cloth sofa, several hair-cloth chairs, one brisk, little new-fashioned rocker in bright colors; an old-fashioned sofa bedstead, dark, solid wood, looking respectable but gloomy, and speaking, like the carpet and the curtains, of other days; marble-topped dressing bureau and washstand, the woodwork of which was sadly marred — this comprised the general furnishing of the room. To be sure, there were little home touches, tidies on the sofa and chairs, lace-trimmed pillow-shams and bolster-shams, nick-nacks of one sort or another on the high, old-fashioned mantle; all of these had a careless look, as though the owner had grown weary of keeping them in the daintiness of perfect order. Yet this one room, up three flights of stairs, is the spot where those two people, who went to the opera together on a never-to-be-forgotten evening long ago, are living out together the prose of that life

which began in poetry during their homeward ride. More than a year had Will Coleman and his wife spent in this room. They were together in it now; Jennie in careful costume, for they had just come up from dinner, which was served at a fashionable hour, in a fashionable dreary basement dining-room, with certain fashionable surroundings in the shape of handsome old dishes and a few solid silver pieces, and when you had said this, you had said all that was to be commended about the meals served there. Still, because of the silver pieces, and the once fine furniture, and the faded Brussels carpets, and the general air of decayed respectability, a large sum—viewed in comparison with their income—had to be paid. The question of income was a sore one to Jennie Coleman, even as it had always been an important one to Jennie West. The history of the last year of her life might be summed up in one sentence—a dreary effort to be what she *was* not, and to do what she *could* not. Her forehead was drawn in habitual wrinkles, a soured, discontented look was growing on her

face and in short, she looked, as she sat there, reading the announcements of the evening amusements, as unlike the pretty girl whom Will Coleman had escorted to the opera two years before as can be imagined. She threw the paper aside presently, the wrinkles deepening on her forehead, and opened the conversation with a pettish exclamation:

“I wish we could ever go anywhere!”

“What now?”

It was Will Coleman who asked this short, not to say crabbed, question. He, too, had changed in the space of two years. He was growing older, there was no mistaking it; gray touches were being given to his hair. Also he was growing fleshy and red-faced. I find it very difficult to put the change into words. It is one thing to talk about a few gray hairs, and a few added pounds of flesh, and a florid look on the face; and quite another thing to sit and look at a familiar form, which was, only a short time ago, a very embodiment of alert, sprightly gentlemanliness, and realize the distinctly seen, yet indescribable change, which marks him as an

unsatisfied, unsuccessful, almost middle-aged man. I don't think Jennie Coleman saw this, in full force, at least. But she knew him to be in many respects unlike the Will Coleman who had made a heaven for her out of that homeward ride in the moonlight. If the echo of the tenderness that was in his voice that evening could have reached to her to-night as he said sharply, "What now," the contrast might have brought the tears. But the truth was, her heart was not busy with retrospect.

"Oh, nothing new," she said, the petulance in her voice being even more distinctly marked: "I was just looking over all the things that were going on to-night, and thinking how we sat here cooped up in this den, not able to go anywhere or do anything; night after night the same thing, and the same old story of not being able to afford it dinging in my ears. I'm tired of it."

"We have to pay enough for the den. We might have a degree of respect for it on that account. I've always observed that things which cost a great deal fill you with admi-

ration. I don't see why you can't go to work and admire this establishment on the strength of that."

"Oh, now, Will; don't try to be witty, you never were intended for distinction in that line. I don't know when you have had occasion to observe anything of the kind. It is very certain that I don't have a chance to prove my admiration by making any purchases in these days. I'm always ashamed to go shopping with any of the ladies in the house. I am the only one among them who never has any money to spend."

"No, that's a great trouble of yours; you never have any money to spend, because you can't keep any until you need to spend it. Somebody spends a good deal more than I can earn, I know. I wonder who it is; not this chap, anyhow. I've practised economy to a degree that I never imagined possible in my bachelor days."

"Oh, yes! you are a pattern of economy."

The tone was so severely mocking that Will Coleman, albeit he had provoked it by his own rudeness, was startled, and looked over

the paper he was pretending to read, studying his wife with a curious sense of wonder that one whom he used to know as Jennie West could use such words and such an accent. One great difficulty with the poor young husband was, that though he distinctly saw the change in her, he did not realize a corresponding one in himself.

The cruel, mocking tones went on :

“ You never buy ices or fruits or dainty little lunches, or indulge in soothing trips up the lake at fifty cents an hour. If I were you I wouldn't talk about economy. I was always considered an economist before I was married ; but I wasn't in a perpetual state of beggarliness as I am nowadays.”

Now the truth was, that Will Coleman, in the days of his bachelorhood, had been so accustomed to indulging in these which he was pleased to call trifling expenditures, that the habits were upon him ; and during the earlier months of his married life he had continued them thoughtlessly, though rarely without bringing his wife something which he called “ an equivalent,” in the shape of fruits or bon-bons.

Very soon, however, he discovered that all these things were really alarming leaks, and he was struggling manfully, if one can apply the word to so childish a habit, to avoid all unnecessary expenses. It is true that his definition of the term "unnecessary" needed correcting, but all the same he considered himself a slandered man, and his face flushed painfully during the earlier part of the sentence; but by the time Jennie had announced herself as having been considered an economist in the days of her maidenhood, he was ready to laugh. No one knew better than he how persistently all her loose change had lost itself in the vortex of ribbons, laces, gloves and the like. The consciousness that she was really saying a foolish thing made Mrs. Coleman sensitive to her husband's laugh, and in no way softened her voice:

"Oh yes, you *laugh*, of course. That is your favorite method of treating your wife's views and opinions; but I can assure you that I never dreamed of having to twist and turn through life in this way. If I had, I

should have considered long, before I put myself in such a position."

"You ought to have married a rich man." Her husband's voice was controlled, and she did not realize how her words had stung him.

"I wish to goodness I had," she declared, driven to desperation by his apparent indifference.

"Amen," he replied promptly, and with emphasis. Then he turned the page of his paper and apparently went on with the business of reading the news. As for Jennie, she sat looking out of the window down the rows of tall chimneys which shut out all other view. Her heart was swelling with indignation; she considered herself an ill-used woman.

This conversation, miserable though it was is actually a fair specimen of the sort of talk in which these two often indulged. Do you suppose that either of them imagined the possibility of such a climax to that heavenly ride home from the opera? What an awful fact it is to have to record that there were times in which this husband and wife actually wished that the results which followed that evening's

pleasure had never been. Not that they by any means *hated* each other, or, indeed, were entirely indifferent to each other; but the realities of married life had been too much for them, as they will be for all who do not start from a rock foundation. It is a painful thing to admit, but scenes like the one through which she had just passed were really too common to weigh with lengthened heaviness on Jennie Coleman, or make her long silent, when she had an item of importance to communicate. So she presently broke the stillness with a question:

“What do you suppose Dane Evans has done now?”

“It is entirely beyond me to guess; something unparalleled in folly, to judge from your tone.”

“He will be likely to consider it folly before he gets through with it.”

This sentence not whetting her husband's curiosity sufficiently to call forth a question, she continued:

“Have you seen him to-day? Perhaps you know the whole story?”

“ Haven’t seen him in three weeks; he and Spafford have so much in common nowadays that he has no time for me.”

“ Well, he has thrown up his situation.”

“ What!”

“ Yes, he has; Mrs. Peterson told me at lunch; and her husband is in the same office, you know, and heard all about it.”

“ What has he done it for?”

“ For a piece of folly, or sentimentality. Dane always was sentimental, in streaks; he never would have married Eva if he hadn’t been.”

“ What is he going to do?”

“ Nothing; live on his conscience, I suppose; he professes it as a conscientious movement; I should think it had taken his conscience a long time to enlighten him; he has been there nearly ten years.”

“ Mrs. Coleman, enlighten me; what has conscience to do with Evan’s clerkship? *They* haven’t been requiring Sunday work, have they? And if they did, it wouldn’t be any worse than Sunday lounging or Sunday riding, I should think; he has done enough of both;

to be sure, though, he may have been taken with a desire to copy Spafford."

"That is just what it is ; he is trying to copy Mr. Spafford, and Callie sets him a copy which he dutifully follows. Now she is enlarging her circle and taking Dane and Eva completely under her control."

"You haven't enlightened me yet as to what it is all about."

"Why, can't you see?" — with a strong flavor of impatience in her voice — "*your* conscience is certainly not tender on the subject ; he has decided that to be clerk in a liquor dealing establishment is a sin ; therefore he has thrown up his situation, and is going to live on public charity, or church charity ; I hear he is going to unite with the church next Sunday ; I suppose they'll support him, and call him a martyr for a few weeks, until they get tired of him, then they will throw him off, and he may go to the poor-house for all they will care. I must say I'm sorry for Eva. Papa never thought Dane Evans would amount to much, and it seems he wasn't mistaken."

"Do you really mean that Evans has given

up there, with no other opportunity opening, and no knowledge of what he will do next! And there hasn't been any quarrel or dissatisfaction, or something of that sort?"

"Yes, he has done just that. Mrs. Peterson said the firm argued with him, expressed their entire satisfaction; asked if he had other prospects, and hinted pretty plainly that if it was a question of salary they were ready to do as well by him as any other firm; but he boldly declared he could not stay if they doubled his salary; that money had nothing to do with it; he had no place in view, no prospects; it was purely a question of principle; said he had been thinking the matter over for a long time, but had only recently come to a definite conclusion. That means since Callie Spafford came home. She is such a born fanatic herself that she cannot rest easy on her pillow until she sees some one preparing to become as wild a lunatic as herself."

Will Coleman's paper had dropped to the floor, and his eyes were gazing into vacancy in a thoughtful way; whether he had heard the last few sentences did not appear, but what he

said was entirely foreign to their tenor:

“I must say that is astounding! Dane Evans is more of a man than I had the least idea of.”

Now there was that in this sentence which irritated Mrs. Coleman almost beyond control; she could not herself have defined what it was, at least she would not have liked to do so, but she answered, with increasing asperity:

“Indeed! your penetration is entirely *beyond* me; I fail to see the slightest evidence of manhood, or even common-sense, in such an idiotic proceeding as this. It *may be* a cause for admiration, to see a man deliberately shirk his only means for supporting a wife, and hide behind an affectation of principle, but as I said, I fail to see it in that light. However, my eyes are getting opened; you gentlemen who have always been such ardent admirers of Callie Spafford stand ready to follow her lead without regard to common-sense. I shall expect next to be informed that your conscience won't allow you to sell eggs and butter and cheese for Mr. Prime any more, because his other branch store sells tobacco and cider vinegar!”

Her husband laughed, and stooped down and picked up his paper. If his wife had not been too much excited to observe it, she would have felt that his laugh was exceedingly unpleasant in its tone; so was his voice:

“Don’t you be afraid of any such catastrophe; I have been tutored by a very different feminine from your friend Mrs. Spafford; I know better than to indulge in any such expensive principles. At the same time I am not so reduced but that I can admire high-toned actions in another, and I say Dane Evans is more of a man than I had the least idea of. If I were rich I’d see to it that he didn’t suffer for his convictions, and his determination to carry them out. As it is, I can only admire at a distance; I have no hopes of ever emulating. Meantime, I have an item of news to communicate; Evans isn’t the only man who has planned a change of base; I’ve given up my clerkship; no more ‘butter and eggs’ to sell; so you see you needn’t fear my being demoralized about the tobacco and cider.”

His wife turned entirely away from the window and gazed at her husband with a half-

frightened, half-incredulous air; she did not know what she feared; it could not be that any such scruples as Dane Evans had yielded to could have crossed his path; so far as she knew there was no opportunity in his work for conscientious scruples; and also if there had been, she had lost her former idea of him; she never quoted him in her thoughts any more as a "perfect Christian gentleman." She waited a moment, then said:

"Well, why don't you explain? What do you mean?"

"Wasn't my meaning plain? I said I had given up my clerkship."

"And what do you mean to do now? Starve in company with my half-witted cousins?"

"No, I never expect to starve in such good company. Evans has gotten ahead of me, somehow; a few years ago I used to be quoted as immensely beyond him 'spiritually,' whatever that may mean," and the sentence ended with that disagreeable laugh.

His wife was growing alarmed.

"Mr. Coleman," she said, haughtily, "if you can manage to be serious long enough to tell

me what you are talking about I should be glad; you certainly appear very strange to-night."

