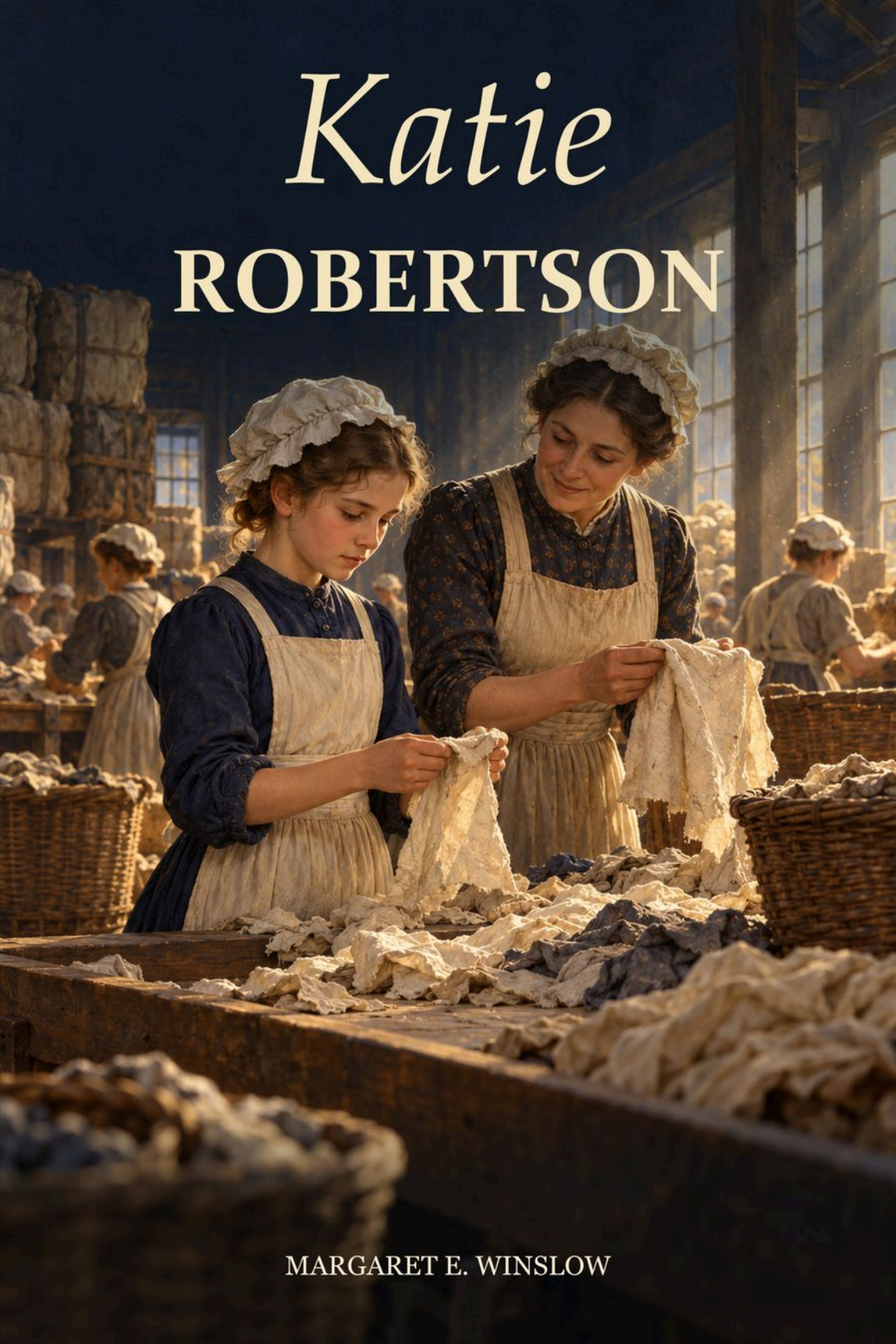
Katie
ROBERTSON



MARGARET E. WINSLOW

Katie Robertson

Margaret E. Winslow

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Margaret E. Winslow

Margaret Elizabeth Winslow was an American teacher, writer and temperance campaigner. Born in New York City, she spent much of her life in Brooklyn and Saugerties. Frances Willard's contemporary account describes her education at the Abbot Institution and Packer Institute, where she later taught for twelve years.

Winslow's work connected education with religious and social reform. She attended the meeting that established the first Brooklyn Woman's Christian Temperance Union in March 1874. Reporting on subsequent meetings for the *New York Witness* helped connect her work as a teacher with a wider public voice.

She served two terms as editor of *Our Union*, beginning in 1876 and returning in 1880. She also wrote stories, poetry and religious material. Willard credited her advocacy with helping establish the white ribbon as the movement's emblem. Her fiction belongs to this wider culture of moral instruction and practical reform.

Readers can notice how a story turns everyday conduct into a question of responsibility. Work, family relationships and decisions about helping others become opportunities to demonstrate a moral principle. Understanding that purpose helps explain both the narrative's sympathy and its expectations of its characters. No portrait is included because a reliable likeness could not be verified in the sources reviewed.

Biographical reference: Frances E. Willard, Woman and Temperance (1884 edition), pp. 527-530. Full source records retained in the edition archive. Dates are not stated here because they have not been independently confirmed.

To the many boys and girls who are in early years earning an honorable support for themselves, or else assisting their parents by working in factories; to the multitudes of young church members, who may be glad of some practically helpful suggestions in surmounting the difficulties and resisting the temptations incident to their new lives; to mill-owners, who feel their solemn responsibility, as in the sight of God, for the intellectual and spiritual welfare of their operatives; and chiefly to the young Christian manufacturer who has been the model from which the picture of "Mr. James" has been copied,—this story, whose incidents are mostly true ones, is dedicated.

That the Holy Spirit may make use of it to inculcate in young hearts a sense of honorable independence, a conviction of the dignity of faithfully performed work, and, above all, an earnest and irrevocable choice of God's blessed service and an entire committal of their ways to him, is the sincere prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

SAUGERTIES, July 1, 1885.

CHAPTER I.

A NEW DEPARTURE.

"But, mother, it isn't as if I were going away from home, like the Lloyd girls; you might have a right to cry if that were the case."

"I know, dear; it's all right, and I ought to be very thankful; but I'm a foolish woman. I can't bear to think of *my* little girl, whom I have guarded so tenderly, going among all those girls and men, and fighting her way in life."

"I don't think I shall be much of a fighter," laughed Katie, looking at her diminutive hands; "and why is it any worse to go among the boys and girls in the factory than among the boys and girls in school? You never minded that."

"That was different—you weren't doing it for money. O me! what would I have thought when I married your father if any one had told me that his child, his *girl* child, would ever have to earn her bread!"

"Well, mother, I won't go," said the girl, her bright looks fading away, "if you don't want me to; but I don't know what Mr. Sanderson will think, he tried so hard to get me into the mill, and it was such a favor from Mr. Mountjoy. You *said* you were very thankful."

"So I was, so I am; but—but you don't understand, and perhaps it's better you should not. I'll try not to grumble."

This was promising more than Mrs. Robertson was able to perform perhaps, for she was a chronic and inveterate grumbler. But she had some excuse in the present circumstances, for Katie was, as she said, her baby, and the "apple of her eye." Married when quite young to the handsome and intelligent young village doctor, she certainly had not expected ever to be placed in a position where her children, her girls at least, would need to earn their own bread. But in a few short years the doctor died of a contagious disease he had taken from one of his patients, and as he had not yet begun to accumulate anything, his young widow was left with her three children to struggle along as best she could. How she had done it God and herself only knew. The little house was her own, the sole patrimony left by her own father. The horse and buggy, the medical library and valuable professional instruments, medicines, etc., were

sold at a fair valuation; and the money thus secured, deposited in the bank, had served as a last resource whenever the barrel of meal failed or the cruse of oil ran dry. For the rest, Mrs. Robertson was employed by her neighbors to help turn and put down carpets, cover furniture, etc. etc., light jobs requiring judgment and skill rather than strength, for which her friends, who never placed her in a menial capacity, gladly paid double the sum they would to any one else. She was also a capital nurse, and in this position rendered herself very valuable in many households, and for such services she was even more generously remunerated; so that somehow she managed to keep her head above water while her children were small, and feed, clothe, and send them to school as they grew older.

Her children were, of course, the one source of consolation left to the poor widow, and many a long evening's work was both shortened and lightened by golden dreams of their future prosperity and success.

When her eldest boy Eric was twelve, and when Alfred, the second child, was only ten, a friend made interest with Mr. Sanderson, superintendent of the bookbindery, auxiliary to the Squantown Paper Mills, to give the two boys steady employment, and since that time, four years ago, their earnings, small but certain, had greatly helped in the family expenses. Both were noble, manly fellows, with, as yet, no bad habits. They brought their mother all that they earned, and were quite content to pass their evenings with her and their little sister. Katie, who was now thirteen, had always attended the public school in the village, of course helping her mother with the housework and sewing. She was a delicate little creature, small for her years, but bright and intelligent, a general favorite with the village children as well as with her Sunday-school teacher, Miss Etta Mountjoy, who was not so very many years older than herself.

Katie was a very lady-like looking girl, and did not seem fitted to do very hard work, nor to mix among rough people, but she was an independent little thing who knew very well how poor her mother was and how hard both she and her brothers had to work. She knew that her breakfasts, dinners, and suppers cost something, and that it took money to buy the good shoes and neat, whole dresses in which her mother always kept her dressed, and she resolved in her own wise little head to find some way of contributing to the family stock.

It was some time before she saw her way clear to do this, but at last she took counsel of a school-fellow whose sister worked in the folding-room of the Squantown Paper Mills and found that even a young girl might earn considerable in this way. So, without telling any one at home of her plans, she, one evening, presented herself before Mr. Sanderson and requested to be taken into the bindery.

"What can you do, little puss?" said this gentleman, quite surprised.
"You look about large enough to play with dolls, like my Nina."

"I'm almost fourteen," said Katie, drawing herself up to her full height and trying to look sedate. "I'm two years older than Nina; I'm as old as your Bertie, Mr. Sanderson, and I *must* make some money."

"Must you, indeed?" said he, beginning to be more interested. "Don't I know your face? Let me see. Why, it can't be—yes, it is Katie Robertson! How time flies! It seems to me only yesterday that your father died, and you were a baby; but Bertie was one, too, then, that's a fact. How time does fly, to be sure! So you want to get into the bindery where your brothers are, I suppose?" Katie nodded. "Well, now," continued he, "it's most unfortunate, but there isn't a vacancy anywhere; we have five or six applicants now waiting for a chance. Why don't you try the mill?"

"The mill!" said Katie, "the paper-mill? But I don't know any one there; how could I go and ask strangers?"

"I think you're brave enough to ask any one," said Mr. Sanderson. "I suppose you'd find it hard, though, and perhaps no one would believe that you were old enough or strong enough to work. Your looks are against you, little one; and then, Mr. Mountjoy did not know your father as I did; he came here afterward. Let me see. Perhaps I might have some influence. Will you trust your case in my hands?" And, as the girl nodded, he continued: "Come here about this time to-morrow evening, and I will report progress. Perhaps I may have some good news for you, but don't be too sure. It isn't so easy to get into the mill either; there are always a great many applicants. You'll come?"

"Yes, sir," said Katie, and went away in a state of disappointed uncertainty. It was not quite so easy to earn money as she had supposed.

The little girl looked very mysterious all teatime, and threw out several hints that quite mystified her brothers about Mr. Sanderson and the bindery. But no one guessed her secret, and the next afternoon, just as she was beginning to think of putting on her hat and running down to get her answer, who should come into the gate but Mr. Sanderson himself.

Mrs. Robertson was greatly frightened when she saw him. She was one of those persons who always look on the dark side of things, and she feared her boys had got into trouble and would perhaps lose their situations. She trembled so that she could hardly put on the widow's cap, in which she always appeared before strangers (although it was now six years since the doctor had left her and gone home to heaven), and said to her daughter:—

"That's always our luck! Just as soon as things seem to be going straight with us, some terrible misfortune is sure to happen; we're the most unfortunate family in the world."

The poor lady forgot that, with the one exception of her husband's death, her life had been one of unmingled, as well as undeserved, happiness; and even in that loss her three children had been spared to her, friends had been raised up to help her, and there had never been a day when she and her children had not had enough plain food to eat and plain clothes to wear. It is thus that we are all apt to dishonor God by dwelling upon the one thing which in his providence he has seen fit to take away, and forgetting to thank him for all the many other blessings he has given us.

But Katie was full of expectation and suppressed delight. She was the opposite of her mother, and always expected good news, and she felt sure that Mr. Sanderson would not have taken the trouble to come himself, except to tell her that he had secured a place for her. Her eyes danced as she let him in, and she looked inquiringly in his face. But he said nothing, except:—

"Good-evening, Katie. I would like to see your mother a few moments." So she ushered him into the "front room," so seldom used, and went to summon her mother, waiting outside the door till she should herself be called in to the consultation.

When Mr. Sanderson told Mrs. Robertson that he had called to say that he had been successful in his application to Mr. Mountjoy,

who had agreed to take Katie into the "rag-room" of the paper-mill, in consideration of his interest in her mother, she was completely taken by surprise and inclined to be offended with both gentlemen for their interference, as she thought it, with her business; but when she heard that the application came from the child herself, while greatly surprised, she could not but feel grateful to them for their trouble, and expressed herself so, while she nevertheless decidedly declined to allow Katie to accept the position, saying she was altogether too young and too delicate, and that she would not have her daughter disgraced by working for her living.

"For the matter of that," said Mr. Sanderson, "I shall be glad to have my Bertie take the place if you don't want it for Katie. I have a large family to bring up, and I want my girls and boys both to be independent. I hadn't thought of it for Bertie quite yet, but your Katie reminded me last night of how old she is; and I see she is none too young to begin."

This put a little different face on the matter, for Mrs. Sanderson and Mrs. Robertson had been intimate friends when girls, in precisely the same rank in life, although one had married a doctor and the other the overseer of the bookbindery. Moreover, Mr. Sanderson was known to be very well off and quite able—had he judged it best—to bring up his girls in idleness, as useless fine ladies. Perhaps it would not be such a disgrace, after all, and they did sorely need the money. Katie was not dressed as her father's child should be, and toil as she might, even with the boys' wages the widow could not make more than sufficed to keep up the little home. Then, too, her child would have to do something for herself when she grew up; she would have no one to look to but herself, and though teaching would be perhaps a more genteel way of support, it was a very laborious one, and would make it necessary to go away from home, as the Lloyd girls were going to do, and to remain away for several years, first at some higher institution of learning and then at the Normal School, and where would the money come from to pay the tuition fees, traveling expenses, and board bills?

All this passed through Mrs. Robertson's mind as Mr. Sanderson reasoned with her and showed her the foolishness of her objections, and finally the impatient Katie was called in, and informed that she

might "try it for a while"; and then the visitor was thanked for his trouble, and took his leave.

This all happened a week ago. The intervening time had been spent in putting Katie's simple wardrobe in order and in making home arrangements by which Mrs. Robertson would not miss her daughter more than she could help, in those various little services which she had been wont to render. The last day had now come; to-morrow the new life was to begin, and Katie was clearing up the breakfast things for the last time when the conversation with which our story commences took place.

"I wish it was not in the rag-room," said Mrs. Robertson, by-and-by, when Katie, having finished her dishes and swept up the room, drew her seat to her mother's side and took up her work—the ruffle of the last of the six mob-caps she was to wear at her work.

"Why?" said her daughter, to whom the factory was just now a sort of enchanted palace, any one of whose rooms was delightful to contemplate.

"It's such a low, dirty place, I'm told, and there's so many common women and girls there."

"Well, I needn't talk to them, I suppose. I needn't be common, at any rate, and I can't get dirty in those great long-sleeved aprons and these nice little caps. You don't know how smart I'm going to be, and won't you be proud of your big girl when she brings home her first three-dollar bill, all earned in one week? Eric will see that a girl's worth something, after all, and Alfred sha'n't make fun of me any more."

Mrs. Robertson did not say anything else just now; she did not like to be always checking the exuberance of her child's spirits with the dull forebodings of her own, but she could not see the paper-mill through the same halo that invested it in Katie's eyes. She knew there were snares and temptations, besides disagreeable and hard work to be met and encountered there, and she feared that the child's future disappointment would be proportioned to the brightness of her present hopes. Still, as the matter was determined upon, she knew it was right to make the best of it, and she tried to talk pleasantly and at least seem to sympathize with her daughter's enthusiasm.

So passed the day, and at night when the boys came home they were called upon to listen for the hundredth time to all the rose-colored plans, and were pressed to declare that there could be nothing in the world more delightful than working in a factory.

But the boys could not see it in that light any more than their mother. They were as content to work as are most men and boys who seem to take it for granted that it is in the course of nature for them to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, but they had been at it long enough to have lost the sense of novelty and to understand that it was work and not play which their sister was undertaking.

"Won't you be sick of it!" said Alfred, in answer to one of Katie's outbursts, "and long, when Saturday comes, to go out nutting with the girls, or off on a hay-ride, or something! You'll wish you were free before you've been a slave many months, or I'm no prophet."

"Well, she shall be free if she wants to," said Eric, kindly. "Our only little sister sha'n't work if she don't want to; we can take care of her, Alfred, can't we?"

"But I do want to work," said Katie; "I know I sha'n't get tired, or if I do get tired of the work, I sha'n't of getting the money; for, boys, I mean to be a rich, independent woman, and help take care of mother. You needn't suppose that I'm going to be dependent upon you."

"All right, young lady," said Alfred, "only I think you'll sing a different tune before many months are over."

"The tune you ought to sing just now, children," said Mrs. Robertson, "is 'Good-night.' You all have to go to work very early, and Katie is not used to it. Good-night, darling, and don't forget to ask God to bless you and shield you in your new undertaking."

"I asked him that night to make Mr. Mountjoy listen to Mr. Sanderson and give me the place," said Katie, with a rising color; "don't you think he heard me and answered my prayer? It seems as though he had just made it all straight and plain. I feel just like thanking him to-night; and, mother, don't you worry so much. Don't you think Jesus is strong enough to take care of me anywhere if I ask him to?"

"Yes, indeed," said the mother, almost ashamed of her forebodings, and rebuked, as she had many a time been, by the

bright, hopeful faith of her child. Surely when she looked at the bright, happy, healthy faces of her children, she too had ample cause for thankfulness, and for continued trust in the divine love which had carried her safely through so many emergencies and had promised never to leave or forsake her or hers.

CHAPTER II.

ENTERING.

"Hallo, Katie, wake up, wake up!" and Eric rattled the knob of his sister's door. But he was compelled to do so many times before he heard a sleepy "What's the matter?"

"Matter? Why, it's high time you were up if you mean to get to the factory this morning."

"It's the middle of the night," said Katie, yawning.

"Indeed, it is not. It's after five o'clock, and work begins at half-past six. You haven't a moment to spare if you want to dress yourself, get your breakfast, and get to the mill in time; it's farther off than the bindery. Come, be a brave girl, and jump up quickly."

Thus adjured, the little girl jumped out of bed—but how cold and dark it was! although Eric had left the lamp in the hall outside. One of Katie's failings—not an uncommon one among girls and boys—was a great dislike to getting up early in the morning, and her mother had always humored her in the matter, getting up herself and giving the boys their breakfast early, and then waking her little girl just in time to eat her own and get to school at nine o'clock. Even then it was sometimes a difficult task.

The young work-woman had not included the necessity of getting up so very early in the morning as one of the many anticipated delights of her new position. This first taste of it seemed, on the contrary, quite a hardship. Still, when she was once out of bed, there was a certain romance in dressing by lamplight, and she knelt down by her bedside to offer her morning prayer, with a strange feeling of mingled awe and thankfulness.

Katie Robertson was a Christian girl, and was really desirous to please the blessed Saviour who had done so much for her. She could not remember the time when she did not love him; but for the last few years, since she had grown older and begun to understand things better, she had felt a longing desire to be like him and to please him in her life and actions. She found time to open her little Bible this morning and read one or two verses by the light of the lamp. They were these:—

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths"; "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or *whatsoever* ye do, do all to the glory of God," and "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

And then she prayed earnestly that she might in these "ways" upon which she was entering always "acknowledge" God, be faithful to her work, do it "to the glory of God," and have the strength which the Lord Jesus Christ has promised to give to those who ask him, to resist temptation and stand up for truth and righteousness in the new life which lay before her. She prayed, also, that her heavenly Father would give her some work to do for him among her companions in the mill, and then she went downstairs.

Breakfast was all ready, and it seemed quite funny to eat it by lamplight; but by the time it was over it was pretty light outside, and when, warmly wrapped up, Katie left the house with her brothers there was a rosy flush over the snow which sparkled and glistened, and the young factory-girl set out in high spirits for her first day's work. The boys escorted her as far as the great gates, where a good many other girls and boys were waiting among a crowd of men and women, and then ran back to be in time at the bindery, which was a little nearer home.

It was rather cold waiting outside, and, if the truth must be told, our little girl felt just a trifle homesick among so many strangers, for as yet she had not seen a familiar face, and something seemed to rise in her throat that she found hard to swallow; but just as she felt that she *must* have a good cry, and at the same time resolved that she wouldn't, the great steam-whistle shrieked, the bell in the tower rang, the gates opened from the inside, the gathered crowd rushed in, and all along the road might be seen flying figures of men, women, boys, and girls, hurrying to be in their places at the commencement of work and thus avoid the fine imposed upon stragglers. There was a pause of a few moments in the paved inside court while the inner doors of the great brick building were opened, and then the incoming crowd entering in various directions, scattered among the different corridors and left the "new girl" standing alone and bewildered at the entrance.

In front of her stretched a long, narrow hall, clean and fresh (Squantown Paper Mills were new and built after the most approved

models), with doors opening from it at intervals on both sides. Some of these doors were open and some were shut; into some the work-people were constantly disappearing, as though the doors were mouths that opened suddenly and swallowed them up, and into some of the open ones Katie peeped timidly and turned back disconsolately as she discovered that they only afforded entrance to similar corridors, pierced by similar rows of doors.

At length the last straggler had entered, gone his way, and disappeared, and dead silence reigned. Katie felt as though she were alone in the universe, and almost wondered if she were to be left there forever, when a short, sharp, deafening whistle echoed through the hall, and at the same instant the great building vibrated from top to bottom, the roar of machinery swallowed up the silence, and the day's work began.

Immediately afterward a side door, close to where our little girl was standing, opened, and out of it came the foreman of the mill, who had been up to this moment in the office, receiving his orders for the day.

"Hallo, you!" he said crossly, seeing a girl standing idle in the hall; "why don't you go about your business? Go to work if you belong here; go home if you don't! No idlers or beggars allowed here, so close to the office door, too. Come, run away quickly."

"If you please, Mr. Thornton, I've come to work in the mill, in the rag-room, but I don't know which way to go."

"Oh!" said the foreman, "you're a new hand, eh? Rather a small one. It seems to me Mr. Mountjoy will end by having a nursery rather than a mill, but he knows his own business best, I suppose. New hands are not in my department, however. Mr. James," he called, reopening the office door and putting his head in again, "here's some work for you."

The "new hand" expected now to have an interview with the awful Mr. Mountjoy, Miss Etta's father, of whom she had heard so much, but had never yet seen, and began to tremble a little in anticipation. But, instead, a rosy-faced, light-haired young man appeared, to whom the foreman made a slight bow, and then went away. This was Mr. James Mountjoy, Miss Etta's brother, and the only son of the

proprietor of the mill. Katie had heard her brothers, who were in his Sunday-school class, talk about him, but had never seen him before.

"Your name, little girl," he said pleasantly, as he ushered her into the office.

"Katie Robertson, sir. Mr. Sanderson"—

"Oh, I know; Mr. Sanderson recommended you to my father. You look almost too small to work. Can you do anything?"

"I can cook, and wash dishes, and help mother, and sew; I was in the first class at school"—

"That is not any of it precisely the kind of work we do here," said the young gentleman, pleasantly; "but no doubt you are a quick little girl, and if you are used to doing some kinds of work others will not come so hard to you. But you must understand in the beginning that work in a factory is work, not play; work that cannot be laid aside when one is tired of it, or when one wants to go on an excursion or to do something else. It is work, too, for which you are to be paid, and it would be dishonesty not to do it faithfully as in the sight of God. Our rules are no stricter than they must be for the best good of the work and the comfort and protection of all, but we *expect* them to be obeyed. You will remember that. There must be no playing or whispering in work hours, and you must always be on time. We want all our work-people to be happy, and I am sure that the best kind of happiness comes from fidelity to duty. Can you be a *faithful* little girl?"

"Yes, sir," said Katie, with a slight blush, though she did not feel at all afraid of him; "I am trying to please God everywhere, and I am sure he will help me to do so here."

"I am glad to hear you say that," said the young man, with a smile. "If every man, woman, and child in this factory were really trusting in God and trying to please him, we wouldn't need so many rules and the work would not be so hard. One thing more: I believe you are to be in the rag-room; that is a dirty place, in spite of all our efforts to keep it clean and well ventilated; you won't find it very pleasant there always, but perhaps you can learn to *endure* for Christ's and duty's sake; and every one has to begin at the bottom, you know, who means to climb to the top of the ladder."

During the latter part of this talk the gentleman and the child had been ascending flight after flight of broad, open staircases, as well as several narrow, spiral ones, crossing machinery-rooms, where great arms and wheels and screws, in constant motion, made the little girl shudder, and threading narrow passages and outside balconies, where the broad raceway foamed and roared fifty or sixty feet beneath them. Katie had never been inside of the great paper-mill before, though she had always admired its fine proportions and handsome architecture from the outside. She was surprised now to see how really beautiful everything was. The floors were laid in wood of two contrasting colors; the balusters were of solid black walnut; there were rows and rows of clear glass windows in the rooms and corridors, while the machinery was either of shining steel or polished brass. In some of the rooms were girls tending the ruling and cutting and folding machines, and occasionally one would nod to Katie, but no one spoke except where the work rendered it necessary.

At last the room next to the top of the vast building was reached, and there Mr. James opened a door and ushered Katie into a room which extended the whole length of one side of the building. The windows, of which there were fifteen, were wide open, but for all that the air was so thick with dust that at first Katie drew back with a sense of suffocation.

"I told you it would not be pleasant," said Mr. James, "but this is your appointed place. Be a brave girl, and when you are used to it it won't seem so bad."

The sense of suffocation was caused by the particles of dust with which the air was heavily laden, and which flew from the piles of rags which over fifty girls were busily engaged in sorting, putting the dark-colored ones by themselves, the medium-colored by themselves, and the white ones—or those that had been white—into large boxes. As soon as these boxes were filled they were placed on wheelbarrows and emptied into long slides by men who waited for them and returned the boxes. Mr. James explained to his young companion that these slides emptied their contents into great vats in the room below, where after lying some days in a certain purifying solution they were boiled with soda to loosen the dirt, thoroughly washed by machinery, and passed into great copper kettles, where they were boiled to a pulp and ground at the same time, horizontal

grindstones reducing them to the finest powder. He also showed her that the dust was rendered much less hurtful than it would otherwise have been by a great fan kept constantly at work on one side of the room, which drove it out of the windows in front of the girls, who were thus not compelled to breathe it unless they turned directly around facing the blast, as Katie had done on entering the room. He then put her under the care of a pleasant-faced woman, whose duty it was to oversee the little girls, saw that she had a comfortable seat, shook hands with her, and went away.

Mr. James was by no means called upon to be so polite to a "new hand"; most employers would have told the child which way to go and then left her to shift for herself, or at best have sent a man or boy to show her the way. Perhaps he would have done so with some girls, but he saw that the child was timid and homesick, and knew that a few kind words would go a great way toward making her feel at home and happy, and would serve as an offset against the disagreeable first impressions of the rag-room, and the weariness of regular work undertaken for the first time.

Why should he care to have one of his factory girls "feel at home and happy"? some one will say; his relations with them are only those of business: so much work for so much money; it was nothing to him what they thought or felt. Mr. James Mountjoy did not feel so. He thought that his father and he were placed in this responsible position and given the care of several hundred human souls expressly that some good work might be done for them. He felt that human beings are more precious than machinery, and that happiness is an important factor in goodness. He looked upon his work-people as those for whom he must give account, and tried to act in all his dealings with them "to the glory of God." Had he been actuated by the purest selfishness and the most approved business principles, he could not have chosen a wiser course; for men and women treated as friends become almost of necessity friendly, and seeing their own interests cared for were all the more likely to care for those of their employer. Katie Robertson certainly never forgot Mr. James's judicious kindness on the morning of her entrance into the mill; he was to her the kindest, sweetest, and most lovable of gentlemen. She felt ready to do anything he should tell her and to keep every rule he might make. Then, too, he was a Christian, and

understood all about what she meant when she had said God would help her; surely it must be very easy to be good and resist temptation in a place with such a master, and she felt like thanking God that, in spite of the suffocating dust, "the lines had fallen to her in such very pleasant places."

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST DAY.

Left to herself Katie looked timidly round. It is always an ordeal to meet so many strangers for the first time, and our little friend was beginning to feel quite forlorn, when Miss Peters, the superintendent of the rag-room, came to her and began to show her about the work to be done; how, besides the rags being sorted, the buttons were to be taken off and the larger pieces cut into small ones by pulling them dexterously along and between two great sharp knives set on end for the purpose. Katie had already covered her clean dress with the long-sleeved blue apron and her hair with the little mob-cap her mother had provided, and at once commenced her work, not at all seeing or noticing the scornful looks that passed between some of the girls whose ragged finery and dirty hair-ribbons full of dust and "*flue*" presented a lively contrast to her own neat and suitable equipment. We may observe, in passing, that before long this simple method of protection so commended itself to some of the more sensible girls and their parents that many of them adopted it and mob-caps and overalls became quite the fashion in the mill.

Katie was a smart little girl and could work very quickly when she set about it; of course to-day she was anxious to show how much she could do, and her piles and boxes were fuller than those of any girls near her by the time of the warning whistle, which indicated that in half an hour the dinner-bell would sound. Then there was a bustle in the room. The piles were taken away in long and deep barrows which men wheeled into the room, the boxes were carried off, emptied into the vats, and brought back again; some of the girls swept the floor and tables by which they stood; talking was permitted in this half-hour, and such a Babel as the tongues of forty or fifty girls suddenly unloosed can make may be better imagined than described. The "new hand" took advantage of the interval to divest herself of her cap and apron, and putting on her hat, after washing her hands in one of the row of basins provided for the purpose, appeared as neat and nice for her homeward walk as she had done in the morning when she came.

Such was not the case with most of the girls, whose fluffy, disordered appearance as they issued from the rag-room was proverbial.

At precisely twelve o'clock the great bells began to clang and the steam-whistle to shriek, and the long corridors and stairs echoed to the tramp of many feet as the hundreds of men, women, boys, and girls rushed down and out, and scattered in every direction toward the many homes where dinner was awaiting them.

Eric and Alfred met their sister just outside of the door, and the three were soon at home, Katie talking so much and so fast all the way, that her brothers, as they said, "could hardly get in a word edgewise." Many of the mill operatives carried their dinner with them and spent the noon hour in gossip with each other, but Mrs. Robertson was careful both of the bodies and souls of her children. She knew that the former would be much more vigorous if every day they had a warm, comfortable, if frugal, meal at noontide, and thought that the latter would be kept pure and unsullied much longer if not exposed to the kind of talk apt to pass between idle men and women of all grades and associations in society. So ever since they first went into the bindery, the boys had regularly come home to dinner, and were much the better, not only for it, but also for the quick walk in the open fresh air.

Poor Mrs. Robertson had passed a lonely morning. She was used to being alone while her daughter was at school, but that was different; she had conjured up all sorts of dangers and disagreeables that the girl might have to encounter, and she rather expected to see her brought in on a board bruised and maimed from some part of the machinery into which she had fallen or been entangled. But when Katie came rushing in like a whirlwind, in high spirits, with glowing cheeks and a splendid appetite, which yet she could scarcely take time to gratify, so full was she of enthusiastic talk concerning the beauty and grandeur of the mill and the kindness of Mr. James, her mother felt rather ashamed of her forebodings.

Never had a dinner tasted so nicely; never had the little girl, to her remembrance, eaten so much. She was in such a hurry to be off again, so as not to be late, that the boys declared she would not give them any time to eat at all, and again predicted that in a month's time things would not be so rose-colored.

In the afternoon a surprise awaited the little factory-girl. Hardly had work recommenced as the silence of voices and the noise of machinery followed upon the long steam-whistle, than Mr. James again appeared, followed by another "new hand." She was a tall, stout girl; in reality just about Katie's age, but looking several years older, dressed in a light-blue cashmere, considerably soiled and frayed. Her hair, which was "banged" low over her forehead, was braided in a long tail behind, and tied with a bunch of tumbled red ribbons, and around her neck was a chain and locket intended to resemble gold. The girls all looked at her inappropriate costume, most of them with envy and admiration, a few with pity for a girl who knew no better than to come to factory work in so very unsuitable a dress, and Katie looked up in some surprise to find that the new comer, who had been placed next to her, was her old school companion, Bertie Sanderson.

Miss Peters came forward pleasantly, showed the new girl how to do her work just as she had showed Katie in the morning, and glancing at her dress, suggested that another time a similar protection to that of her companion would be advisable, and then left her to herself.

Scarcely was her back turned than Bertie, looking round the room with great disgust, turned to Katie and said:—

"Isn't it hateful? Just think of *us* made to work among factory-girls.
I don't see what my father could have been thinking of!"

Katie made no answer, but pointed to Miss Peters, and then to the rule for silence which was hung up conspicuously on the wall.

"Nonsense!" said Bertie, "that don't mean me. I'm daughter of Mr Sanderson, the overseer of the bindery, don't you know? It's kind of funny that I should be in the rag-room among all the common girls, anyhow; but father said I'd got to begin work, and he guessed what wouldn't hurt you wouldn't hurt me. But for the thought that you were here I wouldn't have come at all, no matter what pa said. Ma don't think it genteel. I don't see what made you come; don't you think it's disgusting?"

"No," said Katie, "I wanted to come, and I think the factory is magnificent; besides, I want the money."

"So do I," said the other, "and pa said I should have all I earn till there's enough to get a silk dress. I do want a silk dress so, don't you?"

"No," said Katie, "I don't care;" but at this moment Miss Peters came toward them, saying,—

"No talking, girls; you are new hands, or I should have to fine you; every time a girl speaks it's a penny off of her day's wages, but I'll let you off this time. Bertie, you haven't done a thing yet."

Katie blushed, for though she had not stopped work a single moment, she had been tempted by her companion into breaking the rules; but Bertie looked up insolently at the superintendent as she slowly took up some of the rags, and muttered in a low tone, which was heard by most of her neighbors:—

"Who's going to mind you? You're only a servant-girl, anyway;" for Miss
Peters had, in her early life, "lived out."

Whether Miss Peters heard or not Katie could not be sure, but she thought she saw a heightened color in the young woman's face, and was just going to ask her companion how she could be guilty of such rudeness, when she remembered the rule in time, checked herself, and put her finger significantly on her lips.

As to Bertie, she stared round the room, working a little now and then, and talking aloud to herself as she could get no one to talk to her. Miss Peters was very indignant; but thought it best to take no notice just yet; for, as the girl had said, she was Mr. Sanderson's daughter, and she did not know just how far it would do to enforce rules in her case.

The girls in the rag-room were dismissed at five o'clock, so, as the bindery did not close till six, Katie did not have the company of her brothers on her homeward walk, Bertie taking their place, and talking all the way about the indignity of working in a factory and the hardship of having to work at all. She told about her cousins in the city, who were quite fine ladies, according to Bertie's account, doing nothing but play on the piano and do fancy-work. They were coming with their mother to make a visit in the summer, and how ashamed she should be to appear before them in the character of a paper-mill girl. The girl talked about her father in anything but a respectful

manner, but seemed to find comfort in the thought of her silk dress. She had never had one yet, and it had long been the goal of her ambition. What color did Katie think would be becoming to her? How would she have it made? how trimmed?

"I'll tell you what, Katie," she said, "let's take our money when we get it and get silks exactly alike; then we can wear them to Sunday-school together, and the other girls will see that it isn't so mean to be factory-girls after all. Even Miss Mountjoy herself can wear nothing finer than silk, if she does always look so stuck up."

But Katie failed to be infected with a desire for a silk dress. She had never worn anything but the plainest and poorest clothes, though they had always been whole, clean, and neatly made; her temptations did not lie in that line. She had insisted on beginning to work in order to help her mother support the family, and to make it a little easier for them all to get along. She admired pretty things, of course, as all girls do, but she had an intuitive feeling that Sunday-school was not the place in which to show off fine clothes. Bertie's chatter did not please her, and though they were old friends, or rather companions, having been to both school and Sunday-school together for some years, she was glad when they parted at the corner house, which had once been the doctor's, and she could go home to her mother.

For the little girl was tired by this time; she had got up much earlier than usual and had been on her feet all day, and besides the reaction of so much excitement, even though it had been of a pleasurable nature, was calculated to produce depression. Her mother was out when she got home, and there was nobody to welcome her but the gray cat, which did so, however, with the loudest of purrings, and the lounge in the warm room looked so comfortable that the tired little worker took pussy in her arms, lay down there, and began to think. She was not quite satisfied with her "first day." The factory was quite as nice as she had expected, and Mr. James was nicer; but had she remembered "in *all* her ways to acknowledge God" and "to do all to his glory"? She was afraid not; she had broken the rules once, and had listened to Bertie's chatter, while a desire had arisen in her heart, not for a silk dress, but for plenty of money, for a fine home, for a piano, and all the things that some girls had, and she had been tempted to think it hard that some

people should have so much and some so little. Was God quite just to let it be so?

But, as she lay upon the lounge, rested by its soft cushions, warmed by the fire, and soothed by the purring of the cat, she began to be ashamed of such thoughts. How many comforts, how much happiness God had given her! A nice home, a loving mother, plenty to eat and wear, and health and strength to earn enough to make them all so much more comfortable. She knew that all good things come from God, and if he had not put it into the heart of Mr. Sanderson to speak to Mr. Mountjoy for her, she could not have got the situation in the mill. The forty cents she had earned to-day was directly God's gift, and so would be all the money that ever came to her in the future. She ought to be a very thankful little girl, and she was quite ashamed of her questionings. So she dropped down upon her knees by the lounge, and asked God to forgive her for the sake of Jesus, and lying down again soon fell fast asleep.

When she awoke it was dark; the boys had come home; her mother had come in so quietly as not to awaken her daughter, tea was quite ready, and it was a very pleasant scene that her eyes, now entirely rested, opened upon, and a very happy, thankful little girl came to the table to eat the nice supper which awaited her.

After tea she and her brothers played games for some time; then Mrs. Robertson took her mending-basket, which was always very full, and Katie got her thimble and helped, while Eric read aloud from a book of "Stories from History." And so closed the first day of Katie Robertson's "factory life."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

Miss Etta Mountjoy was a young lady of the period. She was the youngest of Mr. Mountjoy's children, and the baby and pet of all. Her mother died when she was about five years old, and since then she had always done exactly as she pleased; her father would not control her, and her eldest sister, who took charge of the family in her mother's place, could not. It was well that the girl had no evil tendencies and was, upon the whole, well-principled, warm-hearted, and good-natured, or she might have gone very grievously astray. As it was, she was now at seventeen a bright butterfly, flitting from one to another of the flowers of life, and sipping as much honey as she could from each. She was fond of all sorts of bright, pretty things, handsome clothes and jewelry included. She liked to sing and she liked to dance, to go to parties when there were any, and to attend concerts and theatres when she went to town; in a word, she was fond of "having a good time," as Americans express it, whenever and wherever she could get a chance.

Nor did Miss Etta mind work. She was a girl of energy, who would willingly walk miles to attend a picnic or climb a mountain, and she did not hesitate to work for hours on a trimming for her dress, or even some more useful piece of sewing. She was always having *furores* for something; at one time it was gardening, when she coaxed her father to have a good-sized piece of ground dug up and laid out for her, and actually raised, not flowers, as one would expect, but quite respectable vegetables, hoeing the beans, corn, and cabbages herself, and weeding out the cucumbers, lettuce, and radishes with persistent fidelity.

At another time she had a poultry-mania, and a chicken-house with the most approved nests, warming-apparatus, etc., was constructed for the little lady, and here she daily set the hens, fed the chickens, and collected the eggs, selling them to her father at exorbitant prices. Again, cooking absorbed her time and gave occupation to her energies; and the family were treated to strange compounds of her concocting, while the old servant who reigned

supreme in the kitchen was in the depths of despair at the number of dishes and pans she was called upon to clear up, the waste and breakage that went on, and the general disorganization of her lifelong arrangements.

Happily, or unhappily, these moods never were of long duration. The reading-mania lasted just long enough for a handsome bookcase to be stocked with histories, biographies, etc.; a few volumes of poems were dipped into, several novels read, and a big history attacked, when the mood changed into a passion for skating, and the remainder of the winter was consumed in preparing a fancy costume, getting the most approved club-skates, and learning to keep upright upon them; but by the time so much was accomplished, the ice broke up and Miss Etta was obliged to find some other occupation. Art came next in the list of the girl's absorbing avocations. A studio was fitted up, canvas stretched upon easels, pencils sharpened, and quite a creditable beginning made upon some pictures which showed considerable native taste and ability.

Just now Sunday-school teaching had taken the place of all other things, and Etta Mountjoy devoted the energies of her many-sided nature to her class. There had been more than one person opposed to entrusting so sacred a work to so light-minded and trivial a girl. Her brother James considered it nothing short of sacrilege, and her oldest sister Eunice reasoned with her very gravely, and tried to show her that, in order to teach the truths of God, one should have some personal knowledge of them, and that the only acceptable motive for religious work was a sincere desire to please God and benefit the souls of those whom Christ came to save. But Etta was not accustomed to be guided by her brother and sister; she went to her father, told him she wanted to take a class in Sunday-school, and of course he said "Yes." Then she went to the superintendent and made known her request, saying it was at her father's desire, which, as he was book-keeper at the paper-mill, would, she knew, have great weight.

Mr. Scoville paused, hesitated, and finally resolved to consult the pastor, promising Etta her answer before Sunday came round. He would have given an unqualified refusal had the petitioner been any one else than his employer's daughter.

Mr. Morven, the pastor, however, thought differently. He had known the young girl ever since she was a very little one; he knew there was no positive evil in her, and though he had not heretofore suspected her of any serious thought, he looked upon her request as an indication of good, and said that perhaps the very familiarity with sacred things which teaching a Sunday-school class would necessitate might be as beneficial to the teacher as to the scholars. So Mr. Scoville, though rather against his better judgment, sent a note to Miss Etta granting her request, having in his mind a certain class of little ones just out of the infant class, the teacher of which had announced her intention of leaving the school. When he went to see this teacher, however, he found she had changed her mind, and there was no other class available except one composed of seven "big girls," of whom Katie Robertson was one. Of course, Mr. Scoville could not go back on his word, so Miss Etta Mountjoy was formally installed as teacher of one of the most important classes of the school.

Most of the girls liked her; some were seized with a violent admiration, if not of her, of her beautiful hats, delicate kid gloves, and all the *et cetera* which go to make up the toilet of a modern young lady. Others liked her fresh, frank manner and sympathy with them and their interests. Indeed, she was so nearly on their own level as to age that there was no room for condescension on this account; while, as to position, where was there ever an American girl of any age who acknowledged to social inferiority? Katie alone felt, though she could hardly explain it, the want of something in her new teacher which had been peculiarly characteristic of the old one, who was a plain, elderly woman, without much education,—namely, personal love and devotion to the Lord Jesus, showing itself in an earnest desire that her scholars might also learn to love and serve him. This good teacher's prayers had been answered, and her efforts blessed, in Katie Robertson's case, and hence the girl knew how to appreciate the difference.

In some ways, however, Etta agreeably disappointed all their expectations. She set herself to study and prepare her lessons with an energy that carried all before it; consulted commentaries, studied dates, compared contemporary history, committed to memory schedules, and looked out illustrations, all of which she imparted to

her class till its members far surpassed all the others in the school in their knowledge of scripture geography and history and biography. They could give complete lists of the patriarchs, the judges, the kings of Israel and Judah, and the major and minor prophets; and they never failed with the dates of the deluge, the "call of Abraham," the Exodus, the Captivity, and all the periodic points by which the Bible is marked and mapped off in the voluminous Sunday-school literature of the day. As to distinctively religious teachings, every scholar had the catechism verbatim, ready to recite at a moment's notice, and a failure in the "golden text" was unknown. To be sure, other teachers in her vicinity, whose classes failed to win the unqualified praise accorded to hers, did say that Miss Etta never failed to prompt her scholars if there seemed to be any hesitation; but perhaps that was due to a tinge of jealousy in consequence of all the prizes given at a quarterly examination, including one for the teacher, having been won by this "banner class."

All this was very well in its way. There is certainly no harm in knowing all we can about the Bible; it helps us to understand and appreciate it, and to answer the objections which foolish infidels are constantly bringing against it; but the girls, especially Katie, missed the pointed application; the showing how every wrong thing is sin; how sin must be punished; how Jesus has borne the punishment, and so is ready and willing to forgive the sin; how he loves all men, even though they are sinners, and is ready to give them strength to resist temptation and conquer sin, if they will diligently seek the aid of his Holy Spirit—in Bible words, to make them "whiter than snow." These are the true themes of Sunday-school teaching; the one end to be aimed at is so to bring up the children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," as that when they come to years of discretion they shall gladly confess him as their Master, and become noble, intelligent, active Christian men and women. Lacking this, all outside things are, as the apostle says, "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

The only positive harm which Miss Etta did to her class was to foster in some of the girls a great admiration for dress and an ardent desire to imitate their teacher in this respect. Since the days of Eve a taste for dress has always been an inherent part of a girl's constitution, and is apt to become one of her greatest temptations,

especially if she be a poor girl, as were most of these, and must procure cheap imitations of finery; or, if even these are beyond their reach, indulge in discontented repinings, which are really rebellion against God.

Squantown Sunday-school was a very pleasant one. Quite unlike the usual oblong wooden building, which in many country places serves for a secular school during the week and a Sunday-school on Sunday, it was a pretty gothic brick building, handsomely fitted up with folding-seats, a reed organ, and an uncommonly good library. A nice carpet was upon the floor, and pretty illuminated texts painted upon the walls; the windows were narrow and pointed, with little diamond-shaped panes, and when opened gave a near view of the minister's garden full of bright-hued flowers, and a more distant one of softly outlined blue mountains, whose tops, capped in summer with snowy clouds and in winter with veritable snow, formed apt illustrations to thoughtful teachers of the "mountains that stand round about Jerusalem," and symbolized the protecting love and care of the Lord for his people.

The beautiful Sunday-school building was largely due to the efforts of Mr. James, who had his father's well-filled purse to draw from; and he had interested himself in getting the scholars together, as well as in introducing among them all modern improvements. He was greatly interested in his class of big boys, over whom his influence was most beneficial. Nearly all of them had already confessed Christ, and were mostly manly Christians, exercising a good influence upon the other boys in the mill or bindery, to which they, as well as nearly all the members of the school, belonged.

Miss Eunice Mountjoy was also engaged in the Sunday-school, having charge of the Bible-class, which contained all the oldest scholars, some of them quite young men and women. She was a very different sort of person from her youngest sister. Fully twelve years her senior, she looked and seemed much older than she really was, and no one had for years thought of calling her a "girl," although now she was only twenty-nine. When she was quite a girl her mother had died, leaving her with the care of all her sisters and her brother, to whom she had, indeed, done a mother's part. Her chief aim in life had always been to "do all to the glory of God," and to her Bible-class she gave her most earnest efforts and her warmest prayers. Her

influence was great at home, in the mill, and throughout the town of Squantown, though, as far as possible, she obeyed the scripture injunction not to let her left hand know what her right hand was doing. She always invited the female members of her class to take tea with her every Wednesday night; the boys and young men being expected to come afterward, remain a little while, and then escort their sisters, cousins, and friends home. These little meetings were very pleasant; sometimes pretty fancy-work—to be sold for the benefit of the class missionary fund—was done; sometimes clothes were cut out and made for some of the poorer factory children, or some fatherless baby, while Miss Eunice read aloud some interesting book; sometimes when the topics suggested by last Sunday's lesson had proved too voluminous for the time of the session, they were taken up and discussed on Wednesday; sometimes difficult points in next week's lesson were anticipated. In this way the teacher became really acquainted with the members of her class, their dispositions, temptations, and interests; she gained their confidence, and was often able to advise and assist them in many ways, and they learned to look upon her as a friend to whom they might apply in time of need. And, as a secondary benefit, the girls learned a great deal in the way of cutting out, basting, and other mysteries of needlework calculated to prove very useful to them in their future capacity of wives and mothers.

Eunice had often wished that the same plan could be pursued in the other elder classes; but their teachers, who were mostly employed in some capacity in the mill, could hardly spare the time, and Etta certainly was not fitted for the work. As an experiment, however, on the first Sunday after Katie entered the mill she came over to her sister's class and invited all the girls, or as many as chose to do so, to join hers on Wednesday afternoon next, saying she had something of interest and importance to talk about. As the invitation was one that seemed to place those to whom it was given in the rank of grown-up girls, it was at once gladly accepted, especially as most of the girls had never been inside of Mr. Mountjoy's house and grounds, and would gladly see the luxury of which they had heard so much.

There was a great deal of talk after the close of the session about the invitation and the proposed meeting, and some curiosity was

expressed as to the "important thing" Miss Eunice was to talk about. One or two of the girls said they were sorry they had accepted the invitation; they didn't like "to have religion poked at them"; they guessed they wouldn't go. Before the appointed day, however, curiosity got the better of these fainthearted ones, and not a girl of Etta's class was wanting when the time arrived.

CHAPTER V.

THE TEA-PARTY.

At exactly six o'clock some twenty young girls of various ages assembled at "the great house," as Mr. Mountjoy's grand mansion was called in the village. They could not come earlier, as most of them worked in the mill, which they could not leave till five or half-past five; consequently they all arrived at about the same time. They were received with perfect politeness by the servant, who opened the door and ushered them, as she would have done any other visitors, into the spare-room, prettily furnished in blue and white satin, with white lace hangings and silver ornaments. Here they laid aside their hats, and taking their little work-baskets, descended to the great drawing-room, whose splendors considerably surprised the younger girls; the older ones were used to it. At the door Miss Eunice with Etta, the latter arrayed in a wonderful costume, met and received their guests, and after lingering for a while among the paintings, engravings, nicknacks, etc., led them to an inner room, the windows of which overlooked the garden in summer, and a door from which opened into a greenhouse, now full of blooming flowers.

This was the family sitting-room, generally the abode of Miss Eunice, for Etta was too much of a butterfly to stay anywhere, and Rhoda, the middle sister, now about twenty, was an artist, entirely devoted to painting, spending her days and a great part of her nights in her studio, and caring nothing for any of the interests connected with our story. It was luxuriously furnished, more with a view to comfort than to show, and as the girls sank into the easy sofas or into the deep stuffed chairs, or else made themselves comfortable upon low seats and divans, the contrast with their own bare homes and hardworking life was enough to call forth many a sigh of rest and enjoyment. Work was then produced, the usual inquiries after parents and sisters, invalids and home-keepers asked and answered, with a little other familiar conversation, when Miss Eunice said: "I think, girls, as we have finished the book upon which we have been so long engaged, we will not commence another to-day, but devote

our thoughts to a subject about which I have been thinking a great deal, and which your pastor agrees with me in thinking of very great importance to be brought before you. I mean a public confession of Christ as your Saviour and Master."

Some of the girls looked grave, some blushed, some were confused. Katie Robertson glanced up expectantly, for this was an opportunity she had long been on the lookout for, and longed to hear more about it. One of the elder girls said:—

"But, Miss Eunice, nobody ought to join the church who is not converted."

"That is very true, but is it not equally true that all who are converted ought to join the church, as you express it, or, as I prefer to say, confess their Saviour? It is only a mean soul which is willing to accept gifts and favors and never openly acknowledge its gratitude for them. I wouldn't care for the friendship of any one who was ashamed to own me before other people; and I wouldn't think much of a soldier who did not show his colors and put on the uniform of his country."

Katie felt her face flush; for was she not one of these very secret friends—one of the soldiers who had not as yet put on the uniform? Not that she had really been ashamed to do so, but the subject had not been very prominently brought to her notice, and when she had thought of it at all it had seemed such a strange, awful, public step for so young a girl to take. She felt so unworthy; it seemed a thing for old people to do, not for little girls. But Miss Eunice had thrown a new light upon the subject, and it looked differently from what it had ever looked before.

"But if we are not Christians, Miss Eunice, you wouldn't like us to act a lie."

"God forbid, Mary; did you ever think that you *ought* to be a Christian?—ought to be in that state which will make it possible for you to obey the simple command of Christ to confess him before men?"

"A command, Miss Eunice?"

"Yes, a command accompanied by both a promise and a threat. 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven, but whosoever shall deny me

before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.'"

"But still," persisted the first speaker, "if one isn't converted."

"And what is to prevent one's being converted. Don't you think God is willing to give you grace sufficient to enable you to do and be all that he commands you? The greatest mistake young people can make is to suppose that they must wait, and not take the first step toward a religious life till something mysterious comes to them and lifts them into it almost against their own will."

"Not *against* our own wills; I am sure everybody wants to be saved."

"Yes, dear, against their own will, for if any one wills to be a Christian, she can be one at once. I must insist upon it, because it is our Saviour's own teachings. He says: 'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life'; and so I am sure that if any one does not have life, spiritual life, it is because she *will* not come unto him."

"I'd like to come," said one girl, timidly, "but I don't see exactly how."

"I dare say most of you would. Mr. Morven and I have been talking it over. He feels that the time for a spiritual harvest among our people, especially among our carefully taught Sunday scholars, has about come, and he thinks that, with a little more definite help and teaching, many of you would be glad to come to Jesus, and be enrolled as his followers now, instead of waiting for that indefinite sometime which may never come. I have a book here which, in words so simple that the youngest girl here can understand, explains how we may come to Christ by repentance and faith in his sacrifice upon the cross, etc. It is pleasantly written and illustrated with anecdotes. I think you will all like it, and I propose to read a little of it aloud every Wednesday afternoon for the next month, and at the close of the reading we will have a little familiar conversation on this, the most important of all topics. As most of the girls in my sister's class are of quite sufficient age to understand what it means to be a Christian and honestly to consider their own duty in this respect, I shall be very happy to see them also, and any others of their friends, either in the Sunday-school or from outside. Girls, this is a very important subject, and I trust you will think of it conscientiously and

decide upon your own individual duty as in the sight of God. If you fail to make a right use of this season, another similar opportunity may never be given you. Let us commence by asking God's blessing upon our reading and thinking, and the presence of that Holy Spirit without whose aid we can never come to any decision that will be pleasing to him."

Miss Eunice then knelt down while all the girls knelt around her, and prayed in low tones that the influences of the Holy Spirit might be poured out upon all present; that they might have wisdom to see their duty at this solemn moment and grace to do it; that they might not be self-deceived, but really surrender their hearts into the hands of their Saviour, and, putting their whole trust in him, be willing to confess him before men, that he might confess them before the angels and his Father.