"Do I? That is because I have made such a violent effort to give you pleasure to-day, and am succeeding so well! I have taken a leap into respectability such as once I had no idea of. I'm Fargo, Belmont & Co.'s confidential clerk; salary two thousand a year; you can hunt a new boarding place, and get a forty-dollar bonnet and three pairs of ten-button kids as soon as you please."

"Who are Fargo, Belmont & Co?"

"Wholesale liquor-dealers; the most extensive firm in the city. Oh, it is eminently respectable. They never sell less than a barrel of it at a time!"


"But, Will, you will not have to *sell* liquor?"

The evident dismay in her tone seemed to amuse him:

"No," he said, with a burst of laughter; "oh, no, not at all; I only keep a sharp look out that other people buy plenty of it, and pay for it."

CHAPTER XXV.

SHIRKING RESPONSIBILITY.

 HER husband's communication had filled Mrs. Coleman with astonishment. She had, it is true, been the prime factor in bringing about this change in his business; but she did not realize it. The simple fact is that Jennie Coleman had been one of those girls, and had become one of those women, who do not realize anything. Individual responsibility was a question that she had not studied. She had married, as many another has, without any distinct idea of the responsibilities of married life. Take, for instance, that one question, money, which really from first to last is productive of more evil,

perhaps, than any other domestic question under the sun; and when Jennie Coleman assumed her place in life as a matron, what did she know about it? Her father called himself poor, and her life had been a struggle, she believed, with poverty; but her idea of struggling was to coax her father, and in later years her mother, until she succeeded in making them realize that she must buy the thing she wanted, or must go to the place she selected, or must do the thing she pleased; and once convinced, the money was forthcoming *somehow*. Why should it not be the case in her married life? Her father had always been managed, why should not her husband need management? She utterly ignored, or to do her justice she never understood, the difference between a man of business, who though it may press him hard, and he may think the demand unnecessary and therefore foolish can nevertheless secure a few hundred dollars additional, and push through from year to year, and a young clerk whose entire resources are covered by his monthly salary, and who can no more command an

additional hundred or two than he can command an extra pair of hands to meet emergencies. Utterly failing to recognize this difference, of course Mrs. Coleman had seen trouble. And trouble in various forms was deepening around her. She was opening her eyes daily to the fact that her marriage was a sickening failure. Her husband did not satisfy her, and it was a humiliating truth that she evidently did not satisfy him. Did she then really *love* her husband? Or to go back of that, had she *ever* loved him? In all honesty and solemnity I have to answer NO; I do not think she ever had. She admired him, she liked him, she was fascinated by his faultless manners and careful dress, and marked admiration of herself, and she labelled these feelings "love," when she ought to have known that genuine love is both unselfish and discriminating. He, on his part, reached but very little higher in his views and feelings, except that he fancied himself ready to give her all he could; to take upon himself the responsibility of her support, to labor for her from day to day; in short, he realized,

of course, that he was giving, and, at times at least, was willing to give; while she realized that she was accepting, and stood at all times ready to accept, whatever he could be prevailed upon to give her. Oh, I realize my own failure in trying to put this difficulty, that is as old as the world, into words. It is an oft told story. I tell you the excitement of the opera or theater, or of fashionable party life, do not fit people to make wise, deliberate, unselfish choices for life's journey. These two people had met each other a hundred times, when they were well dressed and in society, and doing their best to shine. It was actually almost all they knew of each other until they met in that shabby genteel boarding-house, bound to be companions, in hours when neither felt like making the slightest effort to shine in any way. Well, was the ship-wreck which they were making of it absolutely necessary even then? No; oh, no!

“Utter shipwreck of human happiness is rarely, thank God, a necessity; even though grievous blunders have been made. If Jennie

Coleman had but begun her married life as a Christian woman, recognizing the responsibilities that she had assumed before God, resolved to struggle with her faults, resolved to bear with the faults of her husband, false and foolish as her ideas of married life were, she would have saved her heart from ruin, and possibly have been the human means of saving her husband's soul. But the greatest pity about it all was, that she professed what her keen-eyed husband came to believe she did not possess; or almost worse conclusion still, if she *did* possess it, he wanted none of it!

And so, starting from narrow and selfish points, and dropping lower in the scale each day, at this time barely fourteen months since they stood together at the altar and pledged each other in irrevocable vows, this husband had come to believe that what his wife wanted was money, however earned she did not care; money with which she could dress well, and ride where she chose, and have a good time generally with him for an unexceptionable attendant; and she believed

that what he wanted was to spend his money on *himself*, shutting her out; and both believed that to have gone their separate ways would have made them happier! And it was still their individual happiness, and nothing else, that both were eagerly after. What but misery could there be in store for them?

It seems now to be necessary to give you a careful view of this sudden change of business. Unlike Mr. and Mrs. Evans, this couple, in their parental homes, had come up under the shadow of a stanch temperance, or rather total abstinence, regime. Both grandfathers had been pioneers in the temperance movement, in the days when to be openly connected with such movements required heroism. The next generation on Jennie's side, it is true, had weakened a little, but still her father held strongly enough that to be connected in any sense with the making or selling of intoxicants was a very low social position. While Will Coleman had reason to feel as though his long dead father would rise out of his grave, if he could, to rebuke his son for laxness in this matter. Now you may understand

what a leap downward the change of business was. Down lower, it is true, for the man than for the woman, because he covered his position with no foolish subterfuges such as brains can see through in a moment. He fully realized that he was connecting himself with the liquor traffic. But he realized also another thing, and it was this which increased his bitterness: that his wife would see the increased salary more plainly than she would anything else, and would make no opposition.

Neither did she, to him, beyond that first startled question over which he had laughed in sarcasm. Then she gave herself up to what she told herself was the inevitable. "Will always does exactly as he likes; *I* have no influence with him." And she dressed herself carefully, and set out on the pleasant task of looking up a more congenial boarding-place, better suited to their increased means.

It was when the plans connected with their removal were nearly completed that Mrs. Evans came to call. Jennie went very slowly downstairs, glad of the confusion in her room, which

prevented. receiving her cousin there, and hoping that the parlor would be so occupied as to afford no chance for a *tete-a-tete*; not choosing meantime to define to herself the reason why she desired to avoid a private interview. There were many things in life, which Jennie Coleman might have seen had she chosen to look at them. Her hopes were vain, the parlor was deserted, and Mrs. Evans occupied the little *tete-a-tete* alone. Mrs. Coleman, resolved on taking the defensive at once, explained that her room was so dismantled by reason of preparations for moving that it was not habitable.

“Then it is true,” said Mrs. Evans, eagerly; “I heard that you were going to move; where do you go, and why? Oh, Jennie, I *hope* that the rest of what I heard is false.”

Mrs. Coleman, ignoring the latter part of this sentence, calmly and not without evident satisfaction, explained that they were about to go to the Central Avenue boarding-house; that they were to have a room on the second floor, larger, and in every way pleasanter than the one they were leaving; and that it would

be in every way an advantage to them; the class of boarders was superior, the style of the house unexceptionable, and, besides, it would be so much more convenient for Will."

"Oh, then it is true that he is going into Fargo & Belmont's employ!"—the exceeding disappointment in her cousin's tones was very apparent—"I didn't believe it when I heard the report. It seemed unlike Will; oh, Jennie, how *could* you let him do it?"

"What are you talking about?" said Mrs. Coleman, her face flushing, but struggling to retain a composed, good-natured voice. "I should think it was a subject for congratulation that we were to have as much again income. We have certainly demonstrated the impossibility of living respectably on the small sum that we had. As for letting Will do it, you ought to know by this time how certain a man is to do as he pleases without regard to a woman's advice. I did not know the least thing about this matter until it was all settled."

She was not prepared for the sudden, pleased light in Mrs. Evans' eyes.

"Did you not?" she said, still speaking

eagerly; "I am so glad to hear it; I was afraid you had been tempted to yield to it because of the salary, but now you are in a position to protest. I am sure, Jennie, that you can influence Will. It is for your sake he is so anxious to secure a larger income. Most men care for money only on account of their family. I think Will is peculiarly one of that kind. See for how many years he has been content to work away in the store. He is thought so much of there, too. Dane says there is a certainty of his being promoted in time. Oh, you will find that you can influence him; in fact, Jennie, I believe he will be relieved and thankful to see that you are unwilling to have him make more money at the expense of conscience. He has told Dane more than once how it chafed him to think that he could not give you the position in society that you were fitted to take. Now when he finds that you care more for his highest interests than for any position which the world can offer, he will not only be influenced, but touched."

It was a long speech for Mrs. Evans to make. She was not a woman of many words,

you will remember; and Jennie, in the midst of her embarrassment—not to say indignation—felt a sense of wonderment over the excitement and eloquence of her quiet cousin. Still she answered with impatience:

“I’m sure I don’t know what you mean. Don’t soar into the heroic quite so much talking about Will’s ‘higher interests,’ and all that nonsense. I assure you he is no more fond of poverty than I am, and has chafed under it quite as much. As for promotion, he has been contented to plod along on the strength of that long enough. I am glad for my part that he has had the manliness to arouse himself and make a better provision for his family; though I am sure I did not urge him to do it.”

“But, Jennie, why don’t you urge him *against* it? How can you endure it to have him engage in such a business as that?”

“Really,” and Mrs. Coleman’s laugh was almost as disagreeable as the one her husband had recently cultivated; “that is a very strange way to talk when one remembers that you and Dane have been living on the same business for years. Your horror is decidedly extreme

I should say, considering the recoil from it has been so recent."

"It isn't quite the same position, Jennie. Dane was only a book-keeper.

Mrs. Evans' voice was lower, and the flush on her cheek had deepened. Mrs. Coleman did not realize what a fresh impulse she had given to her cousin's hatred of the business by this home thrust, nor how thankful she grew over the fact that *now*, at least, she was free from the stain.

"Oh, that is all nonsense," declared Jennie, loftily; "no one but a child would think of making such distinctions. Dane was just as much connected with the sale of liquor as Will will be. Only Will's position is one of greater trust and his salary higher."

"But," declared Mrs. Evans, "Dane is free from it now, you know, forever. I heartily wish he had been long ago. I take shame to myself that my eyes were not wider open."

"He is free from everything that is calculated to support you, I should judge, from all I hear. What is he doing for a living?"

Perhaps Mrs. Evans would not have been

human had not the blood rushed violently even to her very temples at this cold home thrust; but she answered still with a quiet voice :

“ He has not found any position as yet, but of course he hopes to very soon; meantime, we are not suffering, and we have grand friends.”

“ Living on charity! I suppose as much. I wonder what your *mother* would think of that? Well, Eva, I must say I think that you and Dane are two fools! That is plain language I know, but the occasion demands it. The idea of his giving up a clerkship that he has held so many years, for the sake of a passing whim suggested to him by other people. I'm sure if Will were as much influenced by the opinion of other women as Dane is, I should be sorry for him. The idea of Dane trying to follow Callie Spafford through all her fanatical absurdities is simply ridiculous; and you will see it in that light one of these days. I could never have believed that you would be such an idiot. If anything would drive Will into the very midst of the business, it

is to see you and Dane shrinking in such fanatical horror from it; actually willing to be dependent on the charity of your poor neighbors!"

I do not know that Mrs. Evans said a word more than she had meant to say when she left home that afternoon, provided there should be occasion for such plainness of speech; but I think she may have said it more suddenly, and less tenderly, than, but for this strong provocation she might have done. Her voice was still low, but it was the sort of lowness that betokens intense self-control.

"Jennie, we need not discuss my husband's prospects or fanaticism. If his recent step was demanded of him by his conscience God can take care of the results; he and I, are both willing to trust our future in God's hands. But there is an entirely different question involved in your husband's position; aside from a question of right or wrong, is it possible that you do not know what everybody else sees, that it is placing Will right in the line of his most awful temptation? Don't you know that the habit of

drinking freely is growing on him every day, and that he is in awful danger of becoming a drunkard? Jennie Coleman, you might almost wish to see him buried, rather than launched on such a whirlpool as that into which he is entering. I came this afternoon to beg of you to use your influence to save him. I know you can do it."