Some serious talk followed, and then tea was announced, after which the conversation became general, and at nine o'clock the girls and their brothers and friends, who had come for them, went home quietly, and for the most part wrapped in serious thought.

Etta Mountjoy had never felt so strangely in her life. She had always known that some people were professing Christians; nay, she had, during her visits to the city, and even at home, seen people, even young girls, come forward and take upon themselves the vows of Christ. Perhaps it may have occurred to her that "sometime" she should do so, but to be deliberately called upon to consider her own immediate duty in the matter had not happened to her before. Once or twice, indeed, when she was much younger, "Sister Eunice" or "Brother James" had attempted to speak to her upon the subject, but she always turned away from it in such a flippant way that both felt she was in no proper frame for the consideration of so solemn a theme, and of late they had foreborne to mention it. It was with a view, perhaps, of interesting her sister quite as much as her sister's scholars that Eunice had invited them upon the present occasion, knowing that the young girl's lively interest in her class would induce her to be present if its members were, and to her great joy and thankfulness she was not disappointed. Etta had never heard her sister pray before, though the Wednesday afternoon meetings were often thus opened, and it seemed to her something almost awful to hear the language which she had always associated with a grave

minister and a solemn church service spoken reverently, it is true, but quite familiarly, by her sister.

Then, too, the question with which the reading closed: "Will *you* now thus confess Christ?" How could she answer it? Was she in a fit state for so solemn an action, she, a butterfly flitting from one avocation to another, with no thought or aim beyond pleasing herself? She knew she was not. She had given up the child-habit of "saying her prayers," and she had never learned really to pray. Until she took that class she had not, for some years, voluntarily opened her Bible, and now she knew that all her energetic study of the technicalities of the Holy Word had in it no grain of desire to please or glorify God. Even her devotion to Sunday-school teaching, usually supposed to be Christian work, had in it no leaven of Christianity, being only self-pleasing from end to end. Etta was sufficiently clear-sighted to see all this. She knew that she never thought of God. His approval or disapproval was all one to her, and while she had never denied or openly scoffed at religion, and had no reason to doubt the truths of its facts and doctrines, she was, so far as anything practical went, not a Christian at all. What had she to "confess"? And yet, how strange it would seem if some of those to whom she stood in the position of teacher, who of necessity looked up to and imitated her, should become Christians and church members, when she had never taken the same stand. Stranger still, and worse, if they should be deterred from what seemed to them a duty by the example of their Sunday-school teacher. Etta had never been placed in such a dilemma before, and she heartily wished either that her sister had not invited her class, or that the class had not accepted the invitation, and that the girls would never come again, and yet she hardly liked to advise them not to do so.

"I don't like that kind of a party at all," said Bertie Sanderson, when the group of younger girls were well out of hearing of the house. "She just got us there under false pretences, calling it fun and turning it into a sort of church. We get prayers enough, in all conscience, on Sundays."

"I'd rather have Miss Etta talk to us about the patriarchs and the stories and all that," said Matilda Eckart, who was a good scholar, or would have been if she had not, by the necessities of her family, been

forced to work in the mill. "I like to learn things; still I like Miss Eunice, too. She's real sweet, and maybe we ought to do as she says."

"Nonsense!" said another girl, Helen Felting by name, "Miss Etta isn't a Christian, and she's her own sister and three or four years older than we are. I don't want to be any better than she is. My, ain't her dress lovely, all silk and velvet, and such an exquisite shade! fits so, too, just as if it was her skin!"

"Did you see her ear-rings?" said another. "Real diamonds, all set round with pearls, and *such* a chain and locket!"

"I don't care," said Bertie; meaning, of course, that she did care very much. "We girls haven't got so much money and we can't have real things. I like my chain and locket just as well (which she didn't, for she was quite keen enough to understand the difference), but I won't go there again till I get my silk dress made;" and she glanced disgustedly at the light-blue cashmere which, as it was her best dress, she chose to wear on all occasions, and which looked already much the worse for its week in the rag-room at the mill.

Katie Robertson did not speak at all, except to answer the questions of Eric, who had come for her, as to whether she had had a pleasant time decidedly in the affirmative. She was thinking very deeply. We have seen that our Katie was a faithful, conscientious little girl, loving God sincerely, trusting in her Saviour, and striving to please him and grow like him. She loved to study the Bible, which she knew was his word, and to pray to him in her own simple language every night and morning; nay, often at other times when she felt the need of his help, or had something she wanted to tell him about. She had not asked herself any hard questions yet about whether she were a Christian or not. She knew she was her mother's Katie because she loved her mother and wanted to please her, and she knew she was God's child because she loved him and wanted to please him. She often did things, and said things, and thought things that she knew were displeasing to both, but she did not want to do so. She was always very sorry, she always asked to be forgiven and believed she was, for did not her mother say so each time, and had not her heavenly Father promised so once for all in the Bible?

But this afternoon the thought had really come to her that she *ought* publicly to confess herself a Christian; and yet she shrank from it, she hardly knew why. She was afraid she might afterward do

something which would disgrace such a holy profession; and yet, if her Saviour commanded it, as he certainly did, that made it a duty, and, of course, she ought to obey, trusting him to help her keep all the promises as he had promised to do. He would like it, too, so much; it would be easier afterward to resist temptation and to "stand up for Jesus" among her companions.

Katie's thoughts were very busy ones, and by the time she came in sight of her home she had decided that, if her mother and the pastor had no objection, she would give in her name among those who were, at the first opportunity, to confess Christ.

The Wednesday afternoon meetings were continued throughout the spring and early summer, and were attended by all the members of Miss Eunice's class, nearly all those of her sister's, and five or six other girls who accepted the kind invitation of the former. There was always the same hospitality, always the same warm welcome, and always the same grave but happy earnestness on the part of the young lady on whom God had laid this great work. As the warm days came on, the meetings were adjourned to the velvety, close-shaven lawn, where chairs and rustic seats were clustered under the shade of a great, wide-spreading tree, and the sweet, holy themes of reading and conversation seemed all the sweeter that they were henceforth associated with blue sky, bright flowers, white clouds, green leaves, and the other things made by the God who was even now calling these young hearts into his service.

Miss Eunice went through with a pretty thorough course of reading upon sin, repentance, faith in Christ, renunciation of all evil, walking obediently in God's holy will and commandments, which is another name for holy living, and as she prayed constantly for God's blessing upon her efforts, she had great cause for thankfulness in the hope that many of these young souls thus brought, for the first time, face to face with their personal responsibility toward God, and his loving provision for their salvation, really chose the "better part," which no man can take away from us,—"passed from death unto life," and in publicly confessing Christ made no false profession.

CHAPTER VI.

A DISCOVERY.

Meanwhile work in the mill was becoming an old story and, as such, decidedly monotonous. The glamour had passed by, and Squantown Paper Mill had ceased to be an enchanted palace and become a prosaic place of daily toil. Such disenchantments are always more or less painful, and Katie's high spirits declined proportionally. It was well that principles of self-support, independence, and duty to God, underlay her enthusiasm, or it would soon have died away, being choked to death by the dust from the rags.

The little pile of money that was ready to be carried home every Saturday night at first did a great deal toward rekindling the old enthusiasm. The first week it was only two dollars and forty cents, but on the second it had risen to three dollars, fifty cents a day being the regular price paid to the "rag-room girls." By this time the "new hand" was new no longer, and she had learned to work so fast as to accomplish the amount usually done in a day in a much shorter time, and then Miss Peters told her she might go home.

Mr. Mountjoy, or rather "Mr. James," upon whom all arrangements concerning the work-people devolved, was not one of those employers who consider that they have bought all the time of their employees. He had a right to a fair day's work in return for a fair day's wages, but if any one was industrious enough to do more than this, the time thus gained was his own to use as he liked. Many of the elder workers did use it in the mill, receiving extra pay for extra work, when, as sometimes happened, there was extra work to be done. Some of her companions made as much as a dollar a day in this way. But Mrs. Robertson was gifted with good sense, and knew that her child's young strength must not be overtaxed and thus the development of the future woman be stunted. So Katie came home generally about four o'clock, and had plenty of time to rest, to help her mother about the house, to keep up some of her old school studies, and to read the very valuable and interesting books of which the Sunday-school library was composed. Her mother took her

money and kept it for her, hoping thus to have enough for the summer outfit she would so soon need. The child would gladly have done extra work in order to make extra money, she knew so well how much it was needed, but her mother was inexorable, and she was forced to submit.

As to Bertie, she never finished her day's work at all. Her time was largely spent in looking out of window, studying the dresses and ribbons of the other girls, making signs to her companions, and whispering to her neighbor whenever Miss Peters's back was turned. She hated her work and would have given it up long ago, at least as soon as the silk dress had been procured, and her mother would have very injudiciously purchased it long before the money had been earned, but that her father was resolute. The mill would have dispensed with her society as soon as her idleness and inefficiency were seen, except that Mr. Sanderson was her father, and it was thought best to show due consideration to him.

"Dear me! how hateful it all is," said Bertie, with a yawn, one day during the half-hour when talking was permitted. "Are you not heartily sick of it, Katie?"

"It's a little monotonous, I own," said the girl addressed, "but then, no work is play, I suppose. Maybe we'll get promoted to the folding-room soon, and it will be much nicer there."

"It isn't a bit nicer. It's work anywhere, and I hate work. I never mean to do a bit of it that I can help. Ma says pa'll have money enough to make us all rich, and I want to be a lady." "Ma" had been a factory-girl herself, which was perhaps one reason why Bertie despised the business. She had married the foreman of the mill, who had now risen to be overseer of the bindery, and yearly laid up a large portion of his salary, while her sister had married a city grocer, who was spending all he made as he made it, and his children were growing up to be useless, fine ladies, and a positive injury to their country cousins.

"But while you do work you might do it faithfully, not spend time for which you are paid in idleness, and crowd in rags with the buttons all on, which will be sure to spoil the machinery when they come to be ground."

"Bah! what difference does it make? I'm paid for my time. Provided I stay here all day, they haven't a right to claim anything more."

"But, Bertie, they have. Don't you remember the text which is painted on the wall at the foot of the corridor?

"'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'"

"It seems to me just like stealing to waste time that we're paid for, or not to do work entrusted to us just as well as we possibly can."

"Oh, well, you're one of the saints, you know. If it's saintship to be rude and call other people thieves I'm glad I'm a sinner, that's all. I guess we'll catch the saint in a slip before long, don't you, girls?" said she, appealing to several other idlers who naturally congregated around a bird of the same feather as themselves.

Bertie and Katie did not walk home together any more. The former, never having finished her work, was always obliged to remain in the mill till the closing-bell rang, while the former went home, as we have seen, at four o'clock, and at noon she was generally met by her brothers.

"Eric," she said on the day of the above conversation, "do you think it's right to idle and talk instead of doing your work?"

"We can't in the bindery; the machine won't let us. Everything would go to thunder if we looked off."

"But suppose you could, and nobody knew anything about it?"

"They couldn't fine you if they didn't know," said Alfred, whose ideas of the righteousness of law were modified by the possibility of escaping its penalty.

"What difference would that make?" said Eric. "God would know."

"Yes," said Katie, "I always wish the words 'Thou God seest me,' were written up on the walls of the mill. It helps you not to get tired and want to stop."

"Do you ever want to stop, Katie?" said her brother, tenderly.

"Yes, lots of times, It's just the same thing day after day, no change, no variety, the dust suffocates you, and it's so hard to get up in the morning, and"—

"Sho!" shouted Alfred, "I thought you'd sing a different tune after you'd been in the factory a little while. Don't you remember I told you so?"

"Katie," said Eric, "you remember *I* told you that you should not work one moment longer than you wanted to. A girl with two strong brothers to support her need not work for her living unless she chooses to. Do you want to stop now?"

"I *want* to, ever so much," said the girl, "but I don't *mean* to. Do you think I am a baby to begin a thing and then leave it off again? There's just as much reason as there ever was for my earning money. I'm not going to be dependent upon you, and mother is growing older every day. Do you remember what the Bible says about those who put their hands to the plough and look back? I don't mean to be one of those; and I mean to pray every day," she said more softly, "that I may be more patient and persevering."

Eric understood her, and even Alfred respected his sister the more for what he could not understand.

"I wish I knew some way of making money faster," said Katie to her brothers soon after; "a great deal, I mean. Mother wants any quantity of things—blankets, and kitchen utensils, and table things, and she hasn't a bonnet fit to go to church in. It takes about all we can make to feed us all, and if there is any left she always uses it to buy things for us instead of thinking about herself."

"I wonder how it is mothers never think of themselves," said Alfred. "They are always fussing to make us happy, and we don't do things for them at all."

Katie thought of the words:—

"As one whom his mother comforteth,"

which had been in last Sunday's lesson, but did not say them aloud, only it was a comfort to her to think of the other holy words which say of a mother and her child: "She may forget, yet will not I forget thee." No matter how much a mother may love, God loves us better still.

One day about that time, Bertie Sanderson, following her usual custom of looking around the room instead of at her work, saw something that caused her to start, open her eyes very wide, and then mutter half-aloud:—

"Oho! the saints are not so saintly after all. It's dishonest to look around the room, is it? I wonder what you call that!"

"Bertie Sanderson, talking, as usual," said Miss Peters, marking the
fine upon the slate which she always carried with her," and Katie Robertson, too," noting a sudden flush upon the face of the latter. "I *am* surprised."

"I did not speak," said Katie, respectfully, but with some confusion.

"There's no harm in talking to yourself," said Bertie, in the rude tone which she usually addressed to Miss Peters.

"Were not those girls talking, Gretchen," said the superintendent, appealing to a stout German who worked near the others.

"No, ma'am, I believe not; at least, Katie wasn't. I heard Bertie say something, but Katie did not answer, but"—

"Never mind," said Miss Peters, who had got all she wanted,—a chance to fine Bertie whom she hated,—"attend to your work," and she passed on, never noticing the hand which Katie, having hastily thrust it into her pocket, continued to hold there.

The work proceeded in silence, and, as Katie went home at four o'clock as usual, Bertie did not have an opportunity to speak to her about the strange thing she had noticed. She did, however, say to Gretchen, as they separated: "Did you see that?"

"What?" said the German, innocently.

"Oh! nothing, if you did not see it." Bertie was going to tell her companion what she had seen, but on second thoughts decided to keep her discovery to herself, that she might have more power over the "saint," whom she was beginning to absolutely hate.

But Gretchen had seen exactly what Bertie had, only she did not think it her business, and as it was not, did not choose to speak about it, but, German fashion, went about her own business.

What had the two girls seen? What was it that made Katie Robertson's face such a study as she walked home at a much slower pace than was her wont? What was it that lay in the depth of her pocket, where her hand rested for greater security. What did she put away in the drawer that contained her treasures, going directly to

her room for the purpose, instead of rushing first of all to the sitting-room to see if her mother were at home.

Only a crisp fifty-dollar bill! Katie had never seen so much money at once before. How beautiful it looked; how much it represented of comfort and luxury; how many things it would buy that she knew were wanted by her mother and the boys! She deposited her treasure carefully at the bottom of a little pearl box which had been her mother's, and was the only really pretty thing which she possessed, and then went downstairs to lie on the sofa, think about and plan for spending it.

Where had Katie suddenly got so much money? and why did she so earnestly desire to keep the possession of it a secret? She *thought* the answer to the latter question lay in her desire to surprise her mother, and was not at all conscious of another feeling that lay as yet quite dormant and unaroused. As to the former, that is easily answered. After cutting off the buttons of an old vest, just as the little girl was preparing to cut it in smaller pieces, the pocket opened, and out fluttered a crumpled paper, which on being opened proved to be a fifty-dollar bill. Some careless gentleman, no one could tell whom, no one could tell when, had stuffed it into the pocket and forgotten all about it. Strange that the vest should have gone through all the vicissitudes common to old clothes, worn possibly by a beggar, condemned to a dust-heap, fished out, sorted, sold, packed, sold again, and transported to the factory, passing through a dozen hands, to any one of whose owners the money would have been so useful, and there it had lain unnoticed till it fluttered out into the very hands of Katie Robertson, who needed it so much.

What castles in the air the little girl built as she lay there in the twilight!—dresses and bonnets for her mother; new suits for each of the boys; a new tea-set, with table-cloth and napkins. Never in the world did a fifty-dollar bill buy half so much in reality as this one did in imagination; which, by the way, is a very pleasant way of spending money, since it does not at all diminish the amount, which may be all spent over and over again in a variety of ways. But strangely enough, while everything needed by the others, even to a new ribbon to tie round pussy's neck, was remembered, Katie's catalogue of articles to be bought contained nothing in the world for herself.

CHAPTER VII.

STRIFE AND VICTORY.

No thought had as yet suggested itself to Katie concerning her right to the money which had thus come into her possession, and as she lay there planning the things she was going to get with it, she enjoyed to the full the dignity of ownership. How glad her mother would be when there was a decent water-pail in the house, plates enough of one kind to go round, and a table-cloth that was not nearly all darns! Then her mother should have a new shawl and bonnet, and each of the boys a straw hat and a bright necktie, and she would have something to put in the plate every Sunday in church, and to add to the missionary collection of the Sunday-school class. Perhaps, even, she could give something toward a present that the girls were talking of giving to Miss Eunice.

But just then an idea, so painful that at first she turned away from it, struck her, and a question that she did not want to answer suggested itself to her mind. Had she a right to keep the money? Was it really hers? Of course it was, said inclination; whose else could it be? She had *found* it, no one else; if she had not picked it up it would have gone in with the rags to be boiled and ground up into paper again, or it might have been swept away among the dust and waste paper, and no one been the better or wiser. "Findings is keepings" was a familiar school-boy proverb; was it the right principle or not?

Katie tried to persuade herself that it was. Nevertheless, she was glad that, as she supposed, no one had seen her find the bill, and that her mother as yet knew nothing about the finding. Also, she did not plan out any more ways of spending the money.

Katie was so silent all teatime that her brothers continually rallied her upon her preoccupation, and her mother, fearing she must be sick, sent her to bed very early. To this the little girl did not object, as she wanted to be alone to think over the question that was so perplexing her brain.

Before getting into bed, our young friend opened her drawer, took out the box, gazed lovingly at the bill for a time, then put it away, and knelt to say her evening prayer. What was the matter to-night? For

almost the first time since she had known what prayer really was, she could not pray. Her thoughts would not be controlled; they kept wandering away to the finding of that bill. She wondered whether any one had seen her find it, what use she should put it to, and if it were really hers after all. She knew it was wrong to think of other things at such a solemn moment, and felt guilty and condemned. Her conscience troubled her; it seemed as though God were angry with her. So far the finding of the money had not been a very happy event for its finder. It often happens that secular things, the things we are interested in in our daily lives, will come in between us and our prayers, and we cannot get rid of them. Young Christians especially are greatly troubled in this way, and have many weary fights in the attempt to control their thoughts. They have an idea that prayer is such a sacred thing, and God is so holy, that they must only talk to him about religion, and use pretty much the same words which they hear in church, and when they cannot do this, they either fall into the habit of *saying* such words formally without in the least thinking of their meaning, or else they are wretched and self-condemned because of what are called "distractions in prayer." But there is a more excellent way, even to take all the things that really interest us directly to "our Father which art in heaven," and tell him all about them. He encourages us to do so when he says, "casting *all* your care upon him," and "in everything by prayer and supplication make your requests known unto God." If we are really his children we may be sure that nothing is too small to interest him which *rightfully* interests us, and if it is not a right interest there is no surer way of finding that out, and gaining the victory over it, than by bringing it to the light of his Holy Spirit and asking him for strength to dispose of it as we ought.

Had Katie thus taken the money which she had found directly to the Lord, she would soon have understood all her duty concerning it. Her desire would have been only to do his will, and she would have gone to sleep as peacefully as a little child who trusts its mother to manage for it just as she sees to be for the best. But this she did not dare to do, partly because she had not yet learned to understand how God "careth" for his children in all little things, and partly because down at the bottom of her heart she was not quite ready to do his will—that is, she *hoped* that it would be right for her to keep the

money, and hoped this so strongly that she could not look fairly on the other side of the question. Nearly all night—or it seemed so to a little girl who was generally asleep by the time her head touched the pillow—she lay tossing from side to side, troubled by a dozen different sides of the question. And when she did get to sleep it was to dream confused dreams of thieves being taken to prison, and of being one of them herself.

As soon as it was light, for the long days had come now, the tired little girl sprang from her bed, and dressed herself, in a very unhappy frame of mind. She must decide very soon now, and she began to see more and more clearly that that money did not belong to her, but to the owner of the vest in which she had found it. To be sure, she could not now find the original owner, but Mr. Mountjoy certainly owned it, because he had bought the rags. It was one thing, however, to see this, and quite another to decide to give up to him who had so much the little that was so much to her. All the pleasant planning must go with it; all the things she had desired for her mother and the boys. She was sure she had not been selfish; it was not for herself she wanted money at all. From force of habit she opened her Bible and read the first words she saw, which were these: "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." And again the words flashed upon her: "Thou God seest me."

What did God see? Did he see "truth in the inward part" of her heart? Was she prepared in *all* her ways to acknowledge him? his right to her and all that was hers?

Then she knelt down and did what she ought to have done the first thing—told him, who understands and pities us "like as a father pitieth his children," all about it, and asked him to forgive, to pity, and to direct her. And now it all came to her, for God always keeps his word, and he has promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, and further that that blessed Spirit when he comes shall "guide us unto all truth."

Whoever was the owner of that bill, she was not. It belonged to God primarily, but he had given the disposal of it into the hands of him who owned the rags. If she kept it, at least without telling him that she had found it, she would be a *thief*! There was but one right way for her, and that was to take it at once to him, tell him where she had found it, and leave him to do as he thought best. To her mind

there was little doubt what he would do. People did not generally give away their money, especially such large sums as fifty dollars seemed to her. All her air-castles must fall to the dust, and the house must go on with the old things as before.

Nevertheless, it was with a sense of absolute relief that Katie folded that bill away in her little purse, and dropped it far down into her pocket. If the "eyes of the Lord were in every place," they saw it there, and they saw, too, into her heart, and saw there that the purpose of doing his will had, by his grace, triumphed over her own desires, and that was enough to make her once more the happy, bright Katie Robertson.

She was almost late at the mill this morning; had only just time to get to her place as the short whistle sounded, and of course there was no time to speak to Mr. Mountjoy. She commenced her work at once, and continued it very diligently, never once looking around at the other girls, so full was she of her own thoughts. Thus she did not see the significant looks which Bertie cast at her from time to time, nor the signs which she made to some of the other girls who, in their turn, became curious and significant, and lost several pennies in fines, because they could not help asking each other what was the matter.

Bertie had not exactly told the story as she knew it, but had insinuated to one and another that she knew something that nobody else knew about Katie Robertson; that, if she chose to tell all she knew, people would not think her such a saint; that, for her part, she did not believe in saints; when people pretended to be very religious they were sure to be dishonest, etc. etc. She made such a mystery of her news that the girls to whom she had made her half-confidence were worked up to a great state of excitement, and the others were devoured with curiosity to know what it could all be about.

But Katie worked quietly on. She had plenty of opportunity to change her determination had she desired to do so, and indeed the temptation to keep the money herself and say nothing about it presented itself again and again to her mind. But now she knew it to be a temptation, and she was strong to resist, because she had committed herself to One who was mighty and his strength was made perfect in her weakness.

As soon as the noon-bell rang and the work-people all poured along the corridors and out at the open doors, Katie knocked at the office door and was told to "Come in!" by Mr. James, who happened to be alone inside. Without a word the girl walked up to his desk and laid the bill down beside him.

The young man started, stared, and finally said:—

"Where did you get this?"

"I found it in the rags, sir."

"When?"

"Yesterday afternoon."

"Why did you bring it to me?"

"Because I think if it belongs to anybody it does to you, it was found among your rags."

"Why did you not bring it to me at once?"

"Because—because I didn't think at first, and I wanted it *so* much."

"Did you?" said he, gravely. "You know the Bible says: 'Thou shalt not covet'?"

Katie started; had she been breaking one of the commandments, after all?
Not the one about stealing, of which she had thought, but another.

"I didn't mean to do that," said she, in a low voice, "but we do want things so much—mother, I mean. We are so poor."

"Are you?" said the young man, in a sympathizing tone. "Well, you are an honest little girl to bring it to me at all. A great many would not have done so, and I should have known nothing about it. Didn't you think of that?"

"Yes, sir; but God knew it, and that made all the difference. Besides, I don't think I was quite honest; if I had been, I should have come to you the first minute, and not thought about keeping it at all."

"Then you did have a little struggle about it?"

"Oh, yes, sir, I hardly slept all night. I didn't know what to do at first, and then I didn't want to do it."

"But God gave you the victory," said the young man, reverently.

"I understand all about that, and how sweet it is to be helped by him,"
Katie added.

"Now," continued he, "I think he sent you that fifty-dollar bill himself; first to try you, and then that you might help your mother to buy all those things that you and she are so much in need of. It isn't mine, for when I pay two cents a pound for old rags I do not buy fifty dollar bills. Take it, and be just as happy with it as a thankful heart can make you. Good-morning; I must hurry home to dinner."[1]

A gladder little girl than Katie Robertson it would be hard to find. The love of money is said to be the root of all evil, and so money itself sometimes is, but that is according to how it is gotten and how used.

This bill would have been a root of bitter evil to the girl had she kept it, in spite of an enlightened conscience, which told her to give it up; and it would have been a root of evil to the young man, had he taken it, as by the letter of the law he had an undoubted right to do, when he knew the little girl needed it so much more than he did. As it was, it was a seed of joy to both of them. Mr. James went home full of the joy which is so like to Christ's joy, in having been kind to another at his own expense; and Katie's heart could hardly hold the glad thankfulness, both to him and to her heavenly Father, that filled it to overflowing, and that was all the gladder because it was rooted in an approving conscience, at peace with itself and at peace with God.

The precious piece of paper was displayed to the wondering mother and brothers at the dinner-table that day. The story, or so much of it as Katie could bring herself to relate, was told, and all enjoyed in anticipation the comforts it was able to procure; but the best thing it accomplished was to teach its finder where to go in time of perplexity and temptation and in whose strength to be "more than conqueror."

——- [Footnote 1: 1 This whole occurrence is a positive fact.]

CHAPTER VIII.

TEMPLES.

It was a lovely June Sunday. The seats of Squantown Sunday-school were even more crowded than usual; the girls' side looking like a flower-bed in its variety and brilliancy of color. Bertie Sanderson was there in her new silk,—a brilliant cardinal,—looking strangely unsuitable to the season; Gretchen, the German, in her woolen petticoat and jacket, which she had not been long enough in the country to discard for summer attire; the other girls in spring suits, and Katie Robertson in a lovely pale-blue lawn and a white straw hat trimmed with the same color. It was the prettiest costume the little girl had ever possessed, and as it was all bought with her own earnings she may be pardoned for being very much pleased with it. And yet it was as simple and inexpensive a summer outfit as any one could have, and certainly was not fitted to excite the hateful thoughts to which it was giving rise in Bertie's mind—Bertie, clad in her unsuitable finery! This finery had not been the success that Bertie expected. To be sure, it was a silk dress, and the brightest color she could procure, but it had been made by the Squantown dressmaker, and entirely lacked the fit and finish of Etta Mountjoy's dresses, besides being in direct contrast to the delicate, harmonious colors which the latter wore—a contrast which her admirer and would-be imitator was quick to perceive when her own brilliant coloring had been selected and it was too late to change. The disappointment made her cross, and inclined her still more to look for flaws in Katie, whom she began to hate as natures not sanctified by the grace of God are apt to hate those who are trying to do his will, and are thus a constant rebuke to them.

"Just look at her finery," said Bertie to her nearest neighbor, as Katie entered, looking as fresh and sweet as a June rose, "and her mother so poor. I could tell a story about how she got it that would make Miss Etta open her eyes, and Miss Eunice, too, for all she makes such a pet of the saint."

"What in the world do you mean?" said the other; but Bertie shook her head and looked mysterious, of course thus exciting the curiosity of the other tenfold.

"Do tell me," she said.

"We know what we do know, don't we?" said Bertie, provokingly, appealing to Gretchen, who nodded, but did not speak.

"Now, you're real mean," said the other, one Amelia Porter by name. "I know something I won't tell you, that's all."

Just then the bell tapped for silence, and the rest of the conversation was carried on in whispers, the only part which was heard being Amelia's astonished "Stole it? You don't say so! I never would have thought of such a thing."

But Katie did not hear. She was not thinking about her dress at all. The lesson was to her a very interesting one—the oft-repeated story of the tongues of fire that came down upon the early church, symbolizing the mighty power of the Holy Spirit to enkindle divine emotions, enthusiasm, and praise, and to make human tongues as flames of fire.

Miss Etta explained (for she had taken pains to study it up) how, in the early, times one Sunday in June was observed in commemoration of this descent of the Holy Ghost, and how, on that day, the new Christians, who of course were originally heathen, having been at first subjected to a long course of training, were baptized. They were called *catechumens*, because they were catechised or questioned, and *candidates* because they wore long white robes, *candidus* being the Latin word for white, and by degrees the day came to be called Whitsunday. Furthermore, Miss Etta told all about the Whitsuntide festivals of old English times in the days of the corrupt church, when festivities of the most riotous kind took place on the two days following Sunday; and the girls left the school, if not impressed by the holy teachings of the lessons, very full of a certain knowledge of that kind which St. Paul says "puffeth up," and prepared to pass a brilliant examination on the history and customs of Whitsuntide.

Very different was the pastor's sermon of that morning, which several of our girls remembered all their lives. Its text was:—

"Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost."

And the speaker showed first what the temples of old times were; not places of meeting, as our churches to a great extent are, but dwelling-places, homes where God, or rather "the gods," were supposed to *live*. This idea was the one used as an illustration by St. Paul in the text, which means that *God* has made all human hearts to be his home and dwelling-place, and that if we will let him, not barring the doors with sin and filling up the inside with other things, he will live there always; or, as our Lord Jesus says: "If any man will open unto me, I will come in unto him and will sup with him;" and in another place, "will abide with him." Then he explained so that the youngest of his audience could understand what are the sins that bar the door against our blessed Saviour, and how we set up idols upon the altars of God's temple, by worshiping dress, vanity, pride, revenge, worldliness, and our own way, and showed how nobody can really worship God and have him abiding in his holy temple who yields obedience to anything or cares for anything more than his will. He said it was an awful thing to *defile* the temple of God by such things as drinking, smoking, and swearing, or even by evil thoughts and dishonest intentions, by selfish motives and unkindness in word or deed.

He closed his sermon in these words:—

"My hearers, every one of you is a temple of the Holy Ghost, built and fashioned with exquisite skill, for his own chosen dwelling-place. See to it that ye defile not this temple, and if it be in any wise already defiled, from without or within, at once seek the double cleansing, which flows from the Cross on Calvary, that thus your sacred temple may be washed whiter than snow. Dethrone the idol *Self* which has so long usurped the place of God upon its altar, and let him rule alone. And remember that every other human soul is likewise a sacred temple, no matter how defiled and degraded it has become by yielding itself willingly to the dominion of sin. Strive to do all that in you lies, by kind, persuasive words, by example and effort, to cleanse the degraded and polluted temples, and so do all in your power to exalt the dominion and worship of God in all the human souls which he has made."

The impression made by this sermon upon its hearers was in accord with the character and religious development of each.

James Mountjoy resolved to be more active and energetic in all efforts to improve the condition of his work-people, to raise the fallen, to reclaim the sinful, to set a better example and raise a higher standard of moral excellence, that the human temples over whom he had influence might be better fitted for the abiding presence of their heavenly Guest. Some of the more thoughtful of his boys resolved that smoking, drinking, and swearing should no longer, even in a slight degree, defile the "temples" entrusted to their keeping.

Eunice Mountjoy made a more entire consecration of herself than ever before to God's service, praying that there might be no hidden idols in her temple; that self and self-seeking might be forever cast out, even as our Lord cast out the money-changers and traffickers from the temple at Jerusalem; that God's will in all things might be hers, and that she might devote not a part only, but *all* her time, all her faculties, all her influence to his service in doing good to others, and thus "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Katie Robertson felt that she had understood some things to-day as never before. What but the presence of the Holy Spirit in her heart had enabled her to see the right and strengthened her to do it, and thus come off victorious over temptation? She remembered how the Holy Ghost is symbolized by a pure white dove, and she longed that her temple should also be a soft, white nest full of pure desires and kindly thoughts, and that nothing she might do or say in her daily life, among her companions or at home, should grieve that blessed heavenly inhabitant.

Even Bertie Sanderson had been struck with the sermon. If her heart was indeed a temple of the Holy Ghost, how was she defiling it? Envy, hatred, and malice were allowed to run riot there; love of dress and vanity were the idols enthroned on the altar; pride, disobedience, irreverence, contempt of rightful authority, idleness, and unfaithfulness were barring the door and keeping the loving Saviour, who stood knocking there, from coming into his own.

Bertie felt uncomfortable; the Holy Spirit was speaking to her, and she could not help but hear. But to hear and to obey are two very different things. The girl knew that she could unbar the closed door of her heart if she chose. One earnest, sincere prayer would bring the omnipotent aid of the Spirit to cast out the evil things and cleanse the defilement. But she did not *want* them cast out; she loved them

too well. It would be all very well to have Christ's love, pity, forgiveness, and protection, and to be sure of heaven when she died; but to be a Christian—a saint she would have called it—now, to give up the things that most interested her, and live a life of self-denial and obedience,—she had no idea of doing any such thing. So, to drown the voice that she could not help hearing but did not mean to obey, she went off on a Sunday afternoon's excursion with some of the boys and girls, received a sharp reprimand from her father for so doing, and went back to her work on Monday morning more rebellious, more hardened, more idle, more malicious than before.

The blessed Holy Spirit is always longing to have us come to Christ and walk in his holy and happy ways. He watches for an opportunity to speak to us, and does speak, again and again, inclining us to give up sin and choose holiness, offering us, if we will do so, all the help we need. But he will not *force* us to obey his gentle call. If we *will* not listen and obey, he lets us go off on our self-chosen path, ceases to speak audibly to us, and patiently waits for another and more propitious season. Bertie Sanderson, that June Sunday, greatly "grieved the Spirit."

But not so did Etta Mountjoy. This young lady, ever since that first Wednesday when she attended her sister's tea-party, had thought more seriously than she had ever thought before. The duty of being a Christian had come home to her during Eunice's talk and prayer, and at the same time she had felt that she was not, and had never tried to be, one. She had seen this still more clearly during the subsequent meetings, from which her duty to her own class would not permit her to be absent. Dishonesty and hypocrisy were not Etta's vices; she could not pretend to be what she was not, and yet she could not shake off the impression that she *ought* to give herself to Christ and openly confess his name. She tried to put the subject out of her thoughts; but still, as she listened, day by day, she grew more and more dissatisfied with herself, her own character, her aims in life. The preparation of her Sunday-school lessons became a dreaded task, for it was impossible to minutely consider the shells of sacred things and not at the same time take cognizance of the spiritual kernels which they envelop, and these spiritual realities made her uncomfortable and more and more dissatisfied with herself.

This Sunday's sermon had gone to the very quick of Etta's conscience, painting as with a finger of light what she ought to be and what she was. God had made her for his own temple and dwelling-place; made her fair, outside and within; endowed her with intellectual and spiritual gifts, and with wealth, station, and influence, giving her opportunities for culture and usefulness far greater than most of those who surrounded her. It was not chance or accident, but God, who had given her all this, and he demanded, as he had a right to demand, in return, her love, her obedience, her service. Had she given him these? Never once in her whole life. She had set up upon his altar in the midst of his beautiful temple the idol of self-pleasing, and never in her whole seventeen years had she acted from any other motive than to please herself. It was sacrilege, it was idolatry, it was dishonesty; and so were all the actions which had come from such a corrupt source.

Etta was too clear-headed to suppose that any sudden change of practice, which it was in her power to commence now, would make any difference. She might obey mechanically, but she could not *make* herself *love*, and she did not love, God. His service was a weariness, prayer a formality, the Bible a dull, uninteresting book. She did love a light, gay, frivolous life; she saw no attractiveness in one of self-denial and holy living.

She went directly to her room on reaching home, refused to go down to dinner, sat behind the shaded blinds, and thought till thought became insupportable; and then, having come to one settled determination, put on her hat, covered her tear-stained face with a veil, and walked down the hill to the parsonage, and rang the bell with a nervous jerk. Whatever Etta did she did with a will; she made no halfway decisions.

The servant who admitted "Miss Etta" showed her into the pastor's study, where after a time he joined her, looking a little surprised at receiving such a visitor on Sunday afternoon. Etta's peculiarities, however, were well known, and he concluded she had some new project in her head, in which she desired his assistance and, as usual, could not wait a moment to put it into execution. He was rather surprised by the tear-swollen eyes and the resolute expression of face, and after courteously welcoming his visitor, waited somewhat impatiently to hear what she had to say.

"I came," said the girl, with her usual directness, "to ask you to give my Sunday-school class to some one else."

"Tired of holding your hand to the plow, and beginning to look back already, eh?" he said.

"No, sir, it isn't that; but I am not fit to teach any class; certainly not such a one as this. I don't myself know what those girls ought to learn; besides, I'm not a fit character for them to imitate."

"Not a fit character? What can you mean?"

So far Etta had spoken quite steadily, but now there came a tremor into her voice, a mist before her eyes, and a choking sensation in her throat, that would not let her speak.

He waited a few moments, then said gently: "Try to tell me about it, and
I will help you if I can."

Encouraged by something fatherly in the clergyman's voice, the girl at last found courage to commence her story; and having broken the ice, her words came fluently enough, as she tried to make him understand how utterly self-seeking and godless her life and character were; how the temple that should be God's was barred against him, and filled with idols and idolatry.

"This must be the Holy Spirit's teachings," said he, gravely; "for, so far as I know, you are no worse or more careless than most girls of your age."

But this thought was no comfort to her thoroughly aroused conscience, nor did the minister suppose it would be. He continued:

"Now that you see how bad things are, you are going to change them, are you not? You will open the barred doors that our blessed Lord wants to enter, and let him henceforth be your one object of worship and obedience, will you not?"

"How can I?" said the astonished girl. "I can't *make* myself like things."

"No; but it is the Holy Ghost who desires to come into his holy temple, and where he comes he brings healing, cleansing, and regenerating power. What we have to do is to let him do his work, not hindering him by our self-will and disobedience, not even trying to *feel* as we think we ought to feel."

"But I am not worthy to have him come to me. For seventeen years I have been sinning against him and grieving him. Even if I were made right all at once, I could not undo all that."

"But Jesus can," he said solemnly. "Have you forgotten the cross, and all that it means? Have you forgotten that he died to bear the penalty of sin, and that for his sake the worst sinners can be forgiven? We are none of us worthy to come to him, or, which is the same thing, to have him come to us; but he is the 'propitiation, sacrifice, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world'; it is not what you can do or be, but what he has done and is. Believe that he loves you, and died for you, and is your Saviour, and you cannot help loving and trusting him and letting his Spirit do with you as he will."

Was that all? So simple, so easy, and yet an hour ago it had seemed so impossible to be a Christian. She did not speak for some minutes; then she said:—

"Have I nothing at all to do?"

"A great deal by-and-by; only one thing to-day."

"And that is?"

"To be sure that you are in earnest, that you are thoroughly ashamed of, and sorry for, the past, really anxious to be delivered from sin and made holy, and resolutely determined obediently to follow where God leads the way."

"I believe I am in earnest," said she, simply. "Won't you pray for me, sir?"

"Yes, indeed, my child," said the minister, laying his hand on her head. "God bless you, and make you very happy in his love, and useful in his service."

"You will provide a teacher for my class?" said Etta, as somewhat later she rose to take her leave.

"Why, no; unless you are really tired of it. I think you had better go on as you have commenced."

"I am not fit to be a Sunday-school teacher."

"I am not fit to be a minister; but God, in his providence, has seen fit to make me one, and so I trust him to give me the strength and wisdom I need. If you will do the same, you will become a very successful and efficient Sunday-school teacher; and this is a good way in which to consecrate your talents and opportunities to his

service. Now, good-by; I must prepare for the evening service. Whenever you want help, advice, or sympathy, be sure you come to me."

Etta went home in a new world of thought and feeling. She seemed to herself scarcely to be the same girl; but in fact she was not thinking particularly about herself. God's love in desiring to save sinners, Christ's love in dying for them, the love of the Holy Spirit in being willing to come and abide with them, filled all her soul, and she was not *trying* to love this triune God, but loving him with all her might, because she could not help doing so. How strange it is that we go on from year to year, trying to be better, trying to feel right, trying to make ourselves holy, instead of just opening the door of the temple of our heart and believing that Jesus Christ loves us, and *because* he loves us will make us all that he wants us to be.

CHAPTER IX.

UNDER A CLOUD.

Meanwhile there were some changes at the mill. Katie Robertson had been promoted to the folding-room, which was on the lower floor, and where the work was not so heavy, though the payment was much better. She now received seventy-five cents for a regular day's work, and might often have made a dollar if her mother would have allowed her to work a half or quarter day extra. This promotion came soon after the occurrence of the fifty-dollar bill, which, no doubt, had something to do with the higher place in Mr. James's estimation, which the little girl held in consequence. He took occasion to inquire of Miss Peters concerning her work, and heard such a good account of her industry, capability, and faithfulness that he felt sure she might be trusted with pleasanter occupation and that which needed greater skill.

To enable our young readers who have never seen the process of paper-making to understand the change in our heroine's surroundings, we will tell them in a few words how paper is made.

As, of course, is universally known, rags, straw, old rope, poplar pith, etc., are the materials used. The best writing-paper is made of linen rags, which are for the most part imported from Germany. For ordinary writing and printing paper cotton rags are used, while straw and hemp, and even wool, go largely into the construction of manilla and wrapping paper. The linen rags and the woolen ones are generally sorted out in the places where they are gathered, at which time the others are all packed into bales, when, after passing through various hands, they are brought to the different paper-mills. Here the bales are hoisted to the top loft of the building, where they are broken and their contents turned over and over and subjected to a fanning process which removes a large part of the dust. They are then passed through slides down into the rag-room, where, as we have seen, they are sorted, cut in pieces, and the buttons taken off. They are cut again, in the next room to which they are carried, by a revolving cylinder whose surface is covered with short, sharp knives, acting on each other much like the blades of scissors. From here they

are passed into the interior of a long, horizontal, copper boiler containing a solution of soda and some other chemical substances, and boiled for several days, at the end of which time, the dirt being thoroughly loosened, the boiling mass is passed through a long slide into vats, through which a constant stream of water is flowing, and so thoroughly washed that it becomes as white as snow and looks like raw, white cotton. It is then taken into another room, packed into a "Jordan engine," and ground into an almost impalpable pulp. This pulp is passed into other vats thoroughly mixed with water, blueing, and some other substances calculated to give it a hard finish, and then conveyed by pipes to the drying-room, where it is distributed over the surface of fine wire netting stretched on cylinders and looking much like "skim milk." It is now passed from cylinder to cylinder, dropping the water with which it is mixed as it goes, and gradually taking, more and more, the consistency of paper. At one stage—if it is to be writing-paper, which was chiefly manufactured at Squantown Mills—a certain amount of glue is poured upon it by means of little tubes which are over the cylinders, and this gradually becomes pressed into the fibre, giving the paper the shining surface to which we are accustomed. This is called *sizing*. At another stage the wire netting is changed for a blanket which passes over the cylinders and keeps the weak, wet paper from friction, as well as from any chance of breaking. Steam is now introduced into the cylinders, and the drying process goes on so rapidly that, at the end of the long room, the pulp issues from between the two last cylinders in sheets of firm, dry, white paper, which are cut off in lengths by stationary knives, and caught and laid in place by two boys or girls who sit at a table just below. So complete and perfect is the machinery that, in addition to the two boys, only one man is needed in the room, and he only to watch lest either of the machines gets out of order, or lest the paper should accidentally break.

It is quite fascinating to watch the thin pulp as it gradually becomes strong paper, and Katie one day overheard a gentleman visitor, to whom Mr. James was explaining the process, say something that she never forgot:—

"It makes me think of God's way of dealing with human souls. He takes them, polluted and sinful, from the gutters and the slums of

life, cuts and fashions them till they are in a condition to be used; then washes out their stains by his precious blood, grinds, moulds, dissolves, and manipulates them, till they come out pure, innocent, white paper, on which he can write just what he pleases."

"Yes," said Mr. James. "I have often thought out that analogy, but you have not yet seen the whole process. No saint is completed till he has gone through the polishing and finishing of his life and character. You will see how we polish and finish our paper in the next room."

In the next room were great steel rollers, at each of which two women were employed, as this work was generally considered too hard and steady, as well as too particular, for the girls and boys. One of these women places a sheet of paper between the rollers at the top; the engine turns them, carrying the paper round and round between them, and the other woman takes it out at the bottom, beautifully polished by the pressure.

It is then carried in great piles to the ruling-machines, which stand at the other end of the room, and there other girls and women act as "feeders" and "tenders." The sheets are carried under upright, stationary pens, filled with blue or red ink, and ruled first on one side and then on the other, the machine never letting go of the sheets till the ruling is perfectly dry.

The paper is now finished, but it must be prepared for being taken away and sold; so great piles of it are placed on barrows, and it is carried by the "lift" down to the lowest room of all, called the "folding-room," and this is a very gay, busy scene.

Multitudes of girls are at work here, and everything is so clean that no checked aprons or mob-caps are needed. Some of them count out the paper, first into quires, and then into reams and half-reams. Others fold the sheets with an evenness and rapidity that only long practice can give; others, again, stamp each sheet in the corner with a die; and still others fold the reams—after they have been pressed together—into the pretty, colored wrappers prepared for them, sealing them with wax, and putting the packages, two together, into heavy brown papers, which are closed with the label peculiar to the special brand of paper.

There was plenty of work for everybody, and there was, moreover, a variety, and Katie felt very much elated at her promotion when she first came into the gay, pleasant folding-room.

But the poor girl was destined to meet with a very bitter disappointment. Perhaps the most severe trial of her life awaited her in that pleasant room. She had only been there a few days when she became aware that she was looked upon with suspicion. The superintendent watched her closely, and carefully verified the accounts she gave of her work. The girls with whom she tried to make acquaintance turned away, and either answered her in monosyllables or else declined speaking at all, and often when she came in suddenly before work had commenced two or three who were mysteriously whispering together would suddenly stop and look curiously and strangely at her. Once or twice she overheard some disconnected words, of which the following are specimens: "What was it really?"—"You don't say so!"—"Dishonesty!"—"I never should have thought it!"—"Are you sure?"—"Bertie Sanderson!"—"She saw it herself," etc. etc. Katie, having no key to these disjointed sentences, could make nothing of them, but she felt that she was what school boys call "sent to Coventry," and had not the least idea why.

The fact was that Bertie, whose jealous dislike was greatly increased by Katie's promotion, while she herself remained in the rag-room, had uttered her innuendoes to all who would listen to her, till it was pretty generally understood throughout the mill that Katie Robertson was a thief, who appeared in unbecoming finery bought with ill-gotten gains. The rumor never took sufficient definiteness of shape to reach the girl so that she could confute it and explain its origin. Of course, she was not likely to tell any one in the mill about the finding of the fifty-dollar bill and what had passed between Mr. James Mountjoy and herself, since it was largely to her own credit, nor had he ever thought of mentioning it, for a somewhat similar reason. So the report traveled from one mouth to another, losing nothing in its passage, and poor Katie was obliged to endure the general avoidance and reprobation as best she might. It was a hard trial and one in which she had no one to sympathize with her, for Mrs. Robertson's gloomy disposition inclined her children to keep from her anything that might add to her unhappiness, and somehow

she did not feel like making confidants of the boys. But hard as the trial seemed in the passing, it was, in the end, good for our heroine, for it drove her to the only Friend who knew all about it, who knew that she was innocent of the charge, whatever it might be, and pitied and loved her, whoever else might cast her out. The things which drive us close to Him, no matter how hard they seem, are really blessings in disguise. Katie had now but one friend in the mill, a slight, pale girl, who stood by the folding-table next to herself. She had only just come to the mill, was intimate with no one, and, so far, had not heard the story, whatever it was, about Katie Robertson. Her name was Tessa. Her father, who had been a traveling organ-grinder, was taken sick and died very suddenly at Squantown. His little dark-eyed girl, who accompanied him, was left perfectly destitute and in a most desolate condition. She was at first taken care of in the poor-house, but as she grew older, and it was thought best that she should do something for her own support, Mr. Mountjoy had been appealed to, and had given her a place in the mill. Not in the rag-room, however, for she had such a delicate constitution that it was supposed she never could stand the dust. Her work consisted in pasting the fancy paper over the edges of little "pads," intended for doctors' use in writing their prescriptions, and when she was tired she was allowed to have a seat. She could not make much, but what she did receive sufficed to pay for her room in the factory boarding-house, and Tessa was as happy as she could be without her father.

The Italian girl had conceived a strong admiration for our bright little Katie, and by degrees the two girls became great friends. Tessa's love was the silver lining to the cloud under whose shadow her companion lived.

But the heaviest part of the cloud was that the story reached Miss Etta. She had noticed the general avoidance of Katie by the other girls in her class, and was very much at a loss to account for it, for to her this scholar had always seemed the best and brightest of them all, and she could see no change in her reverent, attentive behavior, her carefully prepared lessons, and her evident understanding and enjoyment of the spiritual truths which they contained. This latter point she could appreciate better than before, and she often shrank in humility from attempting to teach Katie anything, feeling herself

better fitted to be the pupil. But the girls evidently did not feel so. What could be the matter?

One day, when all had left the Sunday-school, except Bertie, she stopped her and asked her directly why neither she nor the other girls were willing to sit next to Katie Robertson, and why they all looked at her so significantly when she came in or went out.

Bertie flushed, whether with joy or shame it would have been hard to say, and at first would not answer; but on her teacher's insisting, said that she didn't want to tell tales, etc.

The young lady saw that nevertheless her scholar was running over with her secret and longing for an opportunity to divulge it, and, had she been a little older and more experienced, she would not have given her the opportunity. But Etta was very curious, and, moreover, thought she had a right to know all that concerned her Sunday scholars, so she waited until her patience was rewarded by the whole story—that is, the version of it that Bertie's vindictive fancy chose to give.

She learned that Katie had been seen by two of the girls in the mill to *steal* a large sum of money, which she had appropriated to the use of herself and family; that by degrees one after another had heard of it, and that of course honest girls who had their own way to make did not like to associate with a thief.

On being asked who the girls were that had seen the action, and why they had not at once given information concerning it, Bertie declined to give any answer to the first part of her question, and professed entire ignorance concerning the latter; only she said: "All the girls knew, and of course couldn't associate with a sly thief, especially when she gave herself the airs of a saint."

Etta was very much troubled. She could not believe such a story of her best pupil, and yet how could she contradict it? Without names and particulars she did not know how to set about investigating the truth; nor did she like to ask any one's advice, and thus cast suspicion upon the child.

CHAPTER X.

NOVEL-READING.

"What makes you so tired to-day, Tessa?" said Katie, one morning when the "rules" allowed the girls to speak.

"I don't know; I always do feel so in the mornings. It's awfully hard to get up. Don't you find it so?"

"I did at first, but I am getting used to it now. By the time I am dressed I am wide-awake and fit for anything. I don't see why you should feel so; I am afraid you're sick."

"Oh, no; only stupid and sleepy; I'll wake up by-and-by," and Tessa drew from her pocket a thin, square volume which was tightly rolled up. The noon-whistles sounded just then, and Katie saw her companion curl herself up on a box in the corner and at once lose herself in her book.

She still sat there when her friend returned, rosy and refreshed after her warm dinner and two brisk walks, and, as there were still a few moments before work must be resumed, the latter walked across the room and playfully took the book from the other's hand.

"Don't! oh, please, don't!" said Tessa. "Time's most up, and I *must* know what became of Sir Reginald!"

"You *must* eat your lunch. Look, here it lies untasted beside you. Tessa, you will certainly be sick if you go on in this way."

But Tessa did not listen; she had again firmly grasped the book, and was greedily devouring its contents quite dead to outside things, till, the bell ringing, Katie jogged her shoulder, and she walked slowly across to the table where both girls worked, her eyes still upon her book. There she set it up, still open, against a pile of packages of paper, and all the afternoon kept casting furtive glances at it, often letting her work drop and her hands hang idle, while she followed the fortunes of the fascinating Sir Reginald.

Katie was in an agony; she loved Tessa, and did not want her to get into trouble, as she would certainly do if her proceedings should be observed by the overseer. Besides, was it honest thus to use time paid for by an employer?

But she had no chance to speak to her companion, for as usual she finished her work and went home, and whether her companion received a reprimand from the overseer for not having completed her daily task she did not know. Probably she did not, for it was an understood thing that Tessa was not so strong as the other girls, and therefore so much must not be expected of her.

The next day it was the same thing. Tessa looked tired out before the day's work began, and well she might, for she had sat up nearly all night to dispose of Sir Reginald, and now "The Fair Barmaid" had taken his place. Again the girl went without the uninviting lunch she had brought from her boarding-house, and again, as before, the fascinating novel divided her attention with her work. This afternoon she was detected by the overseer, who spoke a few words of reprimand and ordered her to put the book away, which she did unwillingly and with heightened color. It came out again, however, the moment the closing-bell rang; and, to make up for lost time, was assiduously read during the homeward walk, and took the place of both supper and sleep till almost daylight the next morning.

Poor Tessa! she had inherited from her ancestry that love of romance and adventure which, in their own sunny land, makes the Italians rival the Orientals in their love of hearing and telling stories. The more thrilling these stories are, the fuller of passion and crime, the better they seem to suit the tastes of these fervid and excitable natures. And she was alone; there was no one to counsel her, no one to love her, no one even to talk to in the long evenings she must of necessity spend in her bare room at the factory boarding-house, hot and stifling in summer, cold and bare in winter. She had been taught to read at the poor-house school and a stray dime novel happening to fall in her way, her imagination, waiting for something on which to feed itself, seized upon the unhealthful food, and gratified taste quickly ripened into insatiable appetite. The girl read everything she could lay hold of, and there is always plenty of such literature close at hand and ready to be devoured. Novels at five cents apiece are sold by the million at country stores, railway-depots, and news-stations. Ephemeral in their nature, every one who owns them is ready to lend, give, or throw them away, and when books fail there are always quantities of "story-papers," full of the wildest, most improbable, and often vicious tales.

Tessa bought when she had any spare pennies, borrowed and begged when she had not; read by daylight, and twilight, and lamplight, sitting up as long as the miserable boarding-house lamps would hold out, and became so immersed in her world of romance as to become almost oblivious to outward things.