Now was Mrs. Will Coleman angry! More angry than she ever remembered being in her life before. She arose from her seat and came over to where her cousin was sitting and stood before her, her eyes blazing like two stars, and spoke in slow, measured tones :

"Mrs. Evans, excuse me for saying that I think you have made your call of sufficient length, and I decline talking with you any longer, or receiving further calls from you. When a woman stoops to the act of insulting another woman's husband, incited thereto by a feeling of petty envy because her own husband has been a fool, and because the other is a rising business man, I think it is quite time that those two women should become

strangers. You have chosen to uphold your husband in a piece of lazy folly. I hope you will not starve in consequence; indeed, we will see to it, my slandered husband and I, that you do not actually suffer *want*; but as for being cousins any longer, or friends. I have no desire to claim the position."

Then she gathered her silken robes about her and sailed majestically out of the room.

As for Mrs. Evans, she did just what you might suppose her to do next. She burst into tears and sunk in a little crushed heap on the sofa in that great deserted parlor. Only a few minutes for crying; then she arose, dried her eyes, rearranged her disordered bonnet as best she could (very thankful that the parlor was deserted), let herself out at the front door, hailed a passing car, and went home.

What about the angry woman? Well, she, too, cried, as soon as she reached her room—angry tears. She had not the slightest idea of using her influence with her husband to alter his business arrangements. Do her justice;

she did not believe she had influence enough to cause him to change his plans; at least, not now, after they had been announced to the world, and the new business all but entered upon. Also do her justice to understand that she did not believe a word of the warning. Will took an occasional glass of wine, she was sorry for that; she had been surprised, years ago, that the son of such a temperance worker as his father had been, should be, ever so rarely a wine-drinker; but she did not believe that the habit was growing on him. She did not in the remotest degree fear his ever being a drunkard. The idea! when his grandfather had been a hero in the temperance world fifty years ago. Besides, Will was a gentleman, she still believed it; he would never be a common drunkard! What unparalleled imprudence it was to hint it to her, his wife. But being a wife, why did she not recoil in terror from the bare suspicion of it, as it was hinted by other people, and throw her influence powerfully in the scale to prove its falsity? Oh, dear! here, as in every other moment of her life

where plain seeing was needed, there was a glamor over Jennie Coleman's eyes. The simple fact is, that in her girlhood she had been, just as often as she could bring it about an attendant at the theater. She had wept over spurious woes and spurious ruins so often; she had rejoiced over sham heroic deeds so many times; she had applauded mimic virtues so much that nothing any where seemed quite real to her. She had, besides, a dangerous talent for the dramatic. It hovered over even her angry talks with her husband, and made her almost insensibly, take the tragic air and manner of some favorite actress; and it is an actual fact, that real as her anger was that day, intense as she supposed her feeling of wifely indignation to be, while she answered Mrs. Evans' warning, she was tormented with the suggestion that her words were wonderfully well chosen, her manner excellent, and that the entire scene would have appeared exceedingly well on the stage.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MEASURING ENTHUSIASM.



ANY a woman who is the fortunate slave of a young tyrant at home, will be in a condition to sympathize with the frantic haste which Mrs. Spafford made on a certain Tuesday afternoon, in order to be on time at the missionary meeting down town. An annual gathering, and one of special interest. Young Warren had so monopolized his mother for past months that she had missed several of the regular meetings, and therefore felt lost, or at least behind the times, and was particularly anxious to secure this entire afternoon. Notwithstanding the unceremonious way in which she disposed of her toilet, and

the skillful quickstep in which she went to the car, she was late and breathless when at last the usher tip-toed with her down the aisle of the well-filled church. Somebody was reading, and embarrassed as she was by her haste and tardiness, she paused suddenly as she heard a voice whisper her once familiar name: "Oh, Callie Howell!" Whose voice could that be? It sounded to her like a dream from out a long gone past. She gazed about her bewilderedly. Then advanced doubtfully a few steps, and felt her dress gently twitched by somebody in the side aisle. Whose face was that? Where had she seen it? Was this a dream, or had she dropped back ten, fifteen, nearly twenty years into her early childhood? She took the seat made for her by systematic crowding, and held out her hand mechanically to receive the energetic grasp of somebody:

"Have you forgotten all about Sallie Lewis?" a voice whispered.

Sallie Lewis! Why, no, she remembered her; she was a young lady with curls and sweet, blue eyes; a Sabbath-school teacher, *her* teacher, and the little girls, herself included,

used to call her their "dear Miss Sallie." Yes, but that was twenty years ago. Miss Sallie grew old of course, married, went away. Where did she go? Oh, yes; she married a minister; went to India, or China, or somewhere. Mrs. Spafford had not thought of her for a dozen years; but all these events came crowding back upon her memory, called up by that whispering voice. Then she turned and looked fully at the lady. There were no curls; the fair, rosy cheeks were sallow and wrinkled, but the blue eyes were bright and smiling.

"Yes, I am Sallie Lewis," she whispered, squeezing Mrs. Spafford's hand and indulging in a softly laugh, "and you are my dear little roly-poly Sabbath-school rosebud, Callie Howell. You are not changed so very much after all. Tropical sunshine hasn't burned all the fairness out of *you*, you see."

Just then came the voice of prayer, and both ladies bowed their heads, and Mrs. Spafford had time to call back her startled thoughts and realize that she was living in the present, and the sweet-faced, worn woman beside her was really her old-time teacher. A returned missionary!

She felt a sudden accession of honor; she was richer in friends than she had remembered. She studied the quiet face beside her furtively, during the reading of the reports which followed, trying to see in this middle-aged, and unmistakably careworn woman, a photograph of their beautiful and idolized Miss Sallie. It was hard to do; she had evidently borne much of the heat and burden of the day. Her youthful freshness was long since gone, and in its place had come many lines of care. "I have forgotten her name; or, let me see, did I ever know her husband's name? What a shame not to have kept within view of her work, and she my old teacher!" This was Mrs. Spafford's mental comment while the reading of the reports went on. At last she bent toward the lady, who still clasped her hand with the tenderness that the child, Callie, remembered of old.

"I don't know your name?" she whispered.

Then the blue eyes that she remembered well, flashed upon her a touch of their old archness, as she spoke a name well-known in missionary circles and recognized instantly by

Mrs. Spafford. She had actually read extracts from her letters in public meetings, and had never known that she was quoting from Sallie Lewis.

“Oh, I don't mean that,” she whispered back instantly; I know your name very well, indeed; I mean I don't know *you*; why! Oh, I mean—” and then both ladies laughed. It was all so curious. Then directly, of course, they sat erect and gave serious attention to those reports. The idea of two middle-aged ladies laughing in a religious meeting, and one of them a returned missionary! Great as was her eagerness to have a little talk with her old friend, Mrs. Spafford could not but become interested in what was soon transpiring around her. The very reports were inspiriting. The accession of members had been large, the new auxiliaries many, during the past year, and the treasurer's report so far surpassed anything that they had had before, and anything that had been expected, that the ladies clapped their gloved hands with energy, before its reading was concluded. Then several of the speakers seemed endowed with the very spirit of Christ

that afternoon, so simply eloquent were their appeals, so telling the incidents which they had to relate of sacrifice, and progress and reward. Peculiarly was this the case with Mrs. Temple's closing address; her heart was more than ever aglow. She had prepared herself carefully, not so much with many statistics, as with a few facts, which she told in such a manner as to bow many heads and bring to the surface real heart tears. Mrs. Spafford, listening to her, rejoicing with her in the progress of the cause, had nearly forgotten the honor of her own position in sitting beside one who had actually *lived* the experiences to which Mrs. Temple was referring, until some reference to the field in which she labored made her turn suddenly toward her friend for sympathy; she was amazed and distressed to discover that not a trace of sympathetic feeling could be found on her face; she sat erect, composed and almost indifferent; nay, there was worse than indifference on her face; there was just the shadow of a smile hovering around her mouth, and actually a sarcastic curve to the upper lip; the very curve which Callie Howell

as a child remembered when something had occurred to rouse her bright young teacher's opposition. What *could* be the explanation? Mrs. Spafford felt a cold chill at her heart, and turned her head quickly, and was so absorbed by her painful wonderings that she forgot to join in the solemn doxology which presently filled the house. The shadow of her discovery embarrassed her, so that when the meeting formally closed, and the missionary turned eagerly toward her, she knew not what to say.

"Why didn't we hear from you this afternoon?" was her first wonderment put into words.

"Oh, I am to talk this evening at the union meeting," she said, indifferently; "I am glad to be relieved from duty this afternoon. Talking doesn't signify; we have too much of that. What we want is *living*."

"Of course," assented Mrs. Spafford; "but most of those who talk at this meeting are *living*, too. Do you know Mrs. Temple? You will know her, of course. She is very prominent in this work, and such a grand woman. Oh, Sallie, how you must miss such

gatherings as these with sympathetic Christian women all around you. I never realized it so much before; but what a heavy cross it must be to give up all such helps?"

"Do you think so?" the returned missionary said, and there was a strange light in her eyes. "It does not impress me in that way. I wouldn't live in this country again for anything. It seems to me I should suffocate.

Her cheeks were glowing, and her whole manner indicated intense feeling. Her listener stood aghast."

"I can't think what you mean," she murmured. "Of course, you do not want to give up your work. I can understand that, and of course it is a blessed work; but I thought there were sacrifices to make."

"There are, but they do not come to me in the way that you have indicated. I'm not sure that I can make my meaning plain. You don't know how it impresses me, all this, and oppresses me. I feel as though you were all *playing* at missions. Think of the papers that have been read here this afternoon, and the addresses that have been made. Every

one of them referred to sacrifices, and rejoiced over the thought of being counted worthy to bear the cross for Him. Bah! pardon the expression, but it makes me sick. What have they ever *sacrificed* for Him? What do they know of the meaning of the word? Look around you on every side. Do you see any evidence of retrenchment? I am very familiar with that word; it has been rung at us in all its changes for the last four years. Our Boards harp about it, and our private letters of instruction teem with it. We must curtail, and *curtail* and CURTAIL, until we have sent children whom we had a chance to rescue from vice in its worst forms, back into heathendom, because the church at home couldn't furnish us with the paltry sums of money needed to carry on our work. We met one evening in the mission house, and went over our bills, and planned, and twisted, and turned, and then some of us *cried* and said: 'It can not be done. Some of the girls must go from the school. There is nothing more that we *can* curtail.' Now look at these ladies. I have been studying them all the

afternoon; I wish I hadn't. I could almost wish that I might be blind, while I am in this country attending missionary meetings, so that I might hear and not see. But my eyes are wide open. What do I see? A lace collar on this side, *real* lace too; I've not forgotten how the real article looks, costing enough to support one of our girls at school for a year! silk dresses, two of which would give one of our boys a good education. Jewels such as would replenish the entire treasury. Bonnets oh, dear, what *would* not that row of bonnets bobbing all the afternoon just in front of me have done for our girls' school last year. And the owners of those very bonnets moved gracefully down the aisle, and read their pretty reports about its having been a year of much 'self-abnegation and earnest effort for the beloved cause.' No, I don't want to come back to civilization to live; I know I should suffocate. I would much rather, as a matter of personal comfort, spend my life among the Africans. They are heathen, you know we don't expect much of them."

She had talked very rapidly under the spell of

evidently strong excitement; and Mrs. Spafford stood spellbound before her; not knowing what to think or to say; unable to utter a word; relieved, indeed, from the necessity of doing so, for at that moment three members of the executive committee swooped down upon the returned missionary and carried her off in triumph; a captive, to shake hands with scores and scores of pretty ladies, in elegant toilets, who were waiting for the honor to be bestowed upon them.

Mrs. Spafford stood looking after her in sorrowful silence for a moment, then turned and went slowly down the aisle. She was going home; she could not stay to hear her dear old teacher, Sallie Lewis, talk that evening, though the desire to remain was now greatly intensified; but Master Warren had objected to her having an evening out. Indeed, it was through Mrs. Evans' self-sacrifice that she had been enabled to come this afternoon. She must hasten home to relieve her. But she certainly had food for thought. And I do not know that it is any wonder that baby had a very thoughtful preoccupied sort

of mother for companion, the rest of the day, nor that he hailed with a crow of delight his father's late home-coming. He came with news.

"I meant to be early to-night," he said, bustling about with War mounted on his shoulder; "I was going to smuggle you off down town with Evans and his wife, and look after this young man myself, but we were detained by special business; something happened. I'll tell you about it when I get some water; sit down, young man, until I bring your mamma a pitcher of water. Oh, I saw Joe this afternoon. And he says Phillis will be back to-morrow; she has had her tooth filled and is all right."