To do the little girl justice, she was too innocent to understand half the wickedness which in this way was brought before her notice, but none the less was she being gradually demoralized by this evil habit. Her appetite failed, she scarcely took any exercise, she became nervous and excitable to a degree, her work was neglected, and, worse still, she was becoming familiarized with ideas, suggestions, and thoughts that should never come within the comprehension of pure-minded girls. As to her work, she was fast losing all interest in, indeed all capacity for, that, and it was whispered among her superiors that but for her utterly friendless condition it would be expedient to supply her place in the mill with some more profitable work-woman.

"Miss Eunice," said Katie, at the next Wednesday afternoon meeting, "is it wicked to read novels?"

"What a wholesale question," said Miss Eunice. "It is not *wicked* exactly to do a great many things which it would be better on the whole to let alone—tipping one's chair up on two legs, for instance."

Katie blushed, righted her chair, and said: "I mean wrong; is it wrong to read novels?"

"Not all novels, certainly; that is, not all *fiction*. The best writers of our day throw their thoughts into that form, and our knowledge of history, philosophy, science, and character comes largely from this source. Our Saviour sanctified fiction by giving his highest and deepest lessons to his disciples in parables. If you mean that kind of novels, read in moderation, I should decidedly say no."

"She means dime novels," said one of the girls.

"Oh, 'Headless Horsemen' and 'Midnight Mysteries,' fascinating maidens carried off by desperate ruffians. I am thankful to say that I have no personal acquaintance with that sort of thing; but, girls, let me ask you a few questions. May I?"

"First, let all who read, or ever have read, what are called 'sensation stories' raise their hands."

A great many hands went up—more than the questioner liked to see.

"How many find such books help them in their work, make the factory seem pleasanter, and themselves more contented?"

Not a hand was raised, and the girl who had spoken before said:—

"I never can work half as well in the morning when I have been reading stories at night. I hate the sight of the factory, and wish I was a princess, or a splendidly dressed young lady with oceans of gold and jewels, like those in the books."

"Another question: Do books of this kind help you to pray, make the
Bible more interesting, and incline you to loving service for the
Saviour who has died that you might be saved?"

No one answered. The girls looked both surprised and shocked, and Miss
Eunice continued:—

"On the contrary, I dare say many of you remember times when the thrilling interest of an exciting story has made you utterly forget your prayers, or at any rate has made church and Sunday-school and the homely duties of a Christian life seem tame and flat by comparison. Is it not so?"

Many bowed assent.

"Now for my last question: Would you be willing that your fathers and brothers or the young men of your acquaintance should read all of these books with you, every passage, and could you, without blushing, read them aloud to your pastor or to me?"

No answer.

"There is another aspect of the question," continued the teacher. "Your employers pay you a stipulated sum in return for a certain amount of work to be done in a certain amount of time. They have a right to expect you to give your best skill, your closest attention. Do you think it is quite *honest* either to use a part of that time in reading foolish, useless, or hurtful books, or to come to your work so exhausted and preoccupied by them as to be unfitted for performing your part of the contract?"

"I do not desire to coerce you, or even to bind your consciences by any promise, but I leave you to consider all I have said, and I think if

you do so honestly and prayerfully you will come to the conclusion that for you who hope you have found your Saviour,—nay, I will say for all, inasmuch as you all ought to be Christians,—the reading of this kind of books and stories is among those works of the flesh and the devil which you are called to renounce."

Katie had got the answer she had asked for, and besides she was well furnished with arguments to bring to bear upon Tessa the first opportunity she should have of talking with her, and that, she determined, should be very soon.

When the girls and their escorts had gone home that evening, the two sisters lingered to talk a little over the question that had so interested their scholars. It was a new thing for them to have any common interest, and Eunice hailed it as a good omen that her sister should consult with her about anything. Etta had not yet confided to her elder sister her new hopes, purposes, and feelings. She was an independent girl, who had always thought and acted for herself, and there had never been anything like sisterly familiarity between the eldest and youngest of the Mountjoys. The distance between them was too great, and perhaps the elder, in filling the position of a mother to her little sister, had at first assumed a little too much of the authority of one. She had grown wiser now, and did not attempt to force the young girl's confidence; but she could not but be conscious of a change. There was an increased gentleness of manner and sweetness of tone, a thoughtful consideration of others, and deference to her own wishes which she had never seen before. Her continuing to attend the Wednesday meetings, and her serious attention when there, were good signs; so was Etta's voluntary attendance at the Sunday evening service, a thing that had never happened before, and Eunice began to hope that the solemn, earnest realities of life would yet become precious to her light-hearted, wayward sister.

This evening they talked over the novel grievance, and the temptations to which the mill-girls were exposed, and Etta proposed a plan for their benefit, which, when matured and digested, besides being supported by Mr. Mountjoy's purse and his son's executive ability, eventuated in the conversion of an unused loft in the mill into a library and reading-room for the girls and such of their

brothers and friends as knew how to appreciate its benefits by behaving like gentlemen.

The books were chosen with great care, and were the best of their kind to be had—popular science, history, and biography, with a large, a very large, proportion of such fiction as had a tendency to elevate and instruct, while it interested, its readers. The books were not to be taken from the building, except upon rare occasions and under peculiar circumstances; but the reading-room, which was nicely carpeted, well warmed, and furnished with long tables and comfortable chairs, was open during the noon intermission and for two hours every evening, and good behavior was the only condition demanded for enjoying both its social and literary privileges. The library soon became a very popular institution, and the sale and consumption of sensational literature decreased proportionally.

Before separating for the night, Etta said: "Did you notice the girl who asked the question about novels?"

"Katie Robertson? Yes; I have had my eye on her for a long time. She seems the most promising subject of your class."

"So I have always thought; but I have had a terrible disappointment in her. No one would suppose it, but I have recently heard that she is a thief, and that to a large amount. The child, innocent as she looks, has actually stolen fifty dollars from our mill."

"That is absolutely impossible! I will not believe it. Who told you so,
Etta?"

"One of the class. Bertie Sanderson. She was not at all willing to tell tales on her companion, but I questioned her and found it is as I say. She assures me that all the girls know about it, and that two of them—she did not give their names—saw the theft."

"Why did they not inform about it at once?"

"So I asked her; but she did not seem to know, and also declined giving the names of the two girls. That was a little more honorable than I gave Bertie credit for being."

"A little more deceitful, possibly," said Eunice, who had no high opinion of Bertie Sanderson; "yet, if she were herself one of these girls, she would, I suppose, have been glad to say so. Where do you suppose this child found fifty dollars to steal? Money is not kept

loose around the mill, and the girls do not have access to the office. There is something we don't know about this, Etta. The subject ought to be investigated. Have you spoken to James?"

"No, I don't want to prejudice him against Katie, if she should be innocent; but I fear that is hardly possible, after what Bertie said."

"I should be more inclined to suspect Bertie herself. Where do you suppose she got that flashy silk dress she wears?"

"Isn't it horrid! I wonder those girls don't see how vulgar their cheap finery is."

"Perhaps they try to copy their teacher," ventured the elder sister, whose exquisitely neat style of dress was always remarkable for its plainness and simplicity when she came in contact with her Sunday scholars. But Etta was not yet sufficiently humbled to take reproof from that source, and she abruptly left the room. All the same, however, she thought and prayed a great deal upon the subject, and the next Sunday surprised her class by appearing before them without an unnecessary ribbon or ornament.

CHAPTER XI.

TESSA.

Katie Robertson remained in the mill that Saturday afternoon, although her work had long been completed, till the bell rang for five o'clock, that being the hour for the Saturday dismissal. Then she said to Tessa:—

"Come and take a walk with me. There's a full hour before tea, and I don't believe you've ever seen the Fawn's Leap. Have you?"

"No," said her companion, "I have never been anywhere in Squantown. They would not let us go, in the poor-house, and since I've been in the mill I've been too tired after work was over."

"Are you very tired now?"

"Not so very; I did not sleep much last night."

"Was it a *very* interesting story?" said the other, archly.

"Oh, yes," said Tessa, becoming at once very much excited; "she, Amanda, I mean, married the most elegant count, and he took her to his castle, and she had pearls and diamonds and silks and satins, and never had to do a thing all the rest of her life; and only think, Katie, she was a mill-girl in the beginning, just like us." The sentence finished with a sigh.

"Would you like a count to come and carry you off to a castle by-and-by, and give you all those things?"

"Oh, indeed, yes; when the light goes out, and I can't read any more I lie awake thinking about it, and wondering if such a count will ever come along. He might, you know, any day."

"Does that make the mill seem any pleasanter in the morning?"

"No! no! I hate the mill. It looks so rough and bare, and the girls all seem so common. I feel like crying to have to spend so many hours there."

"And then you can't do your work well. I know just how that feels. Miss Eunice says it isn't *honest* to do anything that will unfit us for the work we are paid for doing."

This was a new definition of dishonesty to Tessa, but she only said:—

"Who's Miss Eunice?"

"Oh, she's the teacher of the Bible-class; the nicest, most splendid lady in the Sunday-school, except, of course, Miss Etta. She's our teacher, you know, but she's so young she seems just like one of ourselves."

"Do you go to Sunday-school?" said Tessa opening her eyes. "I thought only little children went. Father said it was so in Italy."

"But everybody goes here. There's great big girls, quite young women, in Miss Eunice's class. Tessa," said Katie, struck with a sudden idea, "what do you do with yourself on Sundays?"

"I read," said the person addressed; "read all day long. I lie on the bed in my room, and forget how hot it is and how lonely, and then when it gets dark I remember beautiful Italy and cry."

"What a lonely life," said Katie, sympathetically. "Why don't you go to church?"

"We never went to church, my father and I. He said the church had ruined Italy, and he was not a Catholic any more."

"But we're not Catholics. Oh, I wish you would come to our church and our Sunday-school! It's just as nice!—there's Miss Etta, and Bertie and Gretchen and Cora, and two or three more, and on Wednesday Miss Eunice invites our class and hers to tea, and reads to us, and we have a society and work for missions and—oh, it's so nice!" said enthusiastic Katie.

"Do you go to Sunday-school just to have nice times?" and Tessa opened her black eyes very widely.

"No," said her friend, more soberly; "I think I go there to learn more about Jesus, and how to love him more and serve him better. Some of us hope to join the church soon."

Tessa asked some questions that led to a long talk which lasted till they had reached the Fawn's Leap, which was a beautiful little waterfall shooting down between two high rocks, from one of which to the other a fawn was reputed to have sprung. It was a very lovely spot, and the two girls threw themselves upon the grass to rest, while the Italian drew long inspirations of delight.

"It makes me think of home," she said; "the old home in Italy. We lived, my father and I, close to a waterfall just like this, among the mountains. After my mother died my father did not want to stay

there, so he went to Naples and bought an organ, and we came to America in a big ship, and wandered about, and then"—her voice broke down then and she said: "Oh, Katie, I am so lonely! if I only had a home like yours, with people in it to talk to and to be kind to me, I should not want to read so many stories. I don't believe they *are* good for me." This was in reference to all Miss Eunice's talk about the evils of novel-reading as repeated by Katie.

A sudden thought struck the latter.

"Tessa," she said, "it must be awfully lonely at your boarding-house in the evenings and on Sundays. I wish you could come and live with me. I have no companions but the boys, and to have you would be just splendid."

"Do you think I could? Do you think your mother would let me? Oh, Katie, you can't really mean it!"

Katie had not taken her mother into consideration. Of course, she could not be sure of her approbation of such a plan, but she promised to ask, and went on planning how nice it would be—how the two girls could share Katie's room and bed; how they could go to the mill together. "And then," said she, "you could go to Sunday-school with me, Tessa."

But here Tessa drew back. She had no clothes, she said, fit to go to church in—only her working-dress and the straw hat which she wore every day to the mill.

"Go in that. Miss Eunice says God doesn't care what we wear when we go to church."

"But the girls do, and I care more about them."

This rather shocked Katie, but she did not see her way out of the difficulty, and mentally resolved to "ask mother": that way out of all difficulties which is first to suggest itself to a young girl's mind.

"There is the sun setting," said Tessa.—"It must be ever so late. I sha'n't get any supper; they never keep anything for us at our boarding-house."

"Oh, yes, you will! you are coming home with me; mother will have something ready for both of us. I told her where we were going, and she promised she would keep our supper for us, no matter how late it was. Besides, it will be a good chance to ask her about our plan."

So Tessa consented, nothing loth, and when she saw the fair, white cloth, with the clear glasses and bright, shining china, the delicate slices of white bread, the wild strawberries, and fresh brown gingerbread, and contrasted it with the bare table, the stoneware badly chipped, and the great piles of coarse provisions, into which the boarders dipped their own knives, she felt as though she had suddenly got into paradise.

Katie had told the home party about her Italian companion, and her apparent friendlessness, and all had taken such an interest in her that when the boys heard their sister ask and receive permission to bring her home to tea, and their mother's promise to make some soft gingerbread, they resolved to contribute their share toward the festival, and the strawberries, to gathering which they had devoted their afternoon holiday, were the result.

It was a very happy tea-party. Katie was in high spirits, her mother gentle and hospitable, the boys courteous and gentlemanly. Tessa had never been in such society before, and yet there was in her a native grace and refinement—due, perhaps, to the artistic atmosphere in which she was born—that prevented her from doing anything rude or awkward, or seeming at all out of place.

After tea the boys brought out the games, and the visitor showed herself quick to learn and eager to enjoy. The heavy, half-sorrowful look went out of her face, which became full of fun as her eyes sparkled and danced, and she pushed back her long black hair.

When the clock struck nine Mrs. Robertson said:—

"It is time for young folks who have to get up early to go to bed. The boys will see you home, dear; but perhaps you would like to stay and have prayers with us first."

"Oh, yes, I am sure she would," said Katie, seeing that her friend seemed not to know how to answer this proposition. So Eric handed his mother the books, and she first read a chapter in the Bible, and then kneeling down, with her little flock around her, read an evening prayer, commending them all to the love and protection of their heavenly Father. It all seemed very sweet to the visitor, who had never been present at such a service before. She could not probably have told how she felt, but a longing desire came over her to stay

where everything seemed so near the gate of heaven, and she said impulsively:—

"Oh, Mrs. Robertson, if you would only keep me always!"

Then Katie said:—

"Mother, why can't Tessa live with us? There's plenty of room for her with me; and she has nobody belonging to her—nothing but a horrid room in the factory boarding-house, where nobody cares for her, and she has to read novels all the evening and all Sunday, and that makes her sick. It would be so nice to have her go to the mill with me every day, and to Sunday-school on Sunday—only she hasn't any clothes that are fit, and"—

"My dear, do stop to take your breath," said the astonished mother, "and let me get some idea of what you are talking about. Do I understand that you want Tessa to come and live here? I should much like to have her do so, my child, but you know—don't think me unkind, Tessa—that we are poor people, and find it hard to fill the four mouths that must be filled."

"Oh, I didn't mean that," said the girl, timidly, and turning crimson. "Of course, I wouldn't let you and Katie support me; but I could pay you my board, just as I do at the boarding-house. I suppose it would be more, but perhaps I could work harder and earn something extra, as some of the other girls do."

"How much do you pay now?"

"Two dollars and a half a week."

"And you have only three dollars! Katie makes five."

"Yes, I know; she works fast. Perhaps I could if there was any use—anything to do it for. I didn't need any money. They gave me my clothes at the workhouse, and I bought books with the other half-dollar."

Both girls looked very beseechingly at Katie's mother, and Eric, who had taken a great fancy to the dark-haired girl, added his entreaties; but she said:—

"I can not answer you to-night; I must think about it and pray over it. I will let you know when I have made up my mind. Now you must go home, dear; Eric will go with you. Good-night, and God bless you."

Tessa felt the kiss that accompanied these words down to the bottom of her heart. No one had ever kissed her before, so far as she could remember, except her father, and she longed most ardently to be taken into this home.

Katie followed her to the door and whispered: "Tessa, I shall ask God to make mother decide the way we want her to. You ask him, too. You know it says in the Bible: 'If any two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them.'" But Tessa did not yet understand about "asking God." She only stared and bid her friend good-night.

The next morning as she sat rather disconsolately on the doorstep of the boarding-house, not knowing exactly what to do with herself, for in consequence of last night's visiting she had neglected to provide herself with a new book, Katie came by and greeted her brightly. She looked so sweet and fresh in her simple Sunday dress that it was not to be wondered at that Tessa, in her soiled mill-clothes, again refused to accompany her friend to Sunday-school.

"You shall have my library book, any way. I don't care to get another to-day, and mother says you are to come round this afternoon to get her answer."

The book was a pleasant story, and though it lacked the species of morbid excitement to which the girl had accustomed herself, it filled up the time agreeably, and gave her a glimpse of a higher, purer plane of life than any with which she was as yet familiar. Some precious truths concerning the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the happiness of serving him, were woven into it, and served as the indestructible seeds which were yet to ripen in the girl's spiritual life. At about four o'clock she put on her hat, and full of mingled anxiety and hope, made her way to the corner house which seemed to her so much like heaven.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Robertson had thought the matter over in every direction. She did not at first like the idea of increasing the home party, or of introducing into it any element that might prove discordant. She dreaded to have Katie or the boys come under any influence that might counteract the earnest, religious training she was endeavoring to give her children. But there seemed to be nothing vicious, or even common, about Tessa; she was sweet and

well-mannered, and so friendless and forlorn that it would be a positive charity to take her in. Then, too, the girl had evidently had no religious teaching and was profoundly ignorant about spiritual things. Perhaps this was missionary work sent to her very hands. She might at least try it for a while. The board to be paid would make it possible to do so, and if the plan were not a success, or proved hurtful to her own children, to whom she owed her first duty, she could but send the girl back to her present lodgings.

So, when Tessa came she was told, to her great joy, that her request was granted, and she might commence her new life on Monday. A very serious motherly talk followed, and among other things the new boarder was obliged to promise never to introduce sensational literature into the house.

Mrs. Robertson agreed to take Tessa for two dollars a week, on condition that she would assist Katie with the housework before and after mill-hours. The half-dollar a week thus saved would soon procure a simple Sunday outfit, and enable her to accompany her friend to Sunday-school and church.

Katie, with some of the remains of her precious fifty dollars, insisted on advancing this; and on the first Sunday morning the young Italian, looking very pretty but rather shy, took her place in Miss Etta's class, and was at once enrolled among its members.

Mrs. Robertson never had cause to regret her kind-hearted decision. Tessa was devotedly attached to Katie, and followed, rather than led, her friend. She was shy with the boys at first, but soon came to show them the same sisterly feeling that their sister did. Her wit, quickness, and power of story-telling soon made her a valuable addition to the family circle, while the genial home influences and good fare so told upon herself that her extreme delicacy soon disappeared, and she became capable of as much work or endurance as Katie herself.

CHAPTER XII.

GRETCHEN.

German Gretchen was absent from the mill one morning. No one noticed it except Miss Peters, who marked her down for one less day's wages. The young girl, who had drifted into the manufacturing town, as so many do, in search of work, had never been a favorite or attracted particular attention. She was a fair work-woman, obeyed rules, and went her way to the boarding-house when night came; but she made no friends either there or at the mill, and it would scarcely have been noticed had she disappeared altogether. Somehow she had floated into Sunday-school, and been placed in the class which afterward became Etta Mountjoy's, but here her apparent stolidity made her perhaps the least interesting of all the girls. Perhaps this was in part owing to the fact that one is not likely to be very talkative in a strange language.

But Gretchen had a heart, although no one in Squantown had yet found, or cared to find, it. It was safe at home in the fatherland, where the house-mother and father had as much as they could do to put enough black bread to support life into the mouths of the five little children, too young to do as she had done, when she accompanied a neighbor's family, who were emigrating to seek their fortune in the New World. These neighbors had gone to the far West, and not caring to be burdened with a possibly unproductive member of their party, had left the little girl in the hands of a German employment agency, through which she had found her way to Squantown Mills.

Gretchen had many homesick hours when she would have given a great deal more than she possessed to be at home again sharing the poverty and hardships of the Old World, but she expressed her feelings to no one. Indeed, she knew no one to whom she could have expressed them. She did her day's work faithfully, receiving her regular payment of fifty cents, and occasionally a little more, which little she resolutely put away at the bottom of her box, to be sent home to her mother and the little ones when there should be a good opportunity.

But now Gretchen was absent from her work one, two, three, four days. It was Miss Peters's duty to report all absentees on Saturday night, and she did so after the hands had been paid off and gone home. The book-keeper noted the absence in his pages, asked if work was so pressing as to make the appointment of a substitute necessary or advisable, and being answered in the negative quite forgot to inform his employer of the girl's absence.

But when Sunday came, and Gretchen was absent from the place in the class which she had so regularly occupied, it was a different thing. Etta, among her other activities, had from the first been a good visitor of absentees. Indeed, when her scholars lived with their families, as in the case of Katie and one or two of the other girls, she had made more visits and laid down the law more than was quite agreeable in all cases. Now, with her newly awakened sense of responsibility toward the immortal souls placed under her charge, she had begun to watch over them as one who must give account of their souls. She had several times thought of looking up Gretchen, in order to become acquainted with her surroundings, etc., but had not yet put her design into execution, and now the girl's absence from the class gave her teacher the very opportunity she desired.

As soon as tea was over, in the long June twilight, Etta put on her hat, and walked down the hill upon which the grand house stood to the valley, in which was the long row of boarding-houses occupied by such of the mill-hands as had no homes in the place. It was stiflingly hot down here, though it had been cool and fresh on the high ground above, and the young lady, who had not often visited the purlieus of the mill, felt as though she could scarcely breathe, and did not wonder that men sat at the open windows in their shirtsleeves, and that tired-looking women seemed gasping for air. The bare wooden buildings, with their long rows of windows and doors all of the same pattern; the smooth, beaten yards, all just alike; the swarms of children making it seem anything but Sunday-like with their noise; the teeming population, which made the tenements resemble ant-hills, and seemed to forbid any idea of privacy, looked very dreadful to her.

On the other side of the street was a long row of brick cottages, each inhabited by two or more families, the distinctive sign of each being the family pig, kept, for greater convenience, in the front yard,

from which odors, not the most choice in their nature, were constantly wafted across the way. In the doorways of most of these lounged Irishmen smoking and swearing, in some cases in a state of intoxication; for, although the rules of the mill concerning drinking were very strict, and no habitual drinker was ever knowingly engaged in it, it was impossible to prevent the men from depositing a part of the earnings received every Saturday night in the hands of one or two liquor-dealers whom the law licensed to sell death and ruin to their fellow-men.

How dreadful, thought the young lady, to be compelled to spend one's life in such wretched surroundings. Is it any wonder that the women become hopeless slatterns, and that the children grow up in vice and sin? How thankful I ought to be to the heavenly Father who has surrounded me with such different influences! how I wish I might do something to raise and elevate these, and give them a few of the blessings of which I have so many!

Etta Mountjoy had grown since that early June Sunday when she had visited her pastor in such sorrow and perplexity. She had read and seen and thought more and more of the wonderful love of our heavenly Father in surrounding her with so many blessings and in sending his only Son to be her Saviour and friend. She looked back upon the life of self-pleasing she had so long led with sorrow amounting to disgust. How could she have been so ungrateful? How could she have failed to love One so altogether lovely? She was learning now to find pleasure in prayer, and the Bible, which had been to her such a dull book, began to be more interesting than any story which she had formerly devoured. And she was trying, faintly and with many relapses, it is true, to take up her neglected duties, especially those which had been most distasteful to her, and perform them steadily "as unto the Lord." Out of all this was springing up in her a desire to do something for Christ—something which would be, if not a return for his favors, at least a token of her gratitude to him. To-night just such an opportunity as she had desired came to her hand.

If Etta had only known it, the dwellings of the operatives at Squantown were palatial compared to those into which the working-classes are huddled in cities; for here the many windows opened upon pure fresh air and green fields, the little yards were

scrupulously clean, and vines clambered up the sides of the doors and windows, even to the roofs. The fare, plain as it was, was not tainted by exposure in a city market, or by being hawked about the city streets, and the price of living was no higher than the wages received in the mill enabled the people to pay.

The young teacher had the number of the house at which her scholar boarded written down in her class-book, and at that number she at once knocked. No one came for some time, but at last repeated raps brought the woman who kept the house, and who might perhaps be excused for her want of greater promptitude on the ground of having so many dishes to wash after the boarders' tea.

In answer to Miss Etta's inquiries the woman answered civilly enough, for it would not do to offend one of "the family," that Gretchen's room was the back garret; that she believed the girl had been sick for a day or two, but she had not had time to look after her, though she had sent her little boy up with her meals. The child couldn't have eaten much, for the tray came down almost as it went up. She had been trying to find time to go upstairs all day, and was just meaning to do so now that her dishes were done. She would go up now, and let the young lady know how her scholar was.

"Let me go with you," said Etta; but the request was only a form, as the girl usually did just as she pleased without waiting for anybody's permission, and, indeed, the woman of the house knew no reason why, on this occasion, she should not follow her own inclination.

Three flights of stairs were climbed, a long narrow hall, studded with doors on each side, traversed, and Mrs. Doyle opened one in the southwest corner of the house, where, the sun having beaten on the sloping roof all the afternoon, the temperature was something fearful. The room was small, for Mr. Mountjoy had built the boarding-houses, and desired to try the experiment of each inmate having a separate room instead of a great many men or women being herded together in open dormitories. It contained simply a cot, a wooden chair, and a table upon which stood conveniences for washing and the untasted supper. On the cot lay the German girl, blazing with fever and tossing about in the greatest discomfort. At first she did not know her visitors, and seemed a little frightened at seeing the room so full. But presently, recognizing her

Sunday-school teacher, she grasped her hand and drew her down to the side of the bed, pointing to her German Bible, in which she had been trying to study her Sunday-school lesson.

Etta was touched, and began to think there might be some interest in even the plain, undemonstrative Gretchen. She bent down to ask her some questions about her sickness, during which Mrs. Doyle hurried to throw the one window wide open, and to make the disordered room fit to be seen.

"The child is very ill, I am afraid," said Etta, coming across to the window and speaking to the woman in very low tones; "don't you think so?"

"Yes, I am afraid she is," said the person addressed, uneasily, for severe illness in a large, crowded boarding-house is no light matter. She and her children were dependent upon their boarders, and a sudden panic might empty the house.

"Can't you send for a doctor, Mrs. Doyle? Papa will gladly pay him, I know."

"Yes; Johnny could run, I suppose, but he'd be sure to tell somebody, and I wouldn't like it to get about till we know what it is, any way."

"Please go yourself, then. It's after tea, and there isn't much to do."

"But suppose the girl gets worse, and begins to scream and frightens the boarders."

"Oh, I '11 stay with her till you come back. I'd rather; I shall be so anxious to hear what the doctor says. Please go, Mrs. Doyle, and hurry."

Etta Mountjoy had a way with her that could not be resisted by most people, and even Mrs. Doyle, not overgifted with the milk of human kindness, could not refuse her. So she went downstairs, and only stopping to put on her bonnet and tell her eldest daughter to go on with the preparations for breakfast,—which always had to be made over night,—as she was going out for a little while, walked swiftly down the street.

Etta sat on the hard chair by the patient's bed, and for some time watched the tossing limbs, heavy breathing, and flushed, excited face. She was not used to sickness. Indeed, she had never seen it since her mother died, so long ago that she could not remember the

pain and the suffering, but only the terrible results, which were pale, cold death, the coffin, the funeral, and the grave.

Did all severe sickness end in death, she wondered? Was this strong, healthy girl about to die? And if so, was she ready? She had never thought of the possibility of death in connection with any of her scholars. Had she taught them the things which alone could be of value to them when they came to stand face to face with a holy God? What advantage then would be familiarity with dates, with geography, and with catechisms? How would they then blame her for not having pointed them to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world? The responsibility of undertaking to deal with human souls, upon which she had so thoughtlessly rushed, now seemed to her something terrible. True, she had not then known or understood anything about it; but, nevertheless, it now seemed to her a great sin, and an earnest prayer for forgiveness rose up from her heart, accompanied by another for the salvation of the sick girl before her.