What had happened was on this wise. Extra work had been the portion of several of the clerks in the great store for the last few weeks owing to the absence of one of its most trusted employes. He had broken down suddenly in the midst of a busy life, and was reported from day to day as seriously sick.

Every morning for two weeks Mr. Spafford had heard one or another of the partners

remark that it was a great inconvenience to have Holbrook away just now; he was doing well they believed, but the illness was likely to be tedious. It was almost impossible to supply his place temporarily; still they would not lose him for considerable, and must hold on as well as they could. Meantime, as the days passed, it was known to but few that Mr. Evans was living a precarious life. His deliberate resignation of his clerkship, with the frank reasons therefor, had caused but a nine days' wonder among his acquaintances, and had not, of course, caused even a ripple in the great business world, where he was not known at all. He had taken his place in the visible Church, and certain members—good earnest men, business men, temperance men—had shaken hands with him and welcomed him with glad words, and assured him of their joy in hearing that he “counted not his life dear unto himself,” and then they had gone their busy ways; there was no vacancy in their gift, they knew no way in which to help him, save with kind words; those they gave, and said to one another, when

they met for the first few days, that they hoped he would get a good position soon—he ought to; such back-bone as that should be able to make its way in the world; and then they had forgotten him. Others, of the same church, unhesitatingly said that they considered he had been rather faster than was necessary or even modest for so young a Christian. He could at least have felt justified in waiting until the Lord opened some door for him. The man who did not provide for his own household was worse than an infidel. And then they, too, had forgotten him.

During these days the most rigid economy was practised in the “little box of a house;” Mrs. Evans, taking lessons of her wifely love and resolute determination to help her husband through this struggle, developed a talent for making palatable dishes out of nothings, that she felt sure even Mrs. Spafford might have envied. Chances here and there the husband found to help hurried men for a day or two; work for which sometimes they paid him in money, and sometimes in hearty thanks, and a promise to do the same

for him some day when they had leisure. These last he appreciated, but could not pay his rent with them, and the days looked at times heavily shadowed. There was always sunshine for them, though, in the house across the way, and hearty welcomes, and numerous invitations to dinner, to tea, even to breakfast when a excuse could be found. Oh, the ways were constant and quiet and soul-sustaining, which these poor neighbors found to aid each other. Weeks before, Mr. Spafford had presented his friend's name at his own place of business, urging that it might be placed on the list for future vacancies; but the list was long, and the prospect of vacancies exceedingly slight.

"I don't know of a probable chance, perhaps in years," had the foreman said to him but the day before. "Of course, sickness may occur, but in that case we wait, as we are doing with Holbrook; he is better, by the way; I hope we shall have him back in a few days."

And yet it was only the next morning that, as Mr. Spafford sat at his desk running up a column of figures, a passing clerk paused a moment to say to him :

“Did you know that Holbrook was gone?”

“Gone where?” and the bewildered clerk tried to remember the sum of the column, and talk at the same time.

“Why, his disease took a turn for the worst, last night at midnight, and just at day-break he died.”

“Is it possible!” and Mr. Spafford was thoroughly aroused.

It had not seemed to occur to any one that the man who had sat so long on that high seat, behind that railing, and plodded through such a weary stretch of business, could possibly *die!* Mr. Spafford sat with pencil poised in air for some minutes, unable to settle down to the routine of work, when so solemn an enemy had invaded their ranks. Yet even while he sat there his mind went to speculating on the strangeness of the fact that death could come so near, and yet not really touch him. Here was taken from their midst a man beside whom he had sat every working day for three months; he would never sit there again, and yet it did not affect his interests, or himself in any

sense. How easily could Mr. Spafford think of those, the very suggestion of whose death as possible, sent a cold chill to his blood. "Human brotherhood is a strange, distant thing, after all," he told himself, musingly, then bent his head and worked away. It was towards the close of the next day that he was summoned to the private office for an interview with the heads of the firm.

"This friend of yours, Mr. Spafford," said the senior, motioning him to a seat: "is he still out of employ?" And receiving an affirmative answer he added: "Could you conscientiously recommend him to fill the position which you have occupied since you have been in our employ?"

With steady lips, but paling face, Mr. Spafford answered:

"Yes, sir."


Could this mean that they were dissatisfied with him? Never mind, he would do as good a service for his friend as he could. And he forthwith gave as rapid and condensed an account of his peculiar business qualifications as he could.

“I think we will try him,” said the chief. “If you know his address, Mr. Spafford, you may communicate with him to that effect. We would be glad to see him to-morrow morning. Meantime, you know, of course, of the vacancy in our ranks? Well, sir, we have unanimously elected you to fill the place. To hope that you will prove as faithful to the firm, and to the right, as the one who has fallen, is to wish great things for you.”

“Callie,” her husband said breaking the little silence which had fallen between them, after the wonderful news had been talked over, “what will our jewel-box think of having three hundred dollars a year in it?”

CHAPTER XXVII.

MEASURING SACRIFICES.

OLLOWING Mrs. Spafford around during the days when these business changes were taking place, was an undertone of doubt and anxiety about mission effort in general, and her own share in it, in particular. Her old friend's keen, stinging sentences had remained to burn. *Was it child's play?* Did the Lord look with sarcasm on it all, and laugh at their pitiful little mimickers of sacrifice? "I will laugh them to scorn," were the Bible words which seemed also to start up and haunt her. She did not look them up and follow out the connection, and thus comfort herself; she had little time for

actual study for a few days, so she simply went about her many duties with puzzled face and troubled heart. When, during intervals of care, she dipped into the Bible for a few minutes, she found herself following out the commission, "Go, preach, teach all nations," "be diligent in season and out of season," "present your bodies a living sacrifice." Earnest words, intense words, fully as keen and piercing as any the returned missionary had uttered. She grew to feeling that she had not even been *half* in earnest. When it really came to the question of sacrifice, how had she shown any personal knowledge of it?

As the weeks and months went by, the perplexities of the subject did not lessen. She found herself buying sparingly, perhaps she might almost have said grudgingly, whatever could not be classed among necessities. The pretty carpet which she had thought of with pleasure, when she was mentally adorning Mr. John's room, cost her actual sighs. What was the use of carpets any way? Boys and girls in Africa China and India perishing, and she buying carpets!

And when one morning Mr. Johns asked and obtained permission to bring his nephews out to spend the evening with him, as she made preparations to have a dainty or two added to the evening meal, she felt perplexed over the additional expense; even the very lumps of coal which she threw on to the grate in the bright parlor cost her a twinge, and she said to herself for the hundredth time:

“What is right, and where does wrong commence? We might sit in the dining-room.”

They called it dining-room winter and summer, by courtesy, but you will remember that, in winters at least, it was also a kitchen. “I like to have those young men come up to tea, and I like to make the table inviting, and this room is as pretty as a picture in which to receive them; but I could sacrifice all these likes, if I am called upon to do so; only, it would be sacrificing other people’s likes also; am I called upon to make other people’s sacrifices for them? And if not, how am I ever to separate myself from other people.”

Meantime, her spiritual life was not without its bright hours. She had grown deeply, in

fact almost painfully interested, in Mr. Johns, a middle-aged man who had buried the wife of his youth and had since been homeless. Perplexed though she was with what appeared to be conflicting duties, she was not sufficiently confused to give over the most thoughtful care and kindness toward this homeless man; and certainly he seemed to appreciate it. He grew daily more interested in matters which were evidently of absorbing interest to Mr. and Mrs. Spafford. He was beginning to be almost as regular at church as they themselves; and for a few weeks past he had joined them at the front door, or at the little gate, or perhaps at the corner, and gone with them to prayer-meeting. He always came down-stairs for evening worship, and he always lingered for morning prayer; surely these were cheering signs. Mr. Johns was not a heathen, it is true, in the common acceptation of that word, but Mrs. Spafford's morbid state did not reach to the height of ignoring the individual value of his soul in the sight of God.

That it *was* a morbid state, at least in part, she became almost convinced, as time passed;

still, there was enough truth in her difficulty to make her unable to get away from it. The bright-eyed plain-spoken missionary, who had so confused her sense of the fitness of things, had long since gone on her way, sought after by missionary societies in all directions, to tell to their eager ears the story of her own life, which certainly was full enough of sacrifice; though this she apparently did not realize. But the effect of her intense words, spoken in haste, remained.

It was finally to Mrs. Temple that she told the whole story one bright winter day, when she and young Warren went to spend a few hours with that lady. The fact is, all the perplexity came to her with ten-fold force, surrounded as she was on every hand by evidences of wealth and expensive tastes. The very carriage, with its luxurious cushions and handsome horses, which had been sent to wait upon her and baby, had given her a questioning twinge. Thinking it all over, she presently turned the conversation in that direction, and found herself telling over to Mrs. Temple her missionary friend's excited words.

There were tears in the elder lady's eyes as she listened, but there were smiles on her face :

“I've been over the same ground,” she declared, to Mrs. Spafford's immense relief. “I know just how it must seem to you — just how the words and thoughts which they suggested have stayed with and tormented you. Never mind, dear, don't grudge the unrest they have caused you; they will bear fruit. Meantime, there are two sides, even to your earnest friend's words. She, from her standpoint, sees plainly one side, but not the other. I think she feels and talks very much as the Lord Jesus Christ would have done, had he turned away in despair and disgust from those poor fishermen who thought they were ‘leaving all,’ to follow him. What did they *leave*, after all? What sacrifices did they make? Yet they thought they were making great ones. And in what infinite patience he bore with them, and led them along, step by step, until the time came when they counted not their lives dear. I don't think they would have been ready for martyrdom that first day when

he called them from their nets. Poor human sight would have felt utterly discouraged with them many a time between that day and the one in which they went up to him through fire and blood. So the church is growing. Some of our dear Christian ladies have but just heard a faint echo of his call, 'Go ye into all the world,' though it has been sounding for centuries. There are many of them standing now on the threshold, dazed with the echo, scarcely knowing if it can possibly mean them, and seeing sacrifice and burden where one day they will 'count it all joy.' And only He can seem to bear patiently with childish footsteps, and wait for growth and strength. "Besides, dear Mrs. Spafford, there are two sides, even to their dresses and bonnets, sometimes. I happen to know the private history of one of that very group of bonnets which your friend saw and deplored. It was bought at an up-town store, where a pretty young girl is just struggling up into position; trying amid great competition to establish herself. To secure Mrs. Jason Ward's custom, to make her a bonnet of such material and in

such a fashion that others of Mrs. Ward's set would look and admire and follow example, was an advertisement for the struggling young woman which she will not soon forget. Indeed, I sometimes think that that very bonnet is going to bring that pretty, new milliner into the kingdom.

“Then beside her sat Mrs. McChesney in an elegant new black silk. She read a report that day, you will remember. When she referred to sacrifices, I could scarcely hide a smile at the smallness of my own thoughts. I was wondering whether she had really felt it a little sacrifice to have that dress made by Mrs. Dormer, a widow who is a neat and skillful sewer, and is trying hard to secure work such as will enable her to keep her children together and educate them. She made this dress, did it well, is capable of doing well; and yet I know that Mrs. McChesney likes to go to Lawrence & Newcomb's old established house; they have always done her work, and suit her exactly, without any trouble. Still, she *didn't* go there; and what is the result? Why ladies of her acquaintance said to one another:

“Did you know that Mrs. McChesney’s new black silk was made by Mrs. Dormer? She must have a very high opinion of her work if she gives her such an elegant silk as that?’ And forthwith custom pours in upon Mrs. Dormer; it is as good as a hundred-dollar advertisement to her; and I will tell you in confidence that Mrs. Dormer brought me around a five dollar bill only last week as a thank offering to the special fund in our Foreign Missionary Society. ‘I know Mrs. McChesney is more interested in that society than any other,’ said poor Mrs. Dormer. She herself had never thought of the heathen twice in her life, but she continued: “So I thought I would bring it, for I do feel so thankful to her.” She is coming to the next meeting, Mrs. Dormer is, you understand, and who can tell whereunto this may grow?