Meanwhile the moments rolled slowly by: the sick girl tossed and moaned; the church-bells rang for evening service, first merrily, as glad to call the people to the house of God; then slowly, as loth to stop while any more stragglers might be induced to come; then with one or two long sobs for those who, in spite of all persuasion and all "long-suffering patience," wilfully stay outside, stopped, and the silence was only broken by the shouts of the noisy children below. Even these ceased at last, and as the sunset glow faded—flame red changing to pale yellow, and that again to cool, sombre gray—the time of waiting seemed to the unskilled watcher well-nigh interminable.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHIP-FEVER.

Presently Gretchen spoke. Her voice was thick, her accent even more foreign than usual, and at first the listener could not understand the words. But she put her ear close down to the bed and made out:—

"Miss Etta, am I going to die?"

"I don't know," said Etta, bewildered; "I hope not."

"I'm not afraid," said the German, "but—but it looks all so strange and dark. You didn't use to tell us about Jesus, and I couldn't rightly understand the minister; but don't it say *here*," putting her hand upon the Bible by her side, "that he will save everybody that comes to him?" Her teacher nodded. "Coming to him is asking him, isn't it?" Another nod. "Then, please, Miss Etta, ask him for me. I can't. I can't seem to think. Ask him *now*."

Poor Etta! never in her life had she been so confused. She had only just learned to pray for herself. She had not yet overcome the reticence which we all feel concerning our own interest in spiritual things sufficiently to tell her own sister of her experience and purpose—how could she bring herself to do this hard thing which her scholar asked of her? But the scholar had a human soul, and that soul might be very near to eternity. How could she refuse to do this thing which, by the very nature of her position toward her, the scholar had a right to ask?

Then an idea struck her, and opening her hymn-book,—for she had expected to attend the evening service after ascertaining the cause of her scholar's absence,—she knelt close to the window, and in the fast-fading light read in a tone of reverent supplication the hymn commencing,—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou biddest me come to Thee,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come!"

Every word of the hymn was prayer, and Etta felt grateful for this help in doing what would have otherwise seemed to her impossible. She threw her whole soul into the last line of each verse, and could not but hope that Gretchen, who lay quite still now, though saying nothing, was following and saying in her heart,—

"Oh, Lamb of God, I come!"

After this there was silence and darkness, and Etta continued to kneel with her face hidden on the window-sill, praying silently that God would indeed save this soul, teaching it that which heretofore she had been unable and unworthy to teach. The effort at obedience to what was so evidently her duty had greatly strengthened the girl; she felt that God was with her in the still room, and the glad joy of those who against their own inclinations work for him began to spring up in her soul.

The doctor and Mrs. Doyle found her thus, and springing to her feet,
Etta came over to the bed to hear what the former thought about Gretchen.

Judging from Mrs. Doyle's account, the doctor seemed inclined to make light of the case, until he had made a careful investigation, and then he looked very grave, and asked where the patient had come from, and how long she had been in this country. Hearing that it was nearly a year since she crossed the ocean, and that she had worked for eight months in Squantown Paper Mill, he looked still more puzzled, and finally said:—

"I really can't account for it, but it certainly is a case of ship-fever; a very bad case, too."

Mrs. Doyle's consternation was extreme. She muttered something about having her children to care for, shut the door tight, and went hastily downstairs, leaving the doctor and the delicately bred young girl to decide what was to be done in the situation.

Doctor Bolen looked at his companion in somewhat quizzical perplexity. Here was a patient dangerously ill with a contagious disorder, at the top of a house swarming with human beings. She must have care and close watching, and the only person within reach to give it was a girl whose gay light-heartedness and instability were well known in the town. Had she known what to do, she was too

young and delicate for such a task. And should she take the infection—what then? Would the wealthy mill-owner thus expose his youngest child, and, as every one knew, his idol?

"I must get hold of some responsible person," he said at last, aloud, but more to himself than to his companion. "But whom? I don't know of a nurse that would come even from the city. Besides, it would cause a panic to do so, and a panic is the most likely thing in the world to cause the infection to spread. Mrs. Doyle, it is clear, is frightened out of her senses, and she can't be expected to risk her children and her livelihood for a stranger. One of the Irishwomen across the way might take care of her for money; but then she'd talk, and the whole gang would be frightened. I don't really know which way to turn." But Etta answered instantly with the intuitive perception for which she was noted:—

"There's Eunice."

Why had he not thought of it? Eunice Mountjoy, with her calm, cool head, her perfect unselfishness, her entire devotion to the good of others; Eunice, who was known and blessed wherever throughout the village there was sickness, suffering, or want; Eunice, who had many a time helped him out of a perplexity,—Eunice was the very person. But how should he get hold of her?

"I will go," said Etta, to whom he expressed the wonder.

"No! You are too young, and at the same time too old, to go through this manufacturing village alone after dark."

"Then you go, and I will stay here, for I suppose Gretchen must not be left alone."

"Of course not. She may become delirious at any moment, and there is no saying what she may do. She does not know us now. Would not you be afraid to stay with her?"

"No," said Etta, steadily. "Tell me just what to do and I will do it."

"But you might take the infection. Have you thought of that?"

"God will take care of me," said she, with a rising color; and the doctor, remembering how he had found her, thought that perhaps he could not do better than to leave her under such protection.

He was gone a long time, a very long time, it seemed to Etta, whose patient became very restless and needed constantly to be soothed and coaxed back to bed when she sprang up and insisted—in

German—on going to her mother. Her teacher, at such times, bathed her face with the warm water the doctor had brought, or gave her a sip of cold water which had been left when the tea-tray was carried away, spoke to her in soothing tones, and finally sang hymns, which seemed to quiet her better than anything else. She had sung all she knew and was commencing the *repertoire* over again, when a heavy step, followed by a lighter one, came along the passage, and presently Dr. Bolen appeared, followed, not by Eunice, as her sister had expected, but by Katie's mother, Mrs. Robertson! There was no time for questionings. The doctor gave Mrs. Robertson his directions, and then, leaving the patient to her, he took the young girl's arm and led her from the room, down the stairs, and out into the street, where the cool night air seemed wonderfully refreshing.

"I would not have exposed you thus," he said, "if there had been any other way. Do you feel very tired, very much exhausted?"

"Oh, no," she said bravely, for the air had greatly revived her. "I don't believe it will hurt me a bit. It's time I learned to do something besides amuse myself, you know. I've never been of much use in the world yet, but I mean to be."

"You have great capacities and opportunities for usefulness," said he, gravely, "but you know none of us is sufficient for these things."

"I am asking God to help me," she said in a low tone. "Don't you think he will?"

"No one ever sought his help in vain. I am glad you are setting out in the right way. All success be with you. Now you must attend to my directions and obey me exactly. As soon as you get home take off every garment you have on; throw away or burn up everything that can't be washed, take a warm bath, and go to sleep as soon as you can, and, remember, you are not to go near my patient again till I give you permission. Will you promise?"

Then he told her how sensibly Eunice had planned that Mrs. Robertson, who often went out to nurse the sick, should be engaged to take care of Gretchen; that to-morrow a certain empty house belonging to Mr. Mountjoy should be fitted up as a temporary hospital, and the sick girl moved there that the battle of life and death might be fought where there were not crowds of people to take the infection. He also cautioned Etta not to spread a report

concerning the nature of Gretchen's disease, as a panic might result which would be not only deleterious to her father's business interests, but also disastrous to the lives of multitudes of the employees of the mill.

By this time they had reached the door of Etta's home, and Dr. Bolen bade the girl good-night, after reiterating his directions.

Eunice came to her sister's room that night after she was in bed to see if the doctor's orders had been complied with. She gave her such a caress as her undemonstrative nature rarely gave way to, and it somehow opened Etta's heart and mouth as well. A long talk followed, and Eunice heard a great deal that made her very happy to hear. Etta begged her pardon for the many times she had refused obedience to one standing toward her almost in the position of a mother, and promised to be more docile and helpful for the future. Both felt that the sisterly bond which had been so weak between them was linked afresh to-night, and that they were now sisters in reality because they were one in Christ.

The next day Eunice's plan was fully carried out. The vacant house, which had been for some months without a tenant, was swept out and furnished with a few necessary articles, and Gretchen, now entirely delirious, was taken there in a close carriage, and Mrs. Robertson established as resident nurse. The good woman fretted and grumbled a good deal at leaving her home and her children,—whom, of course, she could not see for a long time,—but she *was* a good woman in spite of her grumbling. She was a very experienced nurse, and here was service for the Master from which she dared not turn away. Katie, assisted by Tessa, was fully competent to manage the house and cook what they and the boys needed to eat, so she resolutely accepted the trust.

Eunice and Etta went down to the empty house early in the morning, and both worked hard, with a woman who had been hired to do so, to get the rooms in readiness, but when all was prepared, they went home, for Dr. Bolen said there was no use for either to be unnecessarily exposed to infection. He did not want more patients than were sent him in the natural course of events.

Great pains were taken to keep the whole matter quiet. Katie and Tessa and the boys were cautioned not to speak about it, and the removal of the patient was effected during the forenoon when all the

factory "hands" were safe in the mill. But the precautions were useless. Before the next night there were four more patients in the temporary hospital, all from the rag-room, and the consternation was extreme. Many refused to work, and the mill was in danger of being forced to stop just in the middle of filling some very important contracts, when the doctor, taking his own life in his hands, as doctors must, made a thorough investigation of the rag-room, where all the cases had occurred, and found the contagion to be in a bale of rags imported from Ireland, which had not received the usual overhauling before being brought to the mill. These were all collected and burned, and the room thoroughly fumigated, the operatives receiving full wages for the days they were thus shut out from work, and one good result of the fever was that henceforth the bales were all opened and smoked in a separate building before they ever entered the mill at all.

The contagion did not spread any farther after this, and the hands returned without more delay to the mill. Mr. Mountjoy sent to the city for an experienced hospital nurse, and promised to pay all the expenses of the illness, in addition to the wages of those who were thus prevented from earning anything. The "hospital" was supplied from the kitchen of the "great house," and both Eunice and her young sister found full occupation in the preparation of dainties and food for the sick.

The interest in the five sick girls was intense, and when one—a poor, sickly little thing—died, every one felt as though death had come very close, and many were compelled to listen to the voice which said:—

"Prepare to meet thy God."

CHAPTER XIV.

GOOD FOR EVIL.

"Bertie Sanderson has not been in the mill for a week," said Tessa to Katie, as the two friends walked home together one hot afternoon. "One of the rag-room girls said so. I wonder if she has the fever!"

"That's not likely; the girls are all getting better," said her companion.

"Yes; but she's been absent for more than a week," persisted Tessa.
"Let's go round that way and inquire."

But Katie, somehow, shrank from this. While she knew nothing with absolute certainty, she could not help feeling that Bertie was in some way connected with the general avoidance of herself by the girls of the Sunday-school class, and the evident suspicion with which both Miss Eunice and Miss Etta regarded her. What her former companion could have said or done, she had no idea; but the sense of an undefined something had made her of late keep as far as possible from Bertie. She was about to say with her usual impulsiveness:—

"No; I hate Bertie! Don't let's go near her," when she remembered all her purposes of doing Tessa good and setting her a Christian example. Is it Christian to cherish a dislike of another because one has reason to suppose that other has done one an injury? Katie's enlightened conscience knew it was not. It was not like him who said:—

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;" and who, by acting in strict accordance with his own teachings, "left us an example that we should follow in his steps."

For a few moments the little girl said nothing as she walked silently by the side of her companion; then, having during those silent moments sent up an earnest prayer that the hateful feelings might be taken away from her heart, that so she might become more like Christ, she answered by turning her steps in the other direction.

The two girls found, as Tessa had suggested, that Bertie had indeed taken the fever, and was very ill in her own comfortable home. Dr. Bolen had suggested her being removed to the temporary hospital, and being cared for by the competent nurses there; but her mother would not hear of it. She was always a very foolish woman, had been very much opposed to her daughter's going into the mill, and now told her husband that this fever was all the result of his obstinacy, and she hoped he enjoyed having murdered his own child. Now, however, she meant to have her own way. Her Bertie, who was every bit as good as the city young ladies, her cousins, was not to go to an empty house and be nursed with a lot of common mill-girls. If her mother couldn't take care of her, she should like to know who could—which would have been unanswerable if Mrs. Sanderson had known how to nurse anybody—a thing of which she was profoundly ignorant. So poor Bertie had a hard time of it, and daily grew worse instead of better; and as if this were not enough, Mrs. Sanderson never thought of isolating the patient, or of keeping the other children from her, and before long the third child, a boy of six years old, was taken down with the fever also, and the incompetent mother had her hands more than full with the care of her house, the two patients, and two fretful, badly trained little children, with only Nina, who had never been taught to do anything in the world, to help her.

Matters were in this state on the evening when the girls called, and poor Mrs. Sanderson, coming to the door, without an atom of prudence or caution, insisted on dragging in Katie at least, because in her wild delirium Bertie had been incessantly shouting her name. Katie was impulsive, not very old or experienced, and had, moreover, been always taught to obey grown people, so without a thought of possible danger to herself, she followed the woman into the house, while Tessa waited for her outside, and was soon standing by the bedside of her old acquaintance.

She would never have known Bertie Sanderson. The long, disorderly hair, as well as the disfiguring "bangs," had, by the doctor's orders, all been shaved off; the round, rosy cheeks were pallid and sunken; the solid frame was wasted almost to a skeleton, and there was a fierce, wild look in the eyes alternated with an expression of intense fear.

Katie stood aghast, and even as she looked the wasted lips suddenly shrieked out:—

"Katie, Katie Robertson! Send her here. I want to tell her something."

"I am here," said Katie, as soothingly as she could, for her fright.

But Bertie took no sort of notice of her; evidently did not recognize her at all, and went on:—

"It wasn't a lie! I did see her find it and put it in her pocket. That's being a thief, isn't it? It was money—a great deal of money. I saw a five and a nought. It wasn't a lie, I tell you! She did steal it! Katie's a thief, for all she's so saintly."

Katie started. This, then, was the mystery; this was the secret thing that had been setting so many against her. She had never in all her speculations concerning the general avoidance thought of this as a cause. Bertie must have seen her find that fifty-dollar bill and put it in her pocket. But even if, from mere idleness, she had repeated the story to her companions, had she told simply what she really saw, could it be called stealing? And if Miss Eunice or Miss Etta had heard it they would naturally have spoken of it to their brother; he would have told the facts as he knew them, and that would have made matters all straight.

Bertie must have altered her tale in some way, exaggerated it, or suppressed a part. What for? Could her companion be so malicious as simply to desire to make her unpopular and to prevent the young ladies from looking upon her with approbation? She could not understand it. Of course she could not, for malice and jealousy were entirely foreign to Katie's nature, even if she had not been striving "in all her ways to acknowledge" her Saviour. She did wish, however, that she had thought of mentioning her good fortune and Mr. James's kindness at the time, that all this trouble might have been avoided.

Meanwhile Bertie began to moan and cry and call for Katie; and the latter, after speaking in vain again and again, turned to go.

"Oh, don't go away!" said Mrs. Sanderson, imperatively. "She'll know you by-and-by; and I can't stand her calling for you; besides, if you can just stay with Bertie and give her the medicine and drink, I might get a chance to see to Alf., who is most as bad as she is, and see

what Nina's doing with those children; they've been screaming this half-hour. I don't believe she's given 'em a mite of dinner, and I guess there ain't anything in the house for supper. You just stay where you are."

Not a thought had selfish Mrs. Sanderson for the fact that she was exposing a neighbor's child to the same evil which had overtaken her own. Nor in Katie's inexperience did she think of it either; but she did feel very indignant at the tone of command and very much inclined to rebel.

Moreover, she did not want to stay and take care of a girl who had behaved so shamefully toward herself. One by one the bitter things she had been forced to endure through this girl's treachery and deceitfulness came to her remembrance—the avoidance of her companions, the disapprobation and suspicion of the overseer, the changed manner of her Sunday-school teacher, the tears she had shed in secret, and the discouragement she had felt in her efforts to be good; and a sense of indignation possessed her which for a moment made her feel almost glad that the girl had thus got her deserts.

But this feeling was not of long continuance. The Good Spirit, who was leading Katie along the paths of righteousness, would not allow her to turn aside from them because for the moment the way seemed unpleasant and opposed to her natural inclinations. Unheard by outward ears, but heard quite plainly in her heart, he whispered words that made the little girl pause and think a second time before she refused to do as she was commanded. Here was a good opportunity of being like Christ. He forgave his enemies. He was kind to the unthankful and the evil. He gave up his life that those who hated and persecuted and finally killed Him might be saved. This thought decided her.

"Let me speak a word to Tessa first," she said; "then I'll stay."

She then told her waiting companion how ill Bertie was, and how Mrs. Sanderson was overwhelmed with so many to see to, and wanted her to stay and help. She asked Tessa to get tea for the boys and send one of them for her at bedtime, all of which her friend promised faithfully to attend to, and went her way.

When Katie returned to the sick-room, Mrs. Sanderson actually thanked her, and then went off, glad to attend to other responsibilities, and the young nurse was left with the excited, tossing patient. Strangely to herself, she did not feel the least anger or bitterness toward her now, in spite of all her unkindness to herself. The words which had been in a recent Sunday-school lesson, "I was sick and ye visited *me*," came again and again to her mind, and it hardly seemed to be Bertie to whom she was called to minister. She had no experience in sickness, but to some people nursing is an intuitive gift, and Katie inherited it from her mother. Her touch was cool and light. She seemed to know by instinct when the patient needed drink or change of position. She smoothed the disordered bed, shook up the pillows, turned the cool side uppermost, closed the open blind through which the western sun was blazing into the sick girl's eyes, and finding a large newspaper lying on the floor, made a fan of it, keeping off the flies and creating a current of air, till by degrees the tossings and cries ceased, the wildly staring eyes closed, and Bertie fell into a light, though restless, sleep.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sanderson had come home from the bindery, and seemed surprised to find Katie sitting so quietly by his sick child. He remonstrated with his wife—in another room—for exposing a stranger to such danger of infection; but when she asked him what she was to do with two sick children and three well ones on her hands, and who was to get the meals for them all, he had no answer to give, only he set about making the fire and getting supper himself, holding the baby on one arm and telling Nina what to do about setting the table. When all was ready he sent Katie down to her supper and himself watched the two sick children,—which, now that one of them slept, was quite possible,—resuming his watch after he had had his own. Mrs. Sanderson declared that she was completely "beat out," as well she might be, poor woman, and dropping on the lounge in the sitting-room was asleep in a moment, while Katie coaxed Nina to help her wash the dishes, clear up the room, and put the two younger children to bed.

By this time Dr. Bolen came in, looked at his patients, and said that, though Bertie was certainly not better, sleep was the best thing for her and should be encouraged as much as possible. Alf., he

thought, would do well. Then seeing Katie and not recognizing her, he asked where that other girl came from and what she was doing there. Mrs. Sanderson explained, dwelling emphatically upon Bertie's cries for her friend and the soothing influence her presence had exerted.

"That's all very well," said the doctor; "but how am I going to excuse it to her mother if she gets the fever, and what am I going to do with another patient upon my hands and no one to nurse her?"

"Oh, well, there's no harm done. She's only been here a little while, and her brother's coming to take her home before long."

"Not quite so fast, my good lady. She has been exposed to the fever already, and if she goes home now, may communicate it to her two brothers or the other girl that boards with them. Then her mother would be sure to go home to take care of them, and there would be an end of my hospital and my quarantine. No; she must either go to her mother and take her chance there, or she must stay here till we see whether she has escaped the contagion."

"Please, let me stay here," said Katie, who had overheard this conversation. "I don't think I shall have the fever, but I am sure I can be of use to them all."

"Wouldn't you like to go and be with your mother?"

"Yes, sir, I'd like to, but I'd *rather* stay here; because, because they need me, and"—the rest of the sentence was spoken low as if without being intended for any one to hear, but both the doctor and Mr. Sanderson heard it and marveled at the words. They were:—

"Even Christ pleased not himself."

CHAPTER XV.

CONSCIENCE.

Mr Sanderson would not allow Katie to sit up late. Indeed, she could not have kept awake, and would have been of little use if she could. She shared Nina's bed in the room where the younger children slept, but lay awake thinking, long after that irresponsible little girl was asleep by her side. Everything seemed so strange. It was the first night she had ever spent away from her own home, and she could not help wondering how Tessa and the boys were getting along, and what they had for supper. She thought of her mother and of the anxiety which, when she heard where she was, she would feel about her; and she wondered if she should have the fever, and if she did if she should die, as one of the patients at the hospital had already done. Then she wondered if Bertie would die, and a strange sort of awe came over her at such a thought in connection with one who had been her playmate ever since she could remember. It made death seem very near, and she wondered if she were fit to die. But that thought did not trouble her much. Nothing, either in life or death, can really hurt those who love Jesus and trust in his protection. She asked him to make her ready to die when he chose, and then, being of a very hopeful, cheerful nature, began to think of other things.

How could Bertie have circulated those stories about her? And, what was more important, how could she set herself right in the eyes of the other girls, and especially in those of Miss Eunice and Miss Etta? She could not go and say to the latter: "I know Bertie called me a thief, but I am not one," and then tell the story just as it was. They might not believe her, and if they did it would be betraying Bertie, and that would not be kind, particularly now that the latter was so ill. Or if she could have told the young ladies and, with the help of Mr. James, made it all straight with them, she could not go around to all the girls and explain what to them were half-defined suspicions. Even if she told the story of the fifty-dollar bill and her version of it were believed, they might very naturally think that there was something else, and that Bertie would scarcely have based her

charge of theft on so slight and easily to be explained a circumstance as that. What should she do? It was dreadful to live under such a cloud; to have people consider you wicked when you are desiring and trying with all your might to be good, and not be able to right yourself at all. Again a feeling toward Bertie arose in the girl's heart that would have been hatred but for her companion's present condition, and which she felt to be wrong even as it was. For the thought of Jesus and how he forgave his enemies made her feel ashamed of herself, till she got out of bed and, kneeling down in the moonlight, prayed to be made more like him and to be willing to suffer wrongfully, if need be, with patience, rather than to feel wrong or to do anything unkind. And then, as she got into bed again, the scripture words with which she had commenced her factory life came back to her with new force:—

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." And then those others in the thirty-seventh Psalm: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light."

That was the safest way. She might leave it to God to take care of her reputation. He could manage it though she could not, and some time everybody would understand just how it was, and know she was not a thief. Meantime she could afford to wait his time.

The next morning Mr. Sanderson promised to send word to the mill about Katie's absence and its cause, and when he left for the bindery his wife came downstairs to see to things, and she took her place in the sick-room, while Nina went to sit with Alf. Mrs. Sanderson was surprised to see how much Katie had managed to do before breakfast and in the interim between, exciting in Nina quite an ambition to wash dishes and "clean up." The little children had been nicely washed and dressed and were, when their mother went down, sitting on the kitchen doorstep with a kitten between them, over which, for a wonder, they were neither fretting nor quarreling. The breakfast things were all put away, the floor swept, and there was a general look of comfort which had not existed in that house for more than a week. The poor tired woman sank into a rocking-chair, saying to herself, "I don't see how it is some people's children are so handy. Mine don't ever do anything they can help. It's some people's luck." It never came into Mrs. Sanderson's head that the "luck" of

good, efficient children is largely dependent upon the sensible training given them by their mothers.

The doctor, when he came, found Bertie much easier, if not absolutely better. He could not tell quite yet if there were any likelihood of her recovery, but the quieter she could be kept, and the more sleep she could get, the more chance she would have. He told Katie she was a famous nurse, and he should trust her to keep the room still, dark, and cool, and to soothe her friend as much as she possibly could. He furthermore told her that he had seen her mother, who approved of her remaining where she was, though of course she was very anxious lest she should take the fever and very sorry that she had gone to the house in the first place.

"I promised to watch you closely," said he, "and the moment I saw any symptoms, take you to her to be nursed. But I don't believe you will have it if you take care of yourself. You are in the path of duty, and I have often observed that those who are there seldom come to any harm."

It seemed a very long day to restless, active Katie, and yet in one sense it was a relief from the steady, monotonous work in the mill. Bertie was so quiet at first that she was able to wait upon her and Alf. both, and let Nina go down to help her mother get dinner. But after a while she began to toss and mutter, and then came those wild cries for Katie Robertson; that she had something to tell her; that she hadn't told a lie, for Katie was a thief.

When or how the change came the watcher hardly knew, but all at once she became aware that Bertie lay looking directly at her, and that there was full recognition in her eyes. Neither girl spoke for a moment; then Bertie said with a kind of shudder:—

"Am I dead?"

"No, indeed," said the other, not without some effort to speak cheerfully. "You are going to get well now; only keep still and don't tire yourself."

"I am going to die," said Bertie, slowly; "and I can't die, I am so wicked. Katie, I said dreadful things about you. I made all the girls hate you, and Miss Etta, too; but it wasn't quite a lie, for I did see you take the money."

"Yes," said Katie, quietly, "I did find a fifty-dollar bill in an old vest, and I suppose you saw me; but why didn't you tell *me* you saw it, instead of telling the girls? Then I could have explained all about it?"

"I don't know," said Bertie, uneasily. "Yes, I do; that's another lie, and I don't mean to tell lies *now*, I didn't want to have it explained. I wanted the girls to dislike you as much as I did."

"Why?" said Katie, astonished.

"Oh, well, you preached to me, and pretended to be a saint, and Miss
Etta and everybody thought you were so good, and"—

"Shall I tell you about that bill now?"

"Yes, do!"

So Katie told her companion just how it happened, and it was all so simple that she wondered how she could have made such a story of it.

"I wonder you didn't keep the bill, and not take it to Mr. James," she said. "I should."

"I did have a little fight about it," said Katie, blushing. "It was a great temptation. I'm not so very good, but"—

"But what?" said Bertie, eagerly, looking at her.

"I think the Lord Jesus helped me. I asked him, and he says he will help us to be good."

"Do you think he would help me?"

"I am sure he would. O Bertie, do ask him! I am so glad!"

"Are you?" said the sick girl, dreamily. But the effort to talk or think longer in her weakened state was too great. She seemed to float away again, and by degrees the same wild look came into her eyes, the tossings began again, and the low mutterings and sharp cries. It was very painful both to see and hear, but Katie was glad to notice that her own name no longer mingled in the confused talk, and the consciousness of wrong-doing toward herself seemed to have passed away.

In the evening the doctor said that the patient had had a relapse, and questioned her young nurse very particularly as to whether she had shown any consciousness; and being told that she had seemed

for a little while to be quite herself, he asked if she had spoken. Katie said that she had talked quite rationally about something that had distressed her for some time, but she did not say what that something was.

"Bad," said he; "you should never let a fever patient talk, no matter how much she may try. But I mustn't scold you, I suppose; you are too young for such a responsibility, and your friend there is extremely ill."

Then he went downstairs and consulted Bertie's parents, and the result was that a letter was written to the city aunt begging her to come and help take care of the two sick children. The doctor wrote it himself, stating as delicately as he could the extreme urgency of the case, the inefficiency of the mother, the dangerous illness of the children, and the impossibility of securing any assistance in the care of them except that of an inexperienced little girl, who was herself in constant danger of being added to the list of patients.