“Now that is a glimpse of the other side. I don’t say that it is or it *isn’t* the best way to manage these things; but what I do say is, that the Lord sees the heart; and little seeds of loving kindness to one’s neighbor, whether he be next door or across the ocean,

may be in many hearts, unknown to us, unknown to those grand missionaries who have gotten above us so far that they see all the glory of the work and the honor of being allowed to toil, but not so high up that they can see into each human heart, and accept the petty sacrifices, and watch the growing seed, and wait for harvest."

"Still," said Mrs. Temple, as the talk went on, "there is her side, too, and we must not forget it. There are thoughtless expenditures among wealthy Christian women; there are hundreds lavished, where tens would do; that can not be denied, and we do well to look thoughtfully and prayerfully at it from this missionary's standpoint, and by realizing what a ridiculous sarcasm our lives present to her, get a glimpse of what motiveless and unconsecrated expenditure must look like, to God, who gave *himself* for souls!"

"That is it," said Mrs. Spafford, setting War down again on the rug, and standing before her friend, her face aglow with feeling. "Leaving all these people who have plenty of money, and with whose expenditures I have nothing

to do, how am I to regulate my own life? I'm in great confusion."

Then she dropped back into the low easy chair, and, led on by tender questioning, began to tell all about her trivial perplexities, the new carpet, the extra dishes, even the parlor fire and the nephews.

"Two sides, dear friend," said Mrs. Temple, still smiling. "You need to learn that by heart. When the disciples were commissioned to preach the gospel to every creature, they were to begin in Jerusalem. Now think a moment; suppose you, instead of going over on that rainy afternoon, two years ago, and helping to reconstruct, not only Mrs. Evans' kitchen but her home; oh, yes, I know all about it; Mrs. Evans is also a friend of *mine*, remember; but suppose, instead, you had worked a collar for the store, which would bring eventually a dollar into the treasury of the Lord. In actual dollars and cents how would it have compared? How much in dollars has Mrs. Evans been worth to the mission band, her influence dating from that day? How much may she be worth in the future?"

What may her husband do? I think he has commenced grandly; did you know he subscribed ten dollars to the young men's fund for Bibles for Mexico? And you know surely that he believes you and your husband were the means of showing him Christ. Do you believe you could have done it by saving your time and your money for the Foreign Mission treasury? Then I think the Lord has important work for Mr. Johns to do; and your pretty home, yes and the pretty parlor, and all the purity and peace of his surroundings may be the Master's cords of influencing, drawing him. As for those two nephews, I don't believe you know that they are in Mr. Temple's Bible class, and that they are evidently giving serious thought to the all important questions? The older one, Charlie, told my husband about his visit at your home, and about the delightful evening which you gave them, and a hint of some thoughtful, earnest words that you spoke to him under the gas-light. He admitted to Mr. Temple that if he thought he could be such a Christian as you and your husband were he would like to be one. I tell you, dear,

the Lord knows you, knows just what place he has set you in, just how many people you can touch with your influence, and just what he is going to do with them all ; and he loves the cause, both at home and abroad, more than you and I can."

"But about the sacrifice," said Mrs. Spafford, after a thoughtful pause, during which her face had lighted greatly. "I don't quite understand that. 'Give till you feel it,' is the sentence I read the other day, that should be taken as a motto by all the Christian world. I don't know how to do it. As I have been telling you, my actions seem to be so mixed with other people that I cannot separate them. How am I to sacrifice for any cause?"

Mrs. Temple bent toward the rug and gave herself up apparently to the pleasure of a frolic with War ; his happy shouts and evident appreciation of the fun drawing his mother's pleased attention. When her gaze was riveted on him, with the mother love shining fully in her eyes Mrs. Temple said, suddenly :

"What a heavy sacrifice your life has been during the past year for the sake of

this one little boy! How many nights have you sat by his crib? How many hours have you walked the floor with him in your arms? How many comforts have you gone without for his sake? In short, how continually you must have felt the weight of self-sacrifice for him! Can you compute it, Mrs. Spafford?"

A quick telegraphic dispatch from the heart of one woman to the other was the immediate result of this sentence, then the mother bent and kissed her baby.

"I do not feel the utmost that I can do for him to be a sacrifice," she said, with deep feeling, because I *love* him so. Do you mean, Mrs. Temple — can I think —"

"Do I think you can so love Christ that whatever sacrifices of personal ease or comfort you may make for his sake will become so much a joy as to cease to be claimed under the head of sacrifice? Aye, indeed, there is a higher plane than that of sacrifice."

There was much more talk, but I cannot give it to you. Its sum is embodied in Mrs. Spafford's words as she wrapped War's cloak around him and tied his gay cap under his chin:

“Thank you, Mrs. Temple, you do not know what you have done for me this afternoon. I don’t know myself, yet, but I feel sure that I am a great deal richer than I was when I came.” Then, immediately, “Mrs. Temple, you need not have ordered the carriage for us; we could go home by car.”

Mrs. Temple laughed, pleasantly.

“Are you afraid, dear,” she said, “that to luxuriate in a carriage, instead of being uncomfortable in a car, is not making use of your opportunities for sacrifice? Save your car-fare for the mission-mite box, and ride with a clear conscience. John, on his way up for you, dropped Mrs. Perkins, you know, she doesn’t get rides often, and needs them. John is going to stop for her on his way back, and bring her home; so you see you may safely enjoy the carriage.”

Mrs. Spafford responded by a happy little laugh. “I don’t think anything about comfort, or sacrifice,” she protested; “I was just planning to stop on the way and do an errand.”

“Do all the errands you want to; Mrs. Perkins will be in no haste to get home

and John will make love to War with all his heart, while you are gone."

Notwithstanding her protest, Mrs. Spafford found her heart rejoicing, over the fact that she could see work that Christ would own, even connected with that luxurious carriage. Had he not said, "Unto one of the least of these?" Mrs. Perkins ranked among the "least" as the world looked at it, but she was assuredly one of his own.

War was left for a brief minute, cuddled among the cushions, talking to John, while his mother stopped at one of the great stores, summoned the carpet clerk, Mr. Johns, and directed him to bring the nephews home with him to supper. Then she hastened home, set the parlor aglow with beauty with the aid of a large bouquet, brought from Mrs. Temple's green house, then beguiled Phillis into entertaining War, while she made cream muffins for tea. Now light had dawned on her pathway; new meaning there was in the verse: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or *whatsoever* ye do, do all to the glory of God." She saw new ways of doing it; she was gleefully happy over her muffins.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THEN AND NOW.



HAT an immense book the history of a human life would make! Probably no one will ever know how large a volume it would be, for no one will ever write it. I have lingered over the story of the beginnings of married life, to this, my friend Mrs. Spafford. She is so dear to me, and her early trials and triumphs are such vivid pictures in my heart, that I love to linger over them.

But time hastened. Therefore, I, warned by the growing chapters, will ask you to look in upon her busy life for the last time, nearly ten years from the day in which you made her

acquaintance. Not in the pretty "little box of a home;" those quarters grew too strait for the increasing family. It is on the same square, however; the Spaffords found themselves much too attached to their surroundings, the ties of neighborhood too strong to be causelessly sundered; so it stands on the corner below, a large handsome house; plain it is true, but it is the plainness of exceeding taste and care rather than that of accident. Perhaps the most noticeable feature is the lovely lawn that spreads itself abroad in most uncanny-like greenness and beauty; grasses and ferns and flowers cluster here all summer in radiant freshness. Lovely beds of violets are scattered here and there; lilies of the valley in their early season hide under broad, green leaves; while in shady nooks certain beauties of the woods thrive exceedingly, to prove the falsity of the popular notion that none of these wild-wood treasures will bear transplanting and petting.

On the opposite corner is a twin house; the ground distinguished from their neighbor across the way only by a lavish wealth of

roses during June. The houses themselves are as nearly alike as the same architect and builder could make them; and I presume you can readily guess that the Evans Family occupy the latter one. The neighbors of years ago are neighbors still.

I want you, on this bright winter afternoon, to go with me to the meeting of the Young Ladies' Mission Band. You will meet many of the old friends there, and some new ones, and get perhaps a better idea of what is doing in that branch than a half-day's story from me could give you.

It is not necessary to climb the hill to the old Stowell homestead. The parlor served its time, doing its duty nobly, and has retired into private life again; for, six squares away from the two stone houses where our friends live, is another new building. In point of fact, there are many new buildings, for this part of the city has grown so rapidly during the past six years that it can not honestly lay claim longer to the name suburb. But there is one pile of brick and mortar which is *the* building above all others around which the

hopes and plans of many center. It is large, and in fact rather imposing-looking, and bears over its central door in large letters this brief statement: "YOUNG LADIES' BAND, TEMPLE STREET CHURCH."

To the initiated these words tell a great deal ; and as for the uninitiated can't they inquire ? This building is the property of the Temple Street Church. It holds within its ample walls a reference library on missions, a general library of carefully selected volumes, a ladies' parlor, handsomely furnished, where women and girls may be sure of meeting at all hours of the day some Christian women, who will greet them cordially, introduce them to the points to which they may need introduction, give them any needed help as regards work, or home, or friends, in short, set them in the way of helping themselves ; a ladies' committee room just across the hall, where some of the various committees of Christian work are apt to be in session on almost any day of the week ; a coffee and lunch room for women only, constantly presided over by skilful young women who have been taught how to prepare

wholesome and inviting food; a young ladies' parlor, carpeted and curtained and seated tastefully, a parlor organ at one end, a center-table with Bible and hymn books, and numerous side tables with work baskets, and a sewing-machine near at hand. This last is where the young ladies hold their monthly gatherings; and down-stairs the largest room in the building, with bay windows at front and side, in each of which glitter in gilt letters the word "WHAT-NOT," the fancy store belonging still to the stock company formed more than eight years ago. Every other room in the building is connected with the benevolence of the Temple Street Church save this one. This is rented at a fair figure, and paid for in quarterly advance payments by the members of this unique firm. They are still firmly resolved on not mixing things. Business is business, and benevolence is benevolence.

True, they find no fault because the managers of the building choose to use the rent paid them for this room to swell the number of volumes in the library. They have no desire to curtail the benevolent enterprises of the

Temple Street Church; on the contrary, they rejoice over each one. They are grateful for the bestowal of the committee room, and the parlor, and the library, and the upper parlor where they hold their religious meetings — this is benevolence; they gave their mites to help build each of these; they constantly help to keep the wheels in motion; but the down-stairs front room means business.

They are workers. They have enlarged their borders. The store is open now all day long, from Monday morning until Saturday night; always excepting Wednesday and Friday evenings, when occur the regular church prayer-meetings. Well-salaried clerks are in constant attendance, but the numerous partners keep a sharp lookout, and hold themselves carefully posted as to all that goes on connected with the firm. That it has paid, and is paying, you need only glance up and down the well-stocked room to be sure of. I shall not even venture to whisper to you what have been the net receipts during this past year; the fact is, it is a business secret. What firm of any importance cares to noise abroad its

financial power? Yet that some people understand it is evident, because you may hear it repeatedly affirmed by leading business men in the very heart of the great city, that they should not hesitate to trust the "WHAT-NOT," to any reasonable amount. It is true this may be owing in part to the fact that the firm in question never ask one cent of credit from any business house anywhere; their rules in this respect being as strict as when they invested with laughter and trembling their first six dollars and seventy-five cents.

"Well I did not propose to have you linger in the store. You are invited up to the young ladies' parlor, where the meeting is in progress. At first sight it will not impress you at all as a religious meeting. The machine is hushed it is true, but needles and scissors and thimbles are flashing and gleaming in busy fingers; and tongues are moving almost as steadily. Mrs. Spafford is seated at the central table, and the Bible is open before her. Mrs. Evans is at her right, pencil and note book in hand, Every other lady in the room is sewing, or crocheting, or knitting, or cutting.

These two, Mrs. Spafford and Mrs. Evans, it will be remembered, are not *young* ladies; but there is a singular fact connected with their history thus far: Not a young lady belonging to that Band has discovered apparently that these two are any older, or are ever to *be* any older, than those who rank among young ladies. They have held to them with a calm persistence that has so shamed old Father Time that he really has retired into the background, leaving no wrinkles and as yet not even a suggestive gray hair. And every lady in the church knows that these two motherly matrons are main arteries of the Young Ladies' Band. Mrs. Spafford, though with an open Bible before her, repeats instead of reads this sentence:

“Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession,” and without a pause of a moment Mrs. Evans adds: “The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.” And Addie Stowell says: “Thou shall inherit all nations.”

Thus the story grows, the wonderful story of God's own promises, which are found to

belt the earth, proving by his mighty word that all the nations of the earth shall yet praise him. It is Laura Bacon who has dropped the bright wools she was sorting, and slipped into a seat before the organ, just as the triumphant chorus of verses is concluded. She touches the chords, and with one consent they chant: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all nations. O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker." At the first note of the song, the busy hands drop, and with the closing strain the ladies kneel, and Mrs. Evans' voice leads them into the very presence of the God of the whole earth.

"It almost seems as if the day were near at hand when all the inhabitants of the earth shall worship him," declared Addie Stowell, when work had been resumed; "I have been so *astonished* over many facts while getting ready for this meeting."

"That must certainly mean good news from China," said Mrs. Evans, with a smile; "I

believe you are her *special* representative for to-day."

"Oh, China is simply wonderful. You ought to have appointed every one of us to represent her, and then we couldn't have begun to do her justice. I don't know about this 'general summary' that we are supposed to give in January. Why we can't begin to glance at the wonders that are doing."

"Well, just a glance is about all we can give, but I think if you remember that we are to glance backward as well as forward, you will succeed in impressing us by the power of contrast."

"Yes'm, I remember it; and it was that very thing that overwhelmed me. Why, Mrs. Spafford, I didn't know that less than forty years ago there were only six Chinamen converted. Isn't that awful!"

"It is harder for me to realize that any of them are converted now," declared a gay young girl; "I don't know much about the Chinese, only their faces look so funny, and their ways are so unlike ours; it doesn't, seem as though they *could* be Christians. Do many

of them come to the light? You know I have just joined your ranks; you must wink at my ignorance."

"And enlighten it, Fanny," said Mrs. Evans, laughing. "Addie, can you encourage her in regard to the Chinese?"

"I should think so! Why, there are fifty thousand of them connected with Christian churches. Only think of that! Over thirteen thousand of them are communicants; and, Fanny Carley, how much do you suppose those church-members give a year for the cause? Twenty thousand dollars! Just think of it! Heathen, indeed! I wish some of them would come over and teach our civilized heathen how to give. Mrs. Spafford, how much may I say? I'm just bubbling over. There are dozens of curious incidents that I'd like to tell."

"Save them for February," ruled Mrs. Spafford; "you know we give the entire meeting to China then; and I can see by Minnie Stuart's face that she thinks the Chinese don't compare with the Mexicans."

This suggestion brought a chorus of eager

voices to the front. Every one of the girls had been, at a very recent date, to hear that queen of Mexican missions, Miss Rankin. Four copies of her book were in the Missionary Library, and had been carefully read, since the excitement about her wonderful work had reached white wheat, and the girls were therefore on the *qui vive* to give information. At last such was the case with those who represented Mexico, while the others were equally certain that these should be held to the rules, and give only a summary.

“Well,” declared Minnie, “we are willing; the summary is astonishing enough, especially in the light of contrast. Remember how Miss Rankin worked to get one Bible over into Mexico, and how she rejoiced when that feat was accomplished; and then think of the Protestant churches scattered over it to-day, and the thousands there who are followers of Christ!”

This very sentence produced eager words from one and another in confirmation of the remarkable changes in that land, which a few years had wrought; and at last Mrs. Spafford

was again obliged to call them to order."

I don't think it *can* be, that our time is up; we are just hurried because Essie is *determined* to get to India," declared Minnie Stuart, as she laughingly retired to the background.

"Well, India, is fully as startling in its story as China or Mexico can possibly be," affirmed the earnest-faced young girl whom they called Essie.

"Don't you know when we were reading Dr. Judson's life we concluded that no other mission land could be more hopeless than India looked then? Now think of there being seventy-eight thousand people there who belong to Jesus! I tell you, girls, that number is simply glorious! Mamma laughed at my enthusiasm, when I found it out; I *was* a little ashamed of the way in which I shouted; but it came over me suddenly, and I just broke my thoughts: 'Oh! oh! OH!' I said, 'what an *immense* throng there is going to be in heaven, when India, alone, is ready now to send seventy-eight thousand!' Still, the more I studied the matter, the more evident

it was that there was a great deal to do yet. Why, some of the sentences in the book I was reading sounded just like sarcasm, though they were not intended for that. For instance, it stated that there were now in India two missionaries for every million of inhabitants, and that this was a very good number! Mrs. Spafford, what do you think of that, when you said, the other day, that our pastor, with a congregation of a thousand to look after, had far too much to do."

"Just what I thought before, Essie," said Mrs. Spafford smiling; "that we expect more of our pastors than they can accomplish, with such large fields, and that we are awfully neglecting India, as well as every other mission field."

"Yes," declared a champion for China, "I am glad you put in that last, Mrs. Spafford; I don't think India compares with China, for instance, in its need. Why that missionary who visited at auntie's last summer told me herself that, where she was located, the number of people that one missionary had to reach, if they *were* reached, was the same as though

there were a minister in New York City and one in Cleveland, O., and none between! She asked me how I should enjoy having *my* minister have such a field as that!"

Thus the talk went on. Siam and Africa and Japan and Persia and Syria had each their special champion, eager to give contrasting figures and striking bits of news. Constantly was their leader obliged to suppress the enthusiastic young hearts, hinting that this was the day for the *general outlook* only, and that each field would come up in its turn for special notice. Only once did they break the line of actual review of *facts* to romance a little over what the future might bring them; this was when they reached the last month of the year, and Syria was called for. Then all eyes were turned, with sort of tender eagerness, on the blushing face of Lena Bacon.

"Mrs. Spafford, you will certainly let Lena talk as long as she wants to?" pleaded two or three voices, and Mrs. Spafford, smiling, albeit the tears were very near the surface, declared her willingness to listen to whatever Lena had to say; but she, blushing, smiling,

could at first say nothing at all. The simple truth was, she was on the eve of passing beyond the realm of mere *saying* into the actual personal *doing*, in the far away land.

Aye, Mrs. Spafford's mission band were to have a missionary of their "very own," sent out from their home and hearts; and, in the strange sweet providence of God, this was none other than Lena Bacon — she whom you will possibly remember as one who declared frankly, on the day of this band's organization, that she "did not believe in Foreign Missions!" "The Lord holdeth the hearts of his people."

Lena was, despite this childish folly, one of his own, and in his time he set the very inmost longings of her heart of hearts on the work abroad, and called her to prepare to drop seed there. And she was going, in her youth and beauty; sacrificing, so it looked to others, with no meager hand, since she had everything to leave, that this world can give; but never did young heart sacrifice more loyally or joyfully. And Mrs. Bacon, her mother, had moved step by step, during this term of

years, from an actual opposer to a silent looker-on, then to a faint and distant follower, then to one who read, in silvery voice and well-chosen sentences, beautiful reports about "sacrifice and gave annually her hundreds, without knowing that they were gone, or caring greatly what they did, then suddenly had stepped into the very forefront of sacrifice, learning by the deep throbbings of her mother-heart, what the word meant, for she was giving her only darling. And she *did* give her; not without a struggle at first, not without counting the cost with tearful protests, again and again and again; but she had already come to know that sacrifice for Christ is sweet, and that he has a special and very tender place for those who give to him their *best*. So now, where her body, and in a degree her purse, had been for several years, the workers in Temple Street Church recognized that she brought her soul. And in a few months more Lena was going. Not alone? Oh, no!

CHAPTER XXIX.

“GOOD MEASURE.”



NOT alone, in any sense of the word; the all-reaching promise: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” had sounded down to her through the ages, and felt to her heart as though He who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever,” had spoken the word but yesterday to her individual need.

Not alone as regarded human love and care, for she had been chosen by one who counted it a special and crowning mercy of the Master whom he served, that just *she* and no other in all the world had been called to walk with him on his life journey. Are you interested to

know who this other was? Do you remember the nephew, Charlie, and the muffins for tea, and the extra lumps of coal in the grate, and the buffetings of Satan which Mrs. Spafford endured on their account, when he whispered in her ear: "To what purpose is this waste? These lumps of coal might have been saved, and thus the money which must now be taken to buy other lumps have been dropped into your mite-box to swell the general fund." His wretched attempts to appear as an "angel of light," were long since silenced by a word from the Master, which Mrs. Spafford took to him as her answer; "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

And now behold, he had indeed prospered, aye and given already a tenfold harvest; for it was Charlie, the nephew who was going in a few months to carry on her work, right in the centre of the field, while she worked still at home. Only a few months before he

had graduated, and been ordained to preach the everlasting gospel. Truly there are times in which God proves that a "day with him is as a thousand years."

Looking back upon the story of her past, Mrs. Spafford marvelled sometimes that even *God* could work so fast or bring such wonderful things to pass. Not the least among her joys was the fact that the one who had quietly borne all the expense of "Charlie's education and outfit for his far-away field, was the carpet clerk, Mr. Johns.

"He is my contribution to Foreign Missions," the widower was apt to say, with a humorous shake of his gray head, when the church hinted its desire to share some of the honor with him. "Charlie is my contribution; Mrs. Spafford was always asking me to give to Foreign Missions the very money that I had been saving up for Charlie. I wanted to please her, and I wanted him to have the money, and so I just made up my mind to lump it. Charlie belongs to me."

Ah, yes, with limitations. Long before this had Mr. Johns recognized and bowed before a higher ownership both for Charlie and himself.

“ Bought with a price.” And the day in which he and Charlie stood together in the church, and gave public recognition of this eternal ownership was one of the happiest in Mrs. Spafford’s life. Could she do other than rejoice that he had said to them in private:

“ I told the Lord, Mr. Spafford, that you and your wife had brought in this worthless old sheaf, as well as the younger one (who I think will yet bring others with him). The Lord knows it is true, and he knows that with you to show me how, I mean to try to go home not entirely empty-handed.”

There was no danger of it. More than one gem already sparkles in the crown set aside and waiting for that gray head.

Now during this long retrospect of ours, the Young Ladies’ Missionary Meeting has gone steadily on. As I said, they ran off their track with Lena long enough to launch out in a dozen questions as to what she meant to do about this, and that, and the other; and she, as entirely and happily at home with them as though they had been her sisters in the flesh, gave ready answers and took sweet counsel

with them, realizing that there was between them a bond of union stronger than death, and strengthening with every passing day. This talk in nowise unfitted them for the ten minutes of prayer, in which nearly every lady in that room gave audible expression to her love for Christ and his cause, and her desire that their special treasure Lena, might be upborne by his everlasting arm.

Then they sang, "Blest be the tie that binds," and the January meeting was over.

"How do you get it to sound so little like a meeting?" questioned an interested visitor one day. "Why I mean, you know, the absence of all formality is so striking; they just talk away as though they were having a good time; and yet they are thoroughly well-prepared; it cannot be just a chance conversation which they hold."

"Yes it is," declared Mrs. Evans; "that is, if you please to call it so. The young ladies prepare themselves with great thoroughness, taking time and care, and then the mere *words* in which they clothe their thoughts for the meeting are as much chance as yours are when you

remark to me that it is an unusually cold day. As a matter of fact, you have observed the weather before this, consulted a thermometer, it may be, compared the weather report of this date with the corresponding one of last year; in other words, you have perhaps prepared yourself to give an intelligent and correct estimate of the *weather*, but the words in which you make the statement are entirely unstudied.”

“I understand,” the visitor said; “but still I don’t see how you ever get them to study up and be ready; nor how they contrive to appear so natural and unconstrained about it when they *are* ready.”

“They will not study, until they are interested, and have something to study for; it is the result of long training. Mrs. Spafford has simply been indefatigable in that, as in everything else that she undertakes; and she has had Mrs. Temple to consult and lead her on. Her custom for years has been to give a mission station to a certain number of girls for three months. They are supposed to post themselves thoroughly about that station, and whatever question we may chance to ask of them con-

cerning it, if they cannot answer, and it is answerable, they are expected to be ready with the item the next time they meet us. At the end of three months they change, each taking another field. In this way all the girls, except the quite new ones, have had each of the stations; so of course they know a good deal about them. And there is always a sort of pride in standing up for the country to which one happens to belong for the time being. As for the unconstraint, they feel no constraint, so of course exhibit none; they have been trained to talk on this topic exactly as they discuss the weather or the fashions, or the last book they have read. You notice that they continue their work, except during the strictly devotional exercises, and the talk is frequently interrupted by a call for the scissors, or the canvas, or the blue, or red, or green silk. Mrs. Spafford, after careful study became convinced that this informal way of managing the matter, allowing the interruptions that would naturally occur in common conversation, was the best way of helping the girls to feel at home and informal. It has worked well."