In answer to this appeal, after a couple of days, Mrs. Jamieson, who, if a silly, overindulgent mother, was a much more efficient woman than her sister, made her appearance in Squantown, and under her supervision matters were soon in a better condition, and Katie was no longer needed. She had made herself extremely useful, however, and all the family were unfeignedly obliged to her. The children could not bear to have her go, and Mr. Sanderson insisted upon giving her as much money as she would have earned during the days she had been absent from the mill. Dr. Bolen said she showed no signs of having taken the infection and it would be quite safe for her to go home if she would change all her clothes for those which Eric took to the bindery and Mr. Sanderson carried home, leaving everything she had worn in the sick-room behind her, and then would take a long walk, where the wind could blow her hair about and freshen her up thoroughly.

Tessa and Katie had a long, long talk that night. The former had many things to tell of what had happened both in the mill and at home during the absence of the latter; how the rag-room had been closed and fumigated, the foreign rags all burned, and the girls and Miss Peters enjoyed a three days' holiday without having it deducted from their wages; how the old cat had presented the household with a lovely family of downy kittens, for which Alfred had made a little

house in a box out in the yard; and how both boys had been very patient toward her cookery, laughing at her mistakes and helping her with their superior knowledge; and how they had stayed at home and played games with her every evening, thus preventing her from taking to novels again to cheer her loneliness, as she should otherwise have felt tempted to do.

Then Katie told Tessa all about the fifty-dollar bill, of which she had never heard before and Bertie's unkindness in setting everybody against her; and Tessa said she had heard the rumors, and often tried to make the girls tell her what they meant, but the only thing she could find out was that Katie was dishonest.

"I wonder you were friends with me, then," said Katie. "I should think you would have avoided me, just as all the other girls did. Weren't you ashamed to associate with a thief?"

"Oh, Katie, you know I couldn't believe such a thing of you!—you who have been my best friend—the only real friend I have ever had."

"But why didn't you tell me what you had heard, and ask me to explain it? You see how easily I could have done so."

"Somehow I didn't like to. It seemed like doubting you even to repeat the lies. I knew they were lies all the time, and I loved you better than anybody else in the world. What consequence was it to me what other people said about you?"

How to clear the matter up, neither of the girls knew. For it would be still more cruel and dishonorable, as they thought, to tell what Bertie had done, now that she had confessed it herself and was lying so low. But Katie had learned to "commit her way unto the Lord," and she was not troubled any more about the matter.

"I should think you'd hate Bertie," said Tessa, with Italian intensity. "I don't see how you could bring yourself to stay there and take care of her when you knew how much she had injured you. I should have felt like putting poison into her drink or smothering her with the pillows."

"No, you wouldn't," said the other, laughing, but immediately becoming grave again. "You couldn't hate any one who was dying, and besides, it wouldn't be like Jesus."

"I don't understand."

"Don't you see? Jesus gave up his life for sinners, for those who were his enemies. It makes me love him whenever I think of it, and I want to be like him. This was a good chance, and I think he helped me to overcome all kind of hard feeling. I only longed to do everything I could to make her more comfortable."

"I wish I could love Jesus as you do. My father used to tell me religion was just the priests deceiving silly women, and reminded me how the robbers and beggars in Italy would kneel before the crucifixes, shed tears as they said their prayers, and then turn away and be just as wicked as before. But to you it all seems real, and it, or something, makes you just the best girl I ever saw. But I can't feel so."

"Yes, you can; our Lord Jesus says '*whosoever* will, may take of the water of life freely,' and 'him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' You must be one of the 'whosoever.' O Tessa, I only wish you'd come!"

But Tessa did not answer, and Katie, thinking her asleep, soon followed her example.

CHAPTER XVI.

DECIDING.

It was about four weeks later in the season. Miss Eunice's "tea-party," which had not been held for a long time, was gathered at the great house; not now in the pleasant sitting-room, but on the still pleasanter shaded lawn, where the girls occupied pretty rustic seats, while the tea was spread on little green tables, around which they were grouped as inclination prompted them.

All the members of both classes were there, with the exception of Bertie Sanderson; and there were quite a number of new faces. Some were present who had lately stood very close to death, and others whom the solemn thought induced by the public catastrophe had led to seek for a better life than one of mere amusement. All were glad to come together again; but there was a subdued tone in the gladness, and some voices were not as gay and careless as they were a month ago.

The fever had passed away. There had been no more cases, and only that one death. The rag-room girls and the invalids had gone back to their work; the hospital was closed; Mrs. Robertson had returned to her family, with for once a thankful heart. For, besides that she had been very well paid for her services and loss of time, the pestilence had spared her own dear ones; and they were all there to welcome her as she came back to her home.

Moreover, she had become very much attached to Gretchen and the other girls whom she had attended during their illness, and hated to let them go back to the tender mercies of Mrs. Doyle and the other boarding-house keepers, where they would be sure to be not only uncomfortable and badly fed, but also very much neglected in case of any new illness which might easily result from their weak, enfeebled condition. Her motherly heart thought a great deal about the matter, and her thoughts finally ended in her fitting up a large garret-room, which had never been occupied, with four little white beds and other necessaries and conveniences, and taking the four convalescents home with her as permanent boarders. The girls, while paying no more than they had heretofore done, profited

greatly by the change. They had plain and wholesome, because well-cooked, food, plenty of cleanliness and fresh air, besides the elevating and refining influence of a home where Christian living was inculcated, not so much by precept as by practice. God "setteth the solitary in families," not boarding-houses or institutions; but that is the only true family which takes care "in all its ways to acknowledge him." If such families all over our land would open the arms of their exclusiveness each to take in one or more of the waifs and strays of life, and throw around them the arms of Christian love, they would be taking a long step toward answering their own daily prayer of

"Thy kingdom come ... on earth as it is in heaven."

Katie and Tessa were pleased, girl-like, with the addition to their family party, and, though the boys grumbled a little at first, being, as boys are apt to be, a little shy of girls' society, they soon became used to the change and glad to enjoy the evening occupations that were rendered possible by so large a number.

It had always been a source of great anxiety to the widow, lest her boys, deprived of a father's watchful authority, would, as they grew up, wander off at night, fall under bad influences, learn evil habits, and grow up worthless, dissipated men. But thus far she had been successful in keeping Eric and Alfred at home with her and their little sister, and now, just when the restlessness common to their age might have drawn them away, a new interest was presented in the shape of a "home reading society," which held its sessions on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights; Wednesday evening being devoted to Miss Eunice's "tea-party," Friday to the church service, and Saturday to games.

Mrs. Robertson had plans of a more solid nature for the winter, but till the warm summer weather was over, this seemed enough. The books read were historical stories, biographies, and the like, taken from the mill library by special permission. The boys were generally the readers, while the girls were encouraged by their motherly landlady to repair and keep their clothes in order, a branch of womanliness apt to be much neglected by factory operatives, who often marry and enter upon family duties without even knowing how to hold a needle.

Of course, the widow's time was now so fully occupied that she could not go out to work in families, as she had been wont to do, but the money paid by her boarders more than compensated for that. Her heart, as well as her hands, was quite full, and having no time to brood over her fallen condition, she did not worry and grumble so much as formerly, and was happier than she had ever been since the doctor died and left her to battle with the world alone. And thus she learned to realize the truth of that scripture:—

"He that watereth shall be watered also himself."

Bertie Sanderson did not die with the fever, though all around her, even the doctor, had at one time quite given up all hope of her recovery. She slowly struggled back to life, and as soon as she was able to bear the journey her aunt took her to the city with her for more complete rest and change. Katie did not see her again; for, having once got away from the infected house, it was not thought best either for her brothers at home, or her companions in the mill, that she should risk exposure again. She often longed to know the state of her former companion's mind on recovering her senses. If she remembered that exciting conversation; if she were really penitent for what she had done; and if she had taken her companion's advice and sought the forgiveness and strength of her Saviour. But no one could tell her. Indeed, there was no one she could ask, for she felt intuitively that Mrs. Sanderson was not a person to understand this sort of thing, and she could not summon courage to ask Bertie's father. Of one thing she was sure, however—her companion had not as yet openly confessed her share in the reports which had so affected Katie's reputation, and she must still wait in patience till he to whom she had "committed her way" should make it clear.

The reading for this Wednesday afternoon had been exceedingly solemn. It was about the danger of being "almost persuaded" to do one's duty, and then leaving it undone; the uncertainty of another opportunity presenting itself, and the importance of deciding for Christ *now*. At its close Miss Eunice had said:—

"My dear girls, we have in the weeks that have gone by carefully considered the subject of religion and God's claims upon every one of us for the consecration to him of our hearts and our lives. We have seen that the steps we are called upon to take are repentance, that is,

forsaking sin in intention as well as being sorry for it; a steadfast, living faith in Christ Jesus as our Saviour, and a resolute determination to spend the rest of our lives in his service by keeping his commandments and doing his will.

"We have learned, also, that of ourselves we are none of us sufficient for any of these things, but that God is ready—nay, anxious—to give us his Holy Spirit in answer to our asking, and that this Holy Spirit will work in us the repentance and faith, as well as give us the strength to carry it out amid all the temptations of our daily lives. To-day's lesson has been upon the importance of deciding, and the danger of delay, in such a serious matter. I think the lessons of the past few weeks have helped to impress this latter fact upon us; and I am glad that our pastor has just written me a note to ask that all of you who have made up your minds to confess your Saviour openly at our communion Sunday, the first week in September, which will be just two weeks from to-day, will send him your names at once. He desires to see and talk with each one of you separately, that he may satisfy himself of your being in a fit condition for so important a step. I have a paper here on which you may write your names; but before you do I want you to examine your own hearts faithfully and as in the sight of God, to see whether you honestly and sincerely 'repent you of your sins past, have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, that so you may not be guilty of making a deceitful and false profession.' And now let us pray."

The girls all knelt down, and their teacher prayed that these dear girls might have a right judgment in all things, and decide, "not lightly nor after the manner of dissemblers with God," to confess Christ for their Saviour, and give themselves to him in the way of his appointment. Then there was silence for many minutes, that all kneeling there might carefully examine their own hearts and make this most important decision of their lives in the very realized presence of God himself.

After this the tea-table conversation was not a very gay one, and the girls went home uncommonly early, many of them before leaving writing their names upon the sheet of paper which their teacher presented. To some it seemed too awful a thing to do; to others, as to

Katie Robertson, the awe was softened by the glad sense that Christ was pleased with this act of acknowledging him; and still others were greatly strengthened by this first act of self-committal, from which they would now be ashamed to draw back.

"Fifteen names; God bless them all!" said Miss Eunice, as she looked over the paper with her sister, whose own name headed the list. "I am so glad! And yet there are two or three more that I would like to see there; perhaps they will decide yet. But, Etta, what shall we do with this one?"—pointing to Katie Robertson's.

"I don't know, unless we consult Mr. Morven." For the young lady had begun to realize the help and strength there is in talking over spiritual matters and difficulties with one well qualified to give advice and help; and many a deeply interesting one had followed that first Sunday afternoon's conversation between Etta and her pastor.

"We might do that," said the elder sister, musingly. "And yet, I hardly like to, either; for, you see, we don't know anything definitely against the child, and I should be sorry to create a prejudice against her should she prove to be innocent. At the same time, I do not like to take the responsibility of assenting to the public religious profession of a girl who has such an accusation as theft hanging over her."

"I have almost a mind to tell her the report, and ask her what it means. I have somehow shrunk from doing so because it seems an absolute insult, and whenever I see the child I can not believe there is any truth in the story. I wish I knew more particulars."

"Who was your informant? Oh, I remember!—Bertie Sanderson—and she is out of the way now, and can't be questioned."

"I never believed in, nor liked, Bertie; but I don't think she is bad enough to invent such a slander, making it out of whole cloth. She said Gretchen knew; but I never thought of asking her. She is as truthful as the day."

"I would ask her," said her sister. "And there she is by the gate—come back for something, maybe."

CHAPTER XVII.

CLEARED.

Gretchen came slowly up the lawn, and stood for a moment shyly by the side of Miss Eunice.

"Is there anything I can do for you, my child?" said the young lady, pleasantly, desiring to put her at her ease.

"Please, will you write my name there?" she said, pointing to the list. "I can't write English letters, and I was ashamed to have the other girls know."

"That is nothing to be ashamed of," said Etta. "I don't believe any of the other girls can write German letters. But, Gretchen, do you honestly want to give yourself to your Saviour, and to live so as to serve and please him?"

"Yes, Miss Etta. I shall never forget the night you prayed for me when I was so sick. You said the Lord Jesus would hear the prayer, and take me if I came to him. I think he did so, and I have been coming to him again and again, ever since. He has been good, so good to me, saving me from dying and making me get well from that terrible sickness. The more I read about him in my Bible, the more I love him and want to honor him. But, Miss Etta, it was you who told me about him, and I shall never forget that night."

Etta's eyes filled with glad tears, while her sister added the sixteenth name to the list, and she clasped the hard, red hand with a feeling of sisterhood, for which she could hardly account.

Gretchen's sickness had greatly improved her appearance, toning down her overbright color, and giving her a look of greater delicacy. Mrs. Robertson and Katie had managed to exchange the dark woolen petticoat and jacket for a simple summer dress such as the other girls wore; while contact with the others in the friendly home life had brightened up her intellect, and her new, deeper feelings and desire after a spiritual life had given her a certain earnestness of expression which made the homely German features very pleasant to look upon.

She was just going away after thanking both her teachers in a quaint, formal manner, when Etta said:—

"Gretchen, I don't want you to tell tales about your companions, and you need not answer unless you wish to do so, but I have been told that you know facts concerning a rumor about Katie Robertson, that I very much desire to find out. Can you, honorably, tell me anything about it?"

"Some of the girls don't like her; I don't know why. She's always a very nice girl to me, and so good to her mother!"

"But the rumor is that she is dishonest, and that you saw her steal something."

"I saw Katie steal?" said Gretchen, very slowly. "Never, never in my life. Oh, I know," a light breaking over her face at a sudden recollection. "Bertha and I both saw her find a bill in an old vest-pocket one day, and put it in her own. Bertha spoke about it to me, but it wasn't my business. Finding isn't stealing."

"It isn't quite honest to keep what we find," said Miss Eunice. "We should try to restore it to the owner."

"But how could she find the owner?" said Gretchen, eagerly. "He might be away over in Germany, or—or anywhere."

"That is true," said Etta, thoughtfully. "It's strange! I can't believe that Katie's dishonest."

"Oh, she isn't; I'm sure she isn't! I only wish I could prove it; but this is all I know about the matter."

"Well, dear, thank you for saying what you have said. Don't say a word about it among your companions. I know I can trust you that far, and I will find out the mystery somehow. Good-night, Gretchen. God bless you in your new service," and Miss Eunice kissed her, little German factory-girl though she was.

"Find out the mystery? Of course we can; just as easy as possible, now," said Etta. "All we've got to do is just to ask James if such an occurrence ever happened in the mill."

And Mr. James Mountjoy promptly coming in at that moment, both sisters appealed to him, and heard in return a very simple statement of the whole affair.

"Why didn't you tell us?"

"I did mean to. I thought it so noble in the child. Five girls out of every six would have put the money into their pockets, and said

nothing about it. It was very brave in her, too, to tell me how she had been tempted to keep it."

"I know why he did not tell," said the elder sister, looking fondly at her brother. "Five employers out of six would have accepted the money as their right, and the finder have been none the better for it. Our James is not apt to trumpet his own praises."

The young man colored, and said:—

"I think Katie Robertson is an uncommonly fine girl. I was struck by something she said the day she entered the mill. I asked her if she thought she could be a faithful little girl, and she said she was trying to please God everywhere, and she was sure he would help her here. I think she has acted up to that idea ever since. I have watched her from time to time, and I can not find that she has ever been guilty of disobedience to rules, or any kind of underhand behavior. Her work has always been faithfully done, and her example has been of great use in keeping order among the others. Sanderson is enthusiastic in his praises of her bravery and womanly unselfishness. He says she came to his house at the risk of her own life, and helped his poor, tired-out wife take care of the two sick children with as much earnestness, and almost as much skill, as a professional nurse. She stayed there till the aunt from the city came, thus losing five days' work. I offered her the wages for those days when I found it out, but she told me Mr. Sanderson had given her the amount, and she did not want to be paid twice over."

"And this is the girl we have been suspecting of dishonesty!" said Etta.
"We really owe her something to make amends. What a little wretch that
Bertie Sanderson must be! I really think her parents ought to be told all the circumstances."

All this while a pile of unopened letters, brought by the evening mail, was lying upon the centre-table. The young gentleman turned them over, took possession of several which were directed to himself, and then, handing Etta one which he said was for her, left the room.

"Who can it be from?" said the young lady, eyeing the strangely folded and badly directed epistle, without opening it, as is the manner of so many people.

"I'd see if I were you," said her sister; and seeing that this was good advice, Etta took it, glanced at the signature, and exclaimed:—

"Bertie Sanderson! what a coincidence!"

The letter was as follows:—

NEW YORK, August 15, 18—.

My Dear Miss Etta,—I don't know how to write letters very well, but I must tell you something that is upon my mind. It is about Katie Robertson. You remember I told you she was a thief, and I told all the girls she was dishonest. I didn't *know* that she was; I only saw her find a fifty-dollar bill among the rags one day, and put it in her pocket. I didn't know what she did with it, and I didn't try to find out, because I was jealous and hated her. She used to tell me it was dishonest to break rules, and talk, and idle, when one was paid for working, and I felt kind of glad to think I had found her out in being dishonest too. I told the girls about it—not all, but just enough to make them think her a thief, because at first they all seemed to think so much more of her than they did of me, and I told you just the same thing when you asked me. I tried to tell father when he used to praise up Katie Robertson's independence and industry, and wish I would follow her example. You see, it was all because of her that he put me in the mill. But somehow I couldn't tell him. I was afraid.

You see, Miss Etta, I have been a very wicked girl, and when I got so sick I was afraid to die. I tried to think I hadn't told a lie, because I *did* see her find the money, and I *didn't* know what she had done with it; but I knew I had "borne false witness," and I hadn't "loved my neighbor as myself." I knew, too, that nobody could go to heaven with a heart full of malice and hatred, and I wanted to tell Katie all about it, and ask her to forgive me, and when I got wild I kept calling for her. Then she came and stayed and took such good care of me, I've been ashamed since I knew about it; but I didn't know her or any one then, only one day my wits seemed to come back to me and I told her all about it, and she explained so simply how she had found the money and taken it to Mr. James, and Mr. James had told her to keep it, that I saw in a moment that it was only because I wanted to think her bad that I didn't find out just how it was long before.

I felt so bad then, Miss Etta, because I thought I was surely dying, and going before God with all that unforgiven sin upon me, and

Katie talked so sweetly about Jesus and his forgiveness and help that I thought I'd like to try. But then I didn't know anything for a long time till I woke up and found my aunt there, and they said I couldn't see Katie again, because she might get the fever or carry it to her brothers.

I was dreadfully unhappy, even after I came here, not only about this, but because of all the other bad things I've done all my life. I've been selfish and vain, and unkind and untruthful and dishonest, and I almost wished I had died when I was sick, only then I could not have gone to heaven, and I never could have cleared Katie.

Since I have been here I have been to church a good deal with my cousins, who are Congregationalists, and are both going to join the church. There is a daily service, and there have been a large number of conversions. I have talked a good deal with my aunt, and I really do want to commence over again and be a good girl. Aunt Anna says that Jesus died so that the very worst sinners might be forgiven, and I think he will forgive me. She wants me to stay and be received with her daughters here, but I'd rather join the dear church in Squantown, with the other girls, if you think I might.

But I want Katie and all the girls to know just how bad I have been and just how sorry I am. Please tell them all that I have said, and write and tell me if you think I might join the church, when I've been so wicked.

Give my best love to Miss Eunice and ask her to forgive me, too.

Your affectionate Sunday scholar,
BERTHA SANDERSON.

"I think we may join in the joy of the angels in the presence of God over the one sinner that repenteth," said Miss Eunice, as her sister finished this long and evidently earnest letter. "I think you may safely write to the dear child to come home and commence her new life among us. Your class is greatly blessed, my sister, and I think when we remember what it has done for Gretchen and Bertie, we may well thank God for the ship-fever as for an angel in disguise."

The next Sunday Etta Mountjoy detained her class a few moments after the school session, and read to them the whole of Bertie's letter.

It was received with various expressions of surprise, which were greatly augmented when the whole story of the fifty-dollar bill was told.

"I have brought this all before you, girls," she said, "not to make you think hardly of Bertie. She has suffered too much and is too evidently sincerely sorry for me to do that. I want you to rejoice with me in her repentance, and when she comes back, to receive her with full forgiveness and sympathy, and aid her in her efforts to lead a new life. I thought you ought to know how well one little girl among us has behaved under the most unjust suspicions and great unkindness. Not one of us has understood Katie Robertson. She has known for four weeks, from Bertie's statement to her, what was the real reason of our avoidance and suspicion, and she has never opened her mouth to explain the true state of the case and clear herself, as she might easily have done, because by so doing she would have been obliged to tell of the unkindness and malice of her companion.

"I think we all ought to ask her pardon for being so ready to condemn her unheard and to believe what was whispered against her; and, more than that, we ought to be very thankful to the Lord for giving her such a grand victory over herself."

Katie blushed and could find nothing to say, as one after another the girls and their teacher shook hands with her and kissed her; but it was a very happy heart the little girl carried home with her that bright Sunday.

"Tessa," she said, "it's all true, every word:

"'Commit thy way unto the Lord,
And He *shall* bring it to pass.'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEALED.

The first Sunday in September was the most beautiful day of the season—calm, still, and sunshiny. The August heats were abated, but no touch of chill had yet come into the air. It was still summer, but summer's fierceness had passed by. When the bell of the little gray stone church rang out in joyous tones, multitudes of people, in bright Sunday attire, and with expectant faces, came out of the cottages and boarding-houses and, singly or in groups, wound their way up the hill.

Factory operatives are not, as a rule, a very church-going population, and the church was not wont to be overcrowded; but to-day the pews and seats are all full, and so are the extra benches and chairs taken from the Sunday-school room and placed in the aisles. Every one in Squantown who possesses a sufficiently decent wardrobe in which to appear in a place of worship has turned out to-day. For to-day many of the boys and girls are to stand forth with many of their older friends, and confess themselves upon the Lord's side, while their pastor prays that upon them may fall a fuller measure of that Good Spirit, who alone can enable them to stand firm amid the many temptations by which they are surrounded, and while their brethren, who are older in the faith, promise to give them all the sympathy and help which it is in their power to bestow.

The church has been decorated for the occasion with a wealth of late summer flowers. Geraniums, scarlet, coral, pink, and white, dahlias of every variegated hue, asters, zinnias, heliotrope, ferns, golden-rod, and a multitude more are entwined around the pulpit or wreathed above windows and doors. Pure white day-lilies load the air with perfume, and rare exotics from the gardens of the "great house" stand in exquisitely arranged baskets upon the communion-table.

The music, intended to do special honor to the occasion, is somewhat elaborate, considering that the choir is composed of the older boys and girls from the Sunday-school, and is therefore not so good as usual from an artistic point of view; but it is better than

artistic in that it is intended to do honor to the occasion, and is in many instances the sincere thank-offering of hearts glad to give to their Saviour the "dew of their youth."

It was the endeavor, not only of the clergyman, but also of the whole Mountjoy family, to banish all class distinctions from the church, and to make rich and poor, as they sat together before God, "the maker of them all," feel that they were all one family; that all had a common ownership of, and interest in, the beautiful building and the well-conducted services.

Thus the factory-girls went to the woods on Saturday afternoon for golden-rod and ferns; the humblest families robbed their cottage gardens of the few bright flowers they contained; and the boys gave willing assistance to Etta and her class in arranging and putting up the decorations. The whole congregation joined in singing the hymns and such of the chants as were familiar, and rarely had the singing been heartier.

The service was over and the sermon, and then, as the last hymn was sung, the call was given for the candidates to come forward in answer to the reading of their names. How many of them there were! Even those who had prayed most earnestly and labored most actively were surprised at the result. There were six of the elder girls composing Miss Eunice's Bible-class (the others were already communicants); four of her brother's boys; Etta and her whole class of seven,—making eighteen from the Sunday-school. But there were also quite a number of young men who worked in the factory, who had been largely won by James Mountjoy's honor and integrity, added to manly Christianity; and some young women, and even elder ones, with one or two heads of families, who had been led by the indefatigable efforts of the pastor thus to openly acknowledge Christ.

The girls were not as a rule dressed in any particular manner. Etta, indeed, and one or two others, were in white, because it happened to be more convenient and suitable, but neither Mr. Morven nor Miss Eunice wished to have the consciousness of dress interfere with the solemn thoughts of self-dedication and renunciation of the world appropriate to the occasion. Even with Bertie Sanderson, who had come home a few days before, "old things had so passed away," that she wore a simple blue gingham, much

plainer, and at the same time much more becoming, than the costume in which she had originally appeared at the mill. The solemn questions were asked and answered; the personal vows taken; earnest, solemn prayers uttered and words of wise counsel said, to be long remembered and heeded and acted upon in life's coming battles; and then, with a burst of joyful song, the solemn service was over, and those engaged in it went out from the sacred precincts to fulfil the vows and exercise the grace among the common scenes and homely details of daily life. To many, nay, to most, life would not be one continuous communion service; the holy awe would of necessity fade away; the hymns and prayers be exchanged for the harsh wrangle and barter of a work-day world; temptation was awaiting many of those new church members in unexpected places, and the evil nature within, not yet wholly subdued by divine grace, would make the pathway of holiness a very narrow one, along which untrained feet would often stumble. But the memory of this hour would always be, to those who cherished it, a shield against temptation, a counter-charm against the wiles of the evil one; and since the Saviour whom they had that day openly avouched to be their Lord and God had promised "never to leave or to forsake them," only victory could follow those who confided entirely in him.

"Tessa," said Katie, when the two girls were alone together that afternoon, "I didn't know you were going to join the church till this morning. Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Well, you see I didn't make up my mind till yesterday afternoon. Then I went to Miss Etta, and she took me to Mr. Morven, and he took my name and encouraged me to come."

"What made you think of it?"

"You first. I didn't see how you could be so gentle and patient when everybody was condemning you and thinking evil of you. Then I watched you at your work, and saw how faithful you were, whether any one saw you or not, just as if you felt that God was looking at you, and you wanted to please him."

"So I did. I took for my text, in the mill, the verse: 'In all thy ways acknowledge him.'"

"Then," continued Tessa, "when you wanted me to give up reading those novels I was real mad at first. I thought you had no right to find fault with what I did, and that it was very mean in you, who had a comfortable home and a mother and two brothers, to want to take away the only pleasure from me who had nothing. But when you talked with me so sweetly, and when you asked me to come and live with you, and your mother took in the stranger that no one knew anything about and treated me just like one of her own children, I knew that you did it just out of kindness, and I tried to see what made you so kind."

"I don't think I'm kind," said Katie, "but I do want to be."

"The only reason I went to Sunday-school and church with you," continued her friend, "was to find out what it was that made you so different from the other girls, and there I heard all about Jesus, so different from what the priests used to say at home. There were no crucifixes, no pictures in the church, as there were in Italy, and yet he seemed to be more real than he ever did there, and I found myself beginning to love him almost before I knew it."

"I'm so glad!"

"So am I; but I don't think I ever quite saw what he was, how he laid down his life, for his enemies I mean, till you went to take care of Bertie, at the risk of your own life, and stayed there when you knew how badly she had treated you, and never said a word afterward for fear it would hurt her. It showed me just how he cares for all of us and wants to help us, even those who don't like him and don't want to take his help, and I made up my mind to give myself to him and take him for my Saviour that very night when you asked me to."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Somehow I couldn't. I couldn't talk about such things; they seemed too sacred. And one reason I didn't give in my name with the others that day at Miss Etta's was because I was afraid Miss Eunice or somebody, the minister, perhaps, would ask me questions."