Now I have given you, as I promised, just a

glimpse of the Young Ladies' Band. It could really be only a glimpse, for I have neither time nor ability to let you at once into the inner workings of this carefully planned and skillfully officered scheme. No general of an army, planning his campaign, could work more steadily, patiently, and with a more single eye to victory, than did the mature brains that had taken hold with these young things to do battle for the Lord. To be sure they had many helpers now, among the young people themselves. A few years really makes veterans of people who are in earnest; and a number of those who had taken hold of the work as quite young girls, remained as mature young ladies to drill with the new recruits, who were constantly gathering. Many had married and gone out from them, it is true; but enough of the old material remained to keep the business part of the enterprise from ever being the ponderous and somewhat hazardous experiment that it was when Mrs. Spafford first put her shoulder to the wheel.

Meantime that lady's afternoon work was by no means finished, with the close of the meet-

ing; she hastened home as soon as she could break away from groups of talkers who all had questions of immediate importance to press. She had good reason to make haste, for she was well aware that another missionary meeting was in progress, which was liable by this time to need her immediate attention. I trust you have not forgotten young Warren Spafford; he has arrived at an age in which it is not easy to forget any boy who is within reasonable distance; and young Warren was by no means the sort of boy to sink into oblivion. No meek and quiet spirit was he, but a vigorous, loud-voiced, quick-witted, wide-awake fellow as you will be likely to find at eight years of age. He was a boy who developed constantly in the line of *schemes*. Daring ones, intricate in their nature, were constantly appearing to him to be worked up. Some of these plans were practical, and others were decidedly and hopelessly the reverse; but of this last he could never be convinced by previous experience; each individual plan had to be faithfully tried before he was ready to abandon it.

His last experiment had been a missionary

meeting among the boys, suddenly projected on his mother without word of warning. Three gatherings had been held, and with a code of laws that, to say the least, was original, and a programme that was unique, enthusiasm was still at white heat. His mother, looking on, wondering whether this was really seed, springing up on fertile soil, or a dream that would come to naught, did what she could to encourage the small people, and bided her time. "If I had only planned it for him," she told herself, smiling over some of the quaint plans which she had not made, "perhaps it might really have developed well; but how could I plan when the queer little fellow started it up suddenly, apparently full fledged? Never mind, 'out of the mouths of babes He has ordained praise;' perhaps this will grow to his praise." One thing seemed certain, that if he lived, Warren Spafford would in some way fulfil the hopes of his babyhood; for if his enthusiasm could be said to center on any one thing, and hold itself with an ever increasing fervor, that thing was the world of missions.

Standing at the front window of the house

opposite her own was a pale-faced, hollow-eyed, discontented-looking woman; if you had been near to her, you would not have had to look very closely to trace lines of unrest, many and heavily marked, on her white, dreary face. She had aged in the passing years far more than the other ladies, which possibly you will not think strange when I tell you she is Jennie Coleman, and that she has come to live with her cousin, Mrs. Evans. That last sentence gives you a hint, at least, of family disunion and trouble.

Speedy as Mrs. Spafford's transit had been, her neighbor had reached home before her, and was up-stairs now, ready to have Mrs. Coleman's ceaseless observations on passers by poured at her.

"There is Callie! I wonder why she persists in wearing that cloak? It is too short for the present style, and never became her very well, either. But then I know why she wears it; just because she is too penurious to get another. That is just like Callie Spafford, and it was just like Callie Howell. I should think she might remember now, that

she is a rich woman ; but it is inborn, that trait in her character. She is just as careful and economical as when she was first married and lived in that old little house. Do you remember that day we met her at the store, and she wouldn't buy asparagus because it was so expensive? Well, I met her down town yesterday, and pointed out some elegant hot-house grapes to her. They were so lovely they fairly made my mouth water ; and do you believe she wouldn't buy them? She said they were out of season, and so expensive that she must not look their way. The idea of her talking that way, and her husband a partner in one of the largest houses in the city !”

Mrs. Evans laughed. Once her face would have flushed, and her eyes flashed over this sort of comment on her friend ; but she had learned at last to live away above Jennie's unwearied tongue, accounting it as not of the smallest consequence save to her own bitter heart what the poor tongue kept saying.

“I suppose she thinks she must be conscientious in the use of money even though

she has considerable," she said pleasantly.

"Oh, conscientious, that's all nonsense!" vehemently declared Mrs. Coleman. "She was *born* so and cannot help it, I tell you. It is just as natural for her to save as it is to breathe, and I must say I think it is an exceedingly unbecoming trait; it did well enough when she was poor, but in her present circumstances it is very noticeable. You are not *naturally* that way, Eva; I don't think as a girl you were in the least penurious, but you are so fond of copying Callie Spafford that I tremble for you. It is growing real hard for you to buy anything that you can do without. Such a low, poverty-stricken position to take when there is no manner of occasion."

Now, when we consider the fact that Mrs. Evans was daily spending money for the care and comfort of this, her homeless cousin, she might perhaps be pardoned for feeling the plain words a trifle; but they provoked from her only a smile; they were actually too foolish to feel.

"Oh, you must remember that Mr. and Mrs. Spafford frequently prove the fact that they

have money, by the way in which they give it, if they don't by spending,” she said, speaking lightly.

“Oh, *give!* I am not likely to forget it. That is another hobby of theirs which they ride to death. I think it is quite as silly an extreme as the other; the idea of the Spaf-fords giving two hundred dollars to the collection for Foreign Missions in addition to all that she does in the Band! It is perfectly absurd. Millionaires don't do much more than that. It is nothing but pride; scrimp and save to see how much they can *give*. That is another thing in which you and Dane are copying as hard as you can. I don't see how Dane can do it; he seems to be independent enough about some things. *You never* were independent, Eva, but I wouldn't tie myself down to any copy if I were you.”

“That is really what I am trying to do,” said Mrs. Evans, sweetly and simply; “He is our pattern, you know; Dane and I both want to copy him very closely.”

“Oh, pshaw!” said Mrs. Coleman, giving an impatient twitch to her shoulders, her whole

face gathering in a frown; she called all such words *cant*. After a moment of irritable silence she went back to the charge: "I declare I believe Callie Spafford is a monomaniac on giving; and she is bringing up her child to be just like her. He has a rosewood box perched on the mantle in his own room, and he took me in to see it the other night, and talked to me about his 'tenths' as largely as though he were a merchant prince; for all the world like his father; earning money he is, too, like the child of a day laborer. Well, Callie was a queer girl in every respect, and she has certainly made a queer woman." Then the flow of talk was interrupted by a long-drawn sigh, and after a moment she added in a low, dreary voice: "It is a strange world. Think of you two girls beginning life as poor as you did; and your husbands, in just these few years, on the way to being rich men, while I am a miserable, wrecked woman, no home, no husband, no friends."

And the talk ended as it so often did in a burst of sobs. Poor Jennie Coleman! It was of no avail to attempt consolation, Mrs.

Evans knew this by past experience only too well. At such times *words* only seemed to have power to irritate. She was deeply, painfully sorry for her cousin; but there was no truthful way of saying so, without leaving at least the inference that much of the fault of her wretched life was her own. No husband! not that the grave had closed over him. Mrs. Evans could not fail to see that the unloving wife would have been better pleased if it had. The unwearied exertions of Dane Evans and Mr. Spafford had at last prevailed, and the wreck of the once “perfect gentleman,” Will Coleman, had consented to shut himself inside the walls of an inebriate asylum. Whether he would ever come back into the world of men a *saved* man, God only knew. One of the hardest features of it all was, that his miserable, disappointed wife not only had no hope of him, but did not seem to *want to have*. Thinking of it all — of the eagerness of this young couple to be rich, of the strides towards it which they thought themselves making; of the family across the way, and the almost unbroken tide of prosperity that had flowed in

upon them since the hour when they held to principle rather than to bread (if there must a choice be made), thinking of their *own* signal leading, and of the wonderful "tenths" which God had given to both families in these last years — Mrs. Evans thought, but by no means said: "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing. There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." *Was* that verse written for the purpose of giving to the world a history of these three families? When will the world by observation learn wisdom?

"Mamma," said young Warren, his cheeks very red, his eyes aglow; "we made a thank offering to-day. I told the boys about your thank offering in the Band, you know, and they liked it, and they each gave a cent more than their tenths, and you know the gold dollar that Uncle Dane gave me for my birthday; well, I gave the half of that for a thank offering. We gave it because we are all so happy, and having a grand time. Wasn't that a good reason, mamma?" A thoughtful pause, during which the bright, dark eyes took on a gleam, as though within the soul was born some great re-

solve, and then he said: “Mamma, I am going to pray to Jesus to make me well enough off when I’m a man so that I can give *half* of my money for thank offerings. I mean half of what is left after the tenths are taken out: of *course* I’d give them; they belong. But I want to *give* something, you know, besides what belongs; and there’ll be enough things to be thankful for, won’t there?”

Looking down into his eager face and smiling eyes, the mother stooped and kissed him, once and again, and again, and repeated aloud to herself rather than him, that old-time promise having this seal: “I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass: Give and it shall be given unto you, good *measure*, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

THE END.

BOOKS FOR CLERGYMEN.

The Teachers' Helper, by "Pansy"—Mrs. George I. Alden,—is a volume which no teacher of Sunday-school children can afford to do without. It is exactly what its name signifies, a helper. No writer of books in this country is better qualified to give advice to teachers than Pansy, and could the volume now before us be put into the hands of every one entrusted with the Scriptural teaching of children, and further, could its suggestions be carried into practice, the results would be surprising even to the most experienced of Sunday-school workers. The *Helper* is intended as a manual for the instruction of younger scholars, chiefly series of class exercises to be pursued, based on the lessons of the author's long experience as a teacher; explains how they should be conducted; attacks certain popular notions respecting the capacity of little children to learn and understand, and shows their absurdity; urges patience, earnestness and the exercise of judgment on the part of the teachers; and proffers an amount of good, sound advice on the whole vast subject, that cannot help being an aid and encouragement to any faithful or interested teacher.

Poetry is a hardly less powerful agency in arousing and interesting the mind in religious matters than prose. Hymns and spiritual songs play an important part in devotional exercises and many hearts are impressed by the part which the preacher fails to reach. The publishers have not been unmindful of this fact, and their list includes several important volumes designed to fill this need. Prominent among them are Roundell Palmer's *Book of Praise*, containing the choicest hymns which have been written, gathered from all sources; *He Leadeth Me*, a collection of poems by English authors of a purely devotional character; *Songs of the Spirit*, edited by Bishop Odenheimer, and *The Rock of Ages*, a volume of religious poetry compiled by the Rev. S. F. Smith-D.D. All these are published in two editions—one for holiday presentation purposes and one in popular and cheaper form. For religious gift books adapted to any season of the year are the small quartos, *Jesus Lover of my Soul*, *The Ninety and Nine*, and Miss Lathbury's *Out of Darkness into Light*.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

CHIPS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE.—12 mo. 486 pp. \$1.50
What the press says of it:

In this handsome volume of five hundred pages have been brought together some of the most important utterances of our twenty presidents, carefully selected from speeches and addresses, public documents and private correspondence, and touching upon a large variety of subjects.—*Golden Rule, Boston.*

Most of the extracts are dated and accompanied by brief explanations of the circumstances under which they were written, and the volume, therefore, if judiciously read, will give a clearer idea of the character of the men than can be gathered elsewhere by reading a small library through.—*New York Graphic.*

The selections are made with judgment and taste, and represent not only the political status of the distinguished writers, but also their social and domestic characteristics. The book is interesting in itself, and specially valuable as a convenient book of reference for students of American history. Its mechanical presentation is all that can be asked.—*Providence Journal.*

Each chapter is prefaced by a brief synopsis of the life and services of its subject, and most of the extracts are dated, with brief explanations of the circumstances under which they were written. The work, in fact, is a handbook. It is convenient for reference of American history. It is printed in clear, large type, is tastefully and strongly bound, and is supplemented by a very full index.—*Woman's Journal, Boston.*

The book is thoroughly good; none better could be placed in the hands of young persons. By the light of these they can see the reflection of the character of the grand men who have been called to rule over the Nation during its existence. No other nation ever had such a succession of rulers, where so few have proved failures.—*Inter Ocean, Chicago.*

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Egypt* occupied the geographical centre of the ancient world. It was fertile and attractive. Its inhabitants were polished, cultivated, and warlike. Its great cities were centres of wealth and civilization, and from the most distant countries came scholars and travellers to learn wisdom under Egyptian masters and study the arts, sciences and governmental policy of the country. While surrounding nations were sunk in primitive barbarism Egypt shone as the patron of arts and acquirements. With a natural thirst for conquest she introduced a system of military tactics which made her armies almost invincible. Her wisdom was a proverb among the surrounding nations. "If a philosopher," says Wilkinson, "sought knowledge, Egypt was the school; if a prince required a physician it was to Egypt that he applied: if any material point perplexed the decision of Kings or councils, to Egypt it was referred, and the arms of a Pharaoh were the hope and frequently the protection, even at a late period, of a less powerful ally. It would surprise many readers to know how much in customs, social and religious, has come down to us from this ancient people. Placing the ring on the bride's finger at marriage is an instance. The Egyptian gold pieces were in the form of rings, and the husband placed one on the finger of his wife as an emblem of the fact that he entrusted her henceforth with all his property. The celebration of Twelfth Day and Candlemas are Egyptian festivals under different names. The Catholic priest shaves his head because the Egyptian priests did the same ages before; the English clergyman reads the liturgy in a linen dress because linen was the dress of the Egyptians, and more than two thousand years before the bishop of the Church of Rome pretended to hold the keys of heaven and hell there was a priest in Egypt whose title was the Appointed Keeper of the Two Doors of Heaven.

It is not strange that the story of this people and country should be so fascinating. There is an element of the mysterious in it which attracts even the reader who does not care for historical reading in general. In the preparation of her work Mrs. Clement has not only had the advantage of extensive reading upon the subject, but of personal travel and knowledge. She has skilfully condensed the vast amount of material at her command, and presents to the reading public a volume which needs only to be examined to become a standard.

* Egypt. By Mrs. Clara Erskine Clement. Lothrop's Library of Entertaining History. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.50.

BOOKS FOR CLERGYMEN.

The list of D. Lothrop & Co's more important books is especially rich in works prepared to meet the wants of clergymen, Sunday-school superintendents and teachers. Among them are collections of sermons by eminent preachers, full of thought, and abounding in practical suggestions; essays upon doctrinal points; discussions of various methods of preaching and teaching; church history and biography; books of scriptural reference and exegesis, and collections of poetry of a devotional character. They are invaluable as working tools for carrying on the practical work of the church. Some of them have been before the public for years and have gained a high and secure place in the estimation of the clergy and teachers alike; others, not less important or helpful in character, are new, and result from later needs in the church and Sunday-school.

How to Conduct Prayer Meetings, by Rev. Lewis O. Thompson, comes prominently under this list, a volume which has attained a wide popularity. Dr. Thompson's theory of what a prayer-meeting should be is based upon the fact that it is, in the main, a gathering of professing Christians for conference and edification, and not a revival service for the conversion of the impenitent. The inquiry meeting has taken the place of the former revival prayer-meetings to a great extent, and has been found far more efficacious in producing results. A brief introduction is furnished by the Rev. J. H. Vincent, D. D., in which the work is warmly commended to the notice of all Christian workers, for its sound, practical sense, and deep religious purpose. Nor will Dr. Vincent be alone in his estimate of its worth. It should be read by every pastor, by every class leader, by every church member. It will serve to clear away many false impressions, inspire fresh ardor and enthusiasm among luke-warm church goers, and will be an efficient aid in the promotion of Christian feeling and Christian work.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

A BOOK OF GOLDEN DEEDS, OF ALL TIMES AND LANDS. Gathered and narrated by Charlotte M. Yonge. Illustrated. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.25. The rapidly increasing popularity of this little volume, and the steady demand for it have induced the Messrs. Lothrop to bring out a new edition in handsome form and yet at a price which brings it within the reach of every reader. Excellent as are all Miss Yonge's books, there is not one which appeals so strongly to young readers as this collection of stories and traditions, gathered from many sources, and presented for the purpose of inculcating a love for what is noble and true in the minds of the young. The author's intention has been to make it a treasury, where may be found minuter particulars than are given in abridged histories, of the soul-stirring deeds that lend life and glory to the record of events, in the trust that example may inspire the spirit of heroism and self-devotion, and give proof that the highest object of action is not to win promotion, wealth or success, but simple duty, mercy and loving-kindness. Miss Yonge has chosen from history some of the most remarkable instances of moral and physical bravery, and has clothed them in language befitting her theme. Many of them are familiar, but we have never before seen them rendered in so charming a form, or in a manner where the true motive of action was so plainly and effectually brought out. The volume is printed in clear type, on good paper, and is attractively bound.

FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS; and How They Grew. By Margaret Sidney. Thirty-six illustrations by Jessie Curtis. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.50. Of all the new juveniles in this season's list there is not one which will be read with more delight by the little ones than this jolly story. It is a genuine child's book, written by one who understands and sympathizes with children. The incidents are just such as might have happened, and pathos and humor are skilfully mingled in their telling. The illustrations are charming, and worthy the reputation of the artist.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

SOME CURIOUS SCHOOLS; or, Climbing the Ladder. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.00. This is a new and enlarged edition of one of the most popular volumes in last season's list. It is not merely a book of entertaining sketches, but a series of descriptions of institutions devoted to peculiar or technical purposes, which hold place in purpose and method outside the usual educational establishments. They include "The Children's Hour (New York Art School)"; "Boston Whittling School"; "Reform School at Mettray"; "The Training School Ship Minnesota"; "English and American Sewing Schools"; "The Boston School for Deaf Mutes"; "The Flower School at Corlear's Hook"; "Philadelphia School of Reform"; "Cadet Life at West Point"; "The Perkins Institution for the Blind"; "The Chinese Mission School"; "Lady Betty's Cooking School"; "A Day Nursery," and "Some Indian Schools." The descriptions are all by popular writers, and the illustrations were drawn expressly for them by such artists as Miss L. B. Humphrey, Jessie Curtis, Mary A. Lathbury and Herman Faber.

TWO YOUNG HOMESTEADERS. By Mrs. Theodora R. Jenness. With 36 illustrations by Robert Lewis. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.50. Here is a story of life on the Kansas border, its characters drawn from real life, and told in the most fascinating way. Mrs. Jenness is coming to the front as one of the best writers of magazine stories in the country, and her reputation might easily rest upon this single serial. It is a series of life pictures in the far West, descriptions of the experiences of border settlers. The "two young homesteaders" are a plucky young girl and her brother, who attempt to carry on a small farm in Western Kansas. It gives a capital idea of the difficulties with which pioneer settlers have to contend, and of the perils which they sometimes have to undergo. Every boy and girl ought to read it, and those who do so cannot fail while enjoying it to draw lessons of strength and self-reliance from it.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE YOUNG FOLKS' BIBLE HISTORY. By Charlotte M. Yonge. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.50. The present volume is not only important in itself, but it is an additional proof of the wonderful versatility of the author. The same hand that so successfully set before young readers the stories of the growth and development of the different countries of Europe, here puts the grand old Bible story into a form which the youngest readers can easily comprehend. The language is simple and the facts are told in modern style; one great stumbling-block to the understanding being thus removed. Beginning with the account of the creation, succeeding chapters carry along the Scriptural record to the time of the prophets, and from their day down to the appearance of the Saviour upon the earth. The life and teachings of Jesus are especially dwelt upon. The volume is profusely illustrated with drawings by English artists. We cannot too cordially commend the plan of this work, nor the excellent manner in which it is carried out. It will be found not only valuable for home teaching, but for use in the infant classes of Sunday-schools.

The New York *Tribune* in a notice of Amanda B. Harris's "How We Went Birds'-nesting" says: "It is written with charming simplicity of style, and its ornithology is taken directly from nature and not from books. There is something of the spirit of adventure in the book, and as the youthful reader of dime novels is filled with a desire to go out West and hunt Indians, so the boys and girls who read this little volume will be prompted to visit the haunts of the birds and will have their powers of observation directed and sharpened."

BOOKS FOR CLERGYMEN.

Prof. Austin Phelps, of Andover, says of the late Rev. Nehemiah Adams: "It is the charm of Dr. Adams's style and method in preaching, that truth fitted by its profoundness to the most thoughtful hearers, is made clear to the most illiterate. Few men have adorned the American pulpit with a broader reach in adaptation to different classes of mind."—We cannot commend too warmly the volumes which contain the selected discourses of Dr. Adams. They are full of meat, and will be invaluable to clergymen as models of style and thought. *At Eventide*, published two or three years since, has won its way to a steady demand. *Walks to Emmaus*, the first volume of a proposed series of six, embraces two sermons for each Sabbath of the entire year, and is adapted for the pulpit, the sick room or the library. Each of the six volumes now in preparation, to be issued every year or two, will be complete in itself, although forming a part of this work designed as "one year's discourses." Every evangelical minister, theological student, and household should possess this crowning work of this eminent divine, and standard religious writer.

Of other works of Dr. Adams which claim a place in every Christian household there is *Agnes*; or, *The Little Key*, a book which the *Congregationalist* says: "We believe it will, go down the ages in company with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, and Baxter's *Saint's Rest*;"—*The Communion Sabbath*, *The Friends of Christ* and a companion volume, *Christ a Friend*. *Broadcast* is a collection of choice original thoughts admirably expressed. An edition of Dr. Adams's work in 11 volumes has been issued by the Messrs. Lothrop at \$1.00 per volume. It includes in addition to those already mentioned, *Catherine*, *Endless Punishment*, *Bertha and her Baptism* and *The Cross in the Cell*.

Akin in aim and interest to Dr. Adams's works are Dr. Wayland's volume of University sermons, *Salvation by Christ*; the Bremen Lectures on *Fundamental Religious Questions*, a new and enlarged edition; Rev. J. Chaplin's *Memorial Hour*; Tholuck's *Hour's of Christian Devotion*; Prof. Austin Phelps' *Still Hour* and *New Birth*; *The Seven Words from the Cross*, by Rev. W. H. Adams, and Butterworth's *Notable Prayers of Christian History*.

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NEW PUBLICATIONS.

CHIPS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE.*

In this handsome volume of 500 pages have been brought together some of the most important utterances of our twenty presidents, carefully selected from speeches and addresses, public documents and private correspondence, and touching upon a large variety of subjects. Some of them occupy several pages, while others are in the form of aphorisms, and show the power which most of our presidents have had of putting things graphically and to the point. Thus, John Adams says: "Genius is oftener an instrument of divine vengeance than a guardian angel; "Wise statesmen, like able artists of every kind, study nature, and their works are perfect in proportion as they conform to her laws"; Jefferson, "An honest heart being the first blessing, a knowing head is the second"; "The man who fights for the country is entitled to vote"; Madison, "Justice is the end of government"; "The union of the States is strengthened by every occasion which puts it to the test"; Jackson, "There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in abuses"; "No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent"; "There are two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time, and will ever continue to struggle: the one is the common right of humanity, and the other is the divine right of things." We might fill pages with these terse and telling paragraphs, had we space, to show what the compiler claims, that "in the regular succession of rulers, the chief magistrates of the United States have all been men of fair reputation and abilities, and many of them men of superior literary ability and singular devotion to the interests of humanity and freedom."

The contents are chronologically arranged, the names of the different presidents following each other in consecutive order from Washington to Garfield. Each chapter is prefaced by a brief synopsis of the life and services of its subject, and most of the extracts are dated, with brief explanations of the circumstances under which they were written. The work, in fact, is a handbook from which the reader may learn more of the real characters of the men who form the subject of its contents than from any other single volume of which we have knowledge.

The selections are made with admirable judgment, and with the purpose of showing not only the peculiar political opinions of the writers, but their social and domestic characteristics. Aside from its interest, the volume is invaluable as a convenient book of reference for the student, young or old, of American history. It is printed in clear, large type, is tastefully and strongly bound, and is supplemented by a very full index.

*Chips from the White House. Compiled by Jeremiah Chaplin. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1 50.

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