"Didn't you want to talk to the minister?"

"No; it seemed like going to confession, and that I promised my father
I'd never do. Besides, I didn't think I was good enough."

"Why, we're none of us good enough, Miss Eunice says."

"I know; I listened to all the readings and the talk and the lectures, and by-and-by I got to see things that I hadn't understood before, and how it is not because we are good and strong, but because we're sinful and weak, that we need a Saviour and all the influences of the church. And so, just at the very last moment, I prayed for bravery enough to tell Miss Etta, and she went with me to Mr. Morven, and he told me I was just the one to come, if I really loved the Lord Jesus ever so little and wanted to do his will. He was just as kind and gentle, and it wasn't a bit like confession, for he didn't ask me any string of questions and didn't say the absolution—just talked to us both, prayed, and sent us home. I'm so glad I decided. I never felt so happy in my life before."

"Nor I," said Katie. "It doesn't seem as if anything ever could be hard or hateful again."

So felt a good many young hearts that quiet Sunday night as they returned from the evening service, where the pastor preached a special sermon to those of his flock who had just openly enlisted in the army of the Cross, welcoming them once more into the "communion of saints," pointing out the responsibilities they had assumed and the difficulties in their way, but at the same time congratulating them on the assured strength and aid which were promised to make them "more than conquerors through him who hath loved us."

And as life glided by, bringing its inevitable portion of care and suffering to each, no one of that band was ever sorry, as he looked back to the services of that bright September Sunday, that young hands and young hearts had then been laid trustingly into the hands of their Saviour, and that they set out upon life's journey clad in the invincible armor of faith.

CHAPTER XIX.

AFTERWARD.

The soft, sweet summer-time had quite passed away. Bright autumn had
followed, with its glory of gorgeous leaves and piles of golden fruit. November's fierce blast had begun to toss the leafless branches, and Thanksgiving day was at hand.

Nearly three months had passed since our young friends had stood forth to receive the seal of their discipleship. Three months of testing time they had proved to be—months in which the true attitude of the souls of those who had then presented their bodies as a living sacrifice might become plain both to themselves and their friends.

No greater mistake can be made than for young people to suppose that the recommendation of their Sunday-school teachers, their pastor, or even their parents, is an assurance that they are really fit subjects for a confession of Christ. All these, it is true, are watching them, both in their actions and in the tempers which they thus exhibit, as those that must give an account for their souls; but only God can see the heart—only themselves can know whether they are sincere in their purpose to love and serve him.

Young girls are very easily influenced. Often they come forward in the church because a good many of their companions are coming and they do not want to be left behind; sometimes because it makes them of temporary importance; and sometimes simply because of the transient excitement, without any thought of the solemn vows they are going to assume and the new life which in the future they are to be expected to lead. And this in spite of all the instructions given and the watchful care exercised by pastor and friends. No wonder, then, that the first few months after a public profession are anxious ones to all those who have had any part in smoothing the way thereto for their young friends.

And yet, let no girl or boy be discouraged from taking a stand which is both duty and privilege by these remarks. All that God demands of those who confess Christ—or, as it is popularly

incorrectly called, "make a profession of religion"—is *sincerity* of heart and purpose; *sincere* sorrow, no matter how slight, for past sin; *sincere* faith in the sacrifice of Christ, to atone for and forgive sin; *sincere* purpose of obeying God's commandments for the future, with *sincere* consciousness of weakness added to *sincere* trust in the all-sufficient strength of the Holy Ghost. Every boy or girl old enough to think is capable of this sincerity; and thus every one is bound to obey the express command of his Saviour and confess him before men.

But, of course, if the confession be not sincere, in a very short time, when the novelty and excitement have worn away, the interest in sacred things will wear away also, and very soon something will be said or done that will be a dreadful disgrace to the confession thus carelessly or wickedly made.

Still another mistake is often made by young people, and this is one calculated to do great mischief, as it is often made by those who are sincerely desirous of serving God. For weeks preceding the open step they have devoted a great deal of time to meetings, prayer, and Bible-reading, and their interest in these things has almost put secular ones out of their heads. But when that long-anticipated day is over, they feel somehow that the end is reached, instead of looking on this end as only the first step in a newer and better life. Other duties and interests resume their relative importance. There are not so many meetings to go to, Bible-reading becomes more hurried, prayers are less fervent, and all at once the young communicant falls into some open sin and is filled with grief and remorse.

Oh, if every boy and girl, every man and woman, who has been brought into outward and inward communion with Christ, would only realize that he or she is to go *onward*, never ceasing to pray and strive against evil; ever pressing on for more and more of the Holy Spirit; striving each day to be more and more like Christ,—then would be realized what is meant by the words of the wise king: "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

"Don't you think it would be nice to have a Harvest Home Festival for the Sunday-school on Thanksgiving?" said Etta Mountjoy to her brother and sister one autumn afternoon.

"I never saw one," said Eunice, whose duties as housekeeper had kept her rather closely confined at home for some years.

"Oh, I have. When I was at Altona last fall, the church was decorated with grain and grasses and fruits, and even vegetables. It was just lovely!"

"I should think it might be," said James; "and I don't see why we should not have one if Mr. Morven has no objection. But it will be a good deal of work to carry it through successfully, and I hate that sort of thing when it's a failure."

"I don't mind work," said Etta. "I want something to do—something for the church, I mean; and the girls do, too—something to take the place of our readings and talks. Sometimes I wish it were not all over, but there were something still to look forward to."

"Do you mean that you are sorry that you are really admitted to the communion of the Church, and have openly placed yourself on the Lord's side?"

"No! Of course not," said the girl, blushing. "But things are getting flat. I want something new; you know I always did."

"Yes," said her brother; "we all know, Etta. But, seriously, I trust my little sister will never be tired of the blessed service and fellowship into which she has been so recently admitted. You know what is written about those who put their hands to the plow and look back."

"Oh, I don't mean to look back; I don't want to. I'd rather belong to the church and work for Christ than anything else in the world. What I want is work. Don't you see?"

"Well, dear, if you think you can manage the work I'll find the money, though I don't suppose it will cost a great deal."

So it came to pass that those bright autumn Saturday afternoons were spent by Etta and her girls in the woods, where, with the aid of such boys as could get away from their work, a store of scarlet, golden, and variegated autumn leaves was laid in, with late ferns and hardy brackens, curious bits of moss, seed-vessels, and dried grass being added to the store. These were all taken to Mrs. Robertson's, whose large garret was offered for their reception and preservation, and after tea the girls ironed and varnished the leaves which could

not be detached from the boughs, and pressed the smaller ones between the leaves of newspapers, which were collected for the purpose from neighbors, the younger Sunday scholars who were not in the mill being thus employed.

Then, on Wednesday evening, at Miss Eunice's "tea-party," which of necessity was held indoors, now that darkness came early and the nights were chill, the girls of the two classes covered pasteboard stars, crosses, crowns, and monograms with leaves and mosses neatly stitched on—bound rich yellow wheat stalks into sheaves, and made plumes and tassels of dried grasses and seeds.

Merry chatter helped the work forward. Miss Eunice did not wish her girls to look upon religion and the church's service as a thing of gloom. She knew that God has "given us all things richly to enjoy," and that the way to hallow pleasure and prevent its being hurtful is "in *all* our ways to acknowledge him."

Moreover, these social, familiar talks, when every one was off her guard, afforded capital opportunities of studying character with a view to affording to the young pilgrims such aid and advice as might be useful to them in their heavenward journey.

Of all the young work-women, Tessa showed the most taste and ingenuity in the grouping of leaves and arranging of ferns, and her beautiful combinations constantly called forth the admiration of both companions and teachers. The little Italian received their commendations very meekly, but did not thereby escape exciting the jealousy of Bertie Sanderson, who, on putting together some very fiery leaves without any attempt at toning down, received from Miss Eunice a few gentle suggestions concerning shadow, high lights, etc. "It's too mean," she whispered to her nearest neighbor, as she took her seat, "that beggar from the poor-house gets more notice than all the rest of us put together."

Her companion stared, for she was one of those girls who had almost made up her mind to become a Christian, but had remained undecided till too late, because she had an idea that a person could not dare to join the church till she was as holy as an angel.

"There's Katie Robertson, too," continued Bertie; "she'll be sure to be praised, if her work's hideous. That's what it is to be a favorite."

"Why, Bertie," said the other, "you're real spiteful. I think Katie's just the nicest girl. Anyway, I couldn't talk as you do if I had joined the church."

"But you ought to have joined the church because it was your duty," said
Bertie, who could very clearly see the mote in her sister's eye, in spite of the beam in her own. "You will be a Christian soon, won't you?
It's so nice."

"Not I. If religion don't make people better than you are, I don't want anything to do with it; I'd rather stay as I am," was the sincere, if not very polite, answer. And then Bertie's conscience awoke, and she began to see what harm she was doing. She was very uneasy all the rest of the evening, and still more so when, at its close, Miss Eunice asked her to stop a few moments, as she had something to say to her.

Miss Eunice had overheard the conversation we have recorded, and had noted the cross, spiteful expression of the girl's face, and had grieved much as she saw her Saviour thus "wounded in the house of his friends." She spoke seriously to Bertie so soon as they were alone, and found the latter already repentant and quite willing to acknowledge her fault.

"But what am I to do, Miss Eunice? I *am* jealous, and I *do* feel hateful sometimes. I don't want to feel so, but I can't help it. If I didn't speak, I should feel it all the same."

"But, my dear, you have promised, in the most solemn way, to renounce 'the devil and all his works.' Pride, malice, envy, jealousy are emphatically works of the devil."

"I know, Miss Eunice; and I thought it would be all taken away. The minister in the city told us that Jesus is 'the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.' I thought if I came to him he would take mine away."

"So he has, so he will. Try to understand me. When he hung upon the cross he bore the penalty due to the sins of the whole world, and of course to yours. In that sense he has already taken them away. But in another sense, that of your daily life, your *character*, he will take the evil of that away just as fast as you will let him."

"Let him? How do you mean? I am sure I want to be good."

"Yes, in a lump, altogether, you want to be good, very good; but without any trouble or self-denial. You didn't want to keep from saying those spiteful things about Tessa and Katie a little while ago, or he would have helped you do it. You didn't want the jealous, envious feelings taken out of your heart *just then*, or he would have taken them."

"How, Miss Eunice?"

"*Whatsoever* you ask in prayer, believing, ye *shall* receive," said she.

"But do you mean I ought to have kneeled down to pray then, just that moment, before all the girls?"

"It is not necessary always to kneel down when we pray; though it is best to do so when we can. There are often times when our work would suffer, or when we are so surrounded by others that it would be impossible. But a few earnest words spoken in the silence of our own hearts will always bring our strong, loving Saviour to our help; and we may, *every time*, no matter what our temptations are, be 'more than conquerors through him who hath loved us.'"

"Every time? Oh, Miss Eunice!"

"Yes, every time. You know we constantly ask the Lord 'to keep us each day *without* sin.' How can we utter such a prayer in faith if we don't believe that it can be granted?"

"Yes; but temptations are so sudden, and take you just where you're the weakest."

"I know. And therefore we should be fully armed beforehand. Bertie, did you read your Bible and pray this morning?"

"No!" said the girl, flushing. "I always mean to; but it's so dark in the mornings now, and mill-time comes so soon. It's just as much as I can do to get there in time, any way."

"Yet you find time for your breakfast?"

"I couldn't live without eating."

"Nor can you live spiritually without feeding daily upon Christ, through the study of his Word and prayer. I would sooner go without my breakfast than without my early communion with him. Bertie, there are 'no gains without pains.' If you are really desirous, as I

believe you are, to overcome your own evil habits and tendencies, and grow to be like Christ, you *must* begin every day with prayer for his help; you must watch yourself and your surroundings, and in the moment of temptation you must turn instantly to him who says that he is 'a very present help in trouble,' and who has promised to 'supply all our need according to his riches in glory.'"

Poor Bertie! A hard fight was before her. Fourteen years of unresisted pride, jealousy, and ill-will had formed habits that were hard to break—fourteen years of caring for no one's pleasure but her own. In brief, fourteen years of worshiping herself had helped to form a character which would need a good deal of chiseling before it should grow into an image of Christ. But he had undertaken the work. Miss Eunice had shown her how to avail herself of his offered help, and as she took her teacher's advice, we may be sure that in the end she gained the victory.

CHAPTER XX.

A WARNING.

So the short, bright autumn days and the long, chill evenings passed quickly and pleasantly away. All were busy and happy, and were beginning to find that in spite of conflicts and self-denials "wisdom's ways are pleasantness and all her paths are peace." The preparations for the Thanksgiving festival progressed rapidly, but before the time came to put the plans in execution a very terrible thing happened in Squantown. Faces turned white, voices were hushed, work was suspended at the mill, in the stores, and even upon farms. One home, where a loving mother bowed in deepest agony, was shrouded in gloom, while others were filled with the sympathy of mourning.

The Mountjoys first heard the news at Sunday-school, where Etta found her class so full of the horror that they could attend to nothing else. The stories of the girls were confused, and differed as to details, but their teacher elicited from them the facts, which were as follows:—

Harry Pemberton, one of the best hands in the mill, one of the pleasantest young fellows in Squantown, so the grown-up girls thought, the very idol of the widowed mother who had only him, had gone out with some companions on a Saturday night "spree" to a high cliff in the neighborhood. They carried with them a barrel of beer and some bottles of whiskey, of which, however, the others drank but little. A foolish bet was made between him and one of the elder men, as to which could drink the most "lager," and the others, soon tiring of the contest, left the two with the bet still undecided. The sequel was involved in mystery, for the other man, who was a stranger in the place, had disappeared, and when the bright autumn sun shone out on Sunday morning, it showed to the early passers-by the dead body of poor Harry, bruised, broken, and disfigured, at the foot of the cliff. Whether the beer they had taken made him and his companion quarrelsome and he was pushed over in a fight, or whether Harry, stupefied, fell asleep on the edge and rolled over in his unconsciousness, was never known. The boon companion never

came back to testify, and the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of "accidentally killed."[2]

On Wednesday the mills were closed, that all might have an opportunity of attending the funeral services, which were intensely solemn and impressive. Harry had at one time been a member of Mr. James's Bible-class, and during the recent religious interest his former teacher and employer had more than once urged upon him to break away from the evil companions and bad influences by which he had allowed himself to be surrounded, and take his stand on the Lord's side, finding in the church and its associations help to become a noble and good man. At one time he had seemed to be almost persuaded, and his friend had great hopes of him, but his companions and their influence had proved to be too strong. He had gone back to his evil ways, trusting, perhaps, to "a more convenient season," which, alas! never came to him.

The clergyman detailed these facts to his hearers, among whom were, of course, all the young men of the place; and while delicately avoiding hazarding any suggestions as to the present or future condition of their unfortunate companion, pressed upon all present the importance of calling upon the Lord "while he may be found," and the awful risk of delay.

"No one could have supposed," said Mr. Morven, "when poor Harry trifled with the most important of all questions, his soul's salvation, and put off his final decision till some 'more convenient season,' that that season would never come to him."

Of all the young men of Squantown he had seemed the least likely to be suddenly called into eternity. Yet he had been, in a condition, too, in which any one would least like to be found when called suddenly to stand before God and answer for the deeds done in the body. Who would be called next? Was that one all ready? Therefore, he once more urged upon his hearers, "Prepare to meet thy God." Nor did the earnest pastor fail to draw attention to the lessons concerning the use of intoxicating liquors, in any form or degree, which the occasion so plainly afforded. It was not as an habitual drunkard that Harry Pemberton met his fate, nor was it from the use of what is usually denominated "strong drink." Lager beer, considered and spoken of by many as "a temperance beverage," was responsible for the mischief, and the thoughtless joke of careless

young men had hurried one of them, known to all present as a boy of great promise, uncalled into the immediate presence of God. Perhaps a better object-lesson for total abstinence could not have been found, since it is the occasional drinkers, who are not as yet bound by the chains of almost irresistible habit, to whom alone such an appeal can be made with any prospect of success. Poor Harry had been precisely one of these, and probably no young man in Squantown had considered himself farther from meeting death as the result of intemperance.

This sad and sudden death made a great impression upon James Mountjoy. Always a perfectly *temperate* man, as became an earnest, devoted young Christian, he had never been known as a *temperance* man, that is, an advocate of total abstinence principles, and an active worker in the cause. But he now was deeply impressed with his responsibility and duty in this respect; and accustomed to turning good impressions at once to their legitimate results,—good actions,—he, with his father's full consent, called a meeting of all the men connected with the mill, that night, and presented to them a total-abstinence pledge, which he was the first man to sign.

"I have always," said he, "been opposed to such pledges. I thought a Christian communicant might be trusted to use all these things in moderation, and that it was, somehow, an undervaluing of his church privileges, to say nothing of his manhood, to bind himself by anything else. I will confess, also, to having occasionally enjoyed a glass of wine or champagne. But I have completely changed my mind. Who knows what might happen to me, in some unguarded moment, if I should continue to tamper with that which is in its very nature a deceiver? But, even supposing I were to escape all evil consequences, some one weaker or less favored than I am might be influenced by my example to take that which would injure him in body or soul. St. Paul said he would 'eat no more meat and drink no more wine while the world standeth,' if it should cause his brother to offend, so I have resolved that not another drop of anything that can intoxicate shall ever pass my lips, and if it will be any help for any of you to make or keep to a similar resolution, I will be the first to 'sign away my liberty,' as pledge-signing is foolishly called." And he wrote *James Mountjoy* in clear letters at the head of the paper.

A great cheer greeted the action, and many men and boys pressed forward to follow their young employer's example. Elderly men they were, some of them, who had tried again and again to break off a habit which they felt to be injuring them and defrauding their families, and who found a great moral support in being thus associated with others, one of whom stood in such relation to themselves. Others were young men who greatly admired and emulated Mr. James, and who had heretofore justified themselves in acquiring a taste for whiskey on the ground that the young gentleman was known occasionally to indulge in ale and champagne. And still others were boys, who liked to do what their elders did, by way of appearing manly, and whose adherence, given to the right side of the question, before they had had an opportunity of acquiring a taste for intoxicants, was a great gain on the side of righteousness.

Eric and Alfred were among these latter, and though neither had as yet spent an evening away from home, nor, to her knowledge, knew the taste of liquor, their mother, when she was told of it, gave hearty thanks that another safeguard against evil had been thrown around her boys.

Some of the men declined to sign the pledge, one saying in a surly manner that he was not going to be coerced into doing a thing of this kind. Mr. Mountjoy paid for his work, not his principles, and he should eat and drink just what he liked. To him James replied, pleasantly, that he did not wish to coerce any one. Those who were conscientiously opposed to signing a pledge would, of course, not be expected to do so, but he had no doubt he should have the unanimous support of all present in whatever efforts might be made to put down the growing evils of intemperance.

James Mountjoy never did anything by halves. He at once threw himself earnestly into the temperance reform; supplied himself with books and papers, and became thoroughly conversant with all phases of the question, wondering, as he did so, how as a Christian man he could so long have overlooked his duty in this matter. Resolved to do so no longer, he at once commenced a series of temperance meetings, inviting speakers and lecturers to come to Squantown and make the people intelligent total abstainers. He did not select so much men who were noted for their fervid oratory, nor yet reformed drunkards who often divert their audiences with

amusing accounts of their past performances while under the influence of strong drink, but plain, common-sense business men, who put before their hearers in simple terms the evils that the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol work to the purses, bodies, and souls of any community.

He also added to the library at the factory reading-room a number of valuable works on the nature and effects of alcohol; and before the winter was over had the pleasure of seeing a very marked change in the condition of the factory people as the result of his efforts.

——- [Footnote 2: An actual occurrence.]

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DO GOOD SOCIETY.

Meanwhile the girls at Miss Eunice's tea-party had been busily discussing the funeral and its sad cause.

"What an awful thing intemperance is!" said one of the elder girls. "Even women sometimes drink to excess; and how many others suffer from its effects in their husbands and fathers. I wish we girls could do something to put it down."

"You can," said Etta. "If every girl in the land were to set her foot down against having anything to do with young men who drink, there would soon be a change. I am resolved," she said, in her old impetuous way, "never to associate with any young man, no matter how good or elegant he may be, who even tastes wine occasionally."

"That is a rash resolve, Etta," said her sister, "and one that I fear you will find it hard to carry out. Yet, what you say is right, in the main. Girls do not enough realize the great responsibility of their influence over young men."

"No," said Agnes Burchard, with a sigh. And several remembered how much she had been seen with poor Harry and what jokes had been made about their intimacy. "I always knew that Harry Pemberton drank occasionally; but I thought it manly, and like—like Mr. James."

No one answered this rather unfortunate remark; but presently Katie
Robertson said:—

"Don't you think, Miss Etta, people ought to begin with the boys—before they have learned to drink, I mean."

"A good suggestion, Katie, since an ounce of prevention is said to be better than a pound of cure. How would you set about doing it?"

But Katie, having thus drawn all eyes upon herself, blushed, and did not feel like speaking. So Miss Eunice came to her rescue:—

"We might organize some kind of a society, of which the boys and younger girls could be members. It would be some trouble to keep it

up, but it would be directly in the line of that service to which you pledged yourselves, girls, that bright first Sunday in September."

"Delightful!" said Etta, to whom every new thing always seemed so. "A boys' and girls' temperance society, with a pledge that they shall never in their lives taste anything that can intoxicate. Then they will grow up temperance boys and girls from the start."

"There are two objections to pledging children—that is, very young ones," said Eunice. "The first is, from the unwillingness often felt by their parents; and the other, that many of them do not fully understand what they are about, and as they grow older often break their pledge, on the ground that they are not bound by a promise made when they were too young to understand it."

"Well, some of them keep it, and that's so much gained."

"Yes; for them. But to break solemnly made vows is always an injury to one's character. Besides, if we make a total-abstinence pledge the condition of joining our society, we shall not get the Irish boys, who most need our work. Their parents will not let them come. Why not word our pledge in such a way as to secure everybody's influence on the side of temperance, without making it a personal thing? It will be sure to react upon the individual."

"I think there are some things that boys do besides drinking that are just as bad—smoking and swearing, for instance," said one of the girls.

"And I think it's just as bad for girls to be hateful and unkind," said Bertie, to the surprise of some who knew her, but did not know what a brave fight she was making to overcome her long-indulged faults.

"Let's make it a pledge to be kind and thoughtful," said one of the girls.

"Not to be vain," said another.

"And let's all belong," said a third. "So the boys won't think we're just preaching to them."

So the result of all the talk was that a meeting for all the children in the place was held the first bright Saturday afternoon, Etta presiding, assisted by such of her girls as had finished their day's work at the mill. It happened to be a bright afternoon, warm for the season, and no one felt any inconvenience in staying out of doors,

where they sat in groups around the lawn, while their young hostess explained the purpose for which she had called them together.

"We know you all want to be good men and women," she said; "brave, noble, and helpful. Our idea is not primarily to amuse you or make you happy, but to help you to learn to be helpful and useful to others. We want to form among ourselves a society, whose object is to do all the good that its members possibly can—not trying to have a good time, but to make somebody else happier and better every day. Who wants to join us?"

Instantly every hand in the little group went up.

"Yes, I thought so," said the young lady. "But now I wonder who are willing to take a good deal of trouble about it, and really put themselves out of the way to make other people happy. Those who are willing and mean to persevere not getting tired and giving up the whole thing after a little while, may have the privilege of joining our society by signing their names to our pledge."

She then read the following pledge slowly, pausing to explain every word which might seem hard to be understood by the younger children:—

"We, the undersigned, pledge ourselves to be truthful, unselfish, cheerful, and helpful; to use our influence always for the right, and never to fear to show our colors. We will always use our influence against intemperance, the use of profane language or tobacco, disrespect to the old, ill treatment of the young or unfortunate, and cruelty to animals."[3]

Nearly all present were eager to sign it; those who could write their names doing so, and the others looking on with great satisfaction while theirs were written by some one else. Thus a society was formed which, for want of a better name, was called the "Do Good Society."

Etta was unanimously elected president; four girls of her class were the officers. Meetings were to be held the first Saturday in every month in the Sunday-school room, on which occasions those present were to report attempts at carrying out the principles of the society as well as all successes in doing so.

To this society and its welfare Etta Mountjoy devoted herself, throwing into its concerns the whole activity of her versatile nature;

making its meetings so interesting, and imparting to it so much bright life and activity, that it soon became the most popular institution in Squantown.

The society's first meeting was held one week after its organization. It was raining softly, and the grass was damp and the air chilly; so the children, nearly a hundred of whom were present, were glad to come into the shelter of the pretty Sunday-school room, and while swelling with the importance of being "a society," wait to see what "Miss Etta" would do when she came. The girls were getting a little restless, and the boys had begun to drum rather impatiently upon the floor, when the young lady appeared, carrying in her hand a curious-looking box with a slit in the top and a basket mysteriously covered down, which she deposited on the desk, not as yet answering the questions which were spoken by the many pairs of bright eyes before her.

The first thing the president did was to tell the children that they might sing "Hold the Fort," which they did with such extraordinary force and enthusiasm that they exhausted the excitement which was seething within them, and sat quite still while the basket was unpacked and Etta took from it a bottle of whitish-looking fluid, a clear glass goblet, and a pure white egg. Then she gave them a little temperance talk, reminding them of the sad death of poor Harry, which was known to them all, and telling them that even when people did not drink enough liquor to make them either stupid or quarrelsome, *any* quantity of it taken into the stomach injures it very much.

To make them understand this she broke the egg-shell and dropped the white of the egg into the goblet, holding it up and showing them how soft and clear it was. Then, uncorking the bottle, she told them it contained alcohol, the substance that is found in all intoxicating drinks, even the weaker ones, such as wine and beer.

"Now, watch," she said; and as she poured two or three drops of the liquid into the glass the interested eyes saw the egg grow white and hard, and at last become tough and leathery. "This," she said, "is just what happens when people drink anything that contains alcohol. The brain is a substance like the white of an egg. The alcohol acts upon it in the same way it has acted upon the white of this egg—it *cooks* it! The brain of a drunkard becomes *cooked*—tough and

leathery. The man cannot think as clearly as other men. His mind becomes degraded." The children all expressed their astonishment, and after they had talked a little while, their teacher said:—

"I am sure you don't want people to injure their brains in this way, and so you will be ready to keep that part of your pledge which says we will 'use our influence against intemperance,' of course."

"Yes, yes!" was shouted out by dozens of voices, and many hands went up. One boy said:—

"How about tobacco?"

"Oh, we'll talk about that next time. Now I want you to sing again, and then we will investigate the contents of this box," proceeding to unlock it as she spoke.

When the second hymn was over Miss Etta drew out several folded papers, and handing; them to the secretary, who had come in since the beginning, asked her to read them aloud.

"Remember, children, that neither you nor I know who wrote them. They have no signatures. Perhaps some of the children wrote them themselves, perhaps they got their parents to do so. All we want to know is that they are accounts of how some of our members have tried to be unselfish and helpful to other people during the week that has past. I hope every meeting we shall have a number of such papers to read. You can any of you write them, and slip them into this box, and our secretary will read them to us. But be sure that you don't put any names to them and that what you write is true."

PAPER I.

Last Friday I was going home from school when I saw two big boys hit against an old woman, who was carrying along a heavy basket. I don't know whether they did it on purpose, but they both began to laugh as the basket upset, and the apples which were in it rolled all over the road. I was just going to laugh too, the old woman looked so funny and helpless, but I thought of our society, and I stooped down and picked up all the apples and helped carry home the basket. The other boys laughed at me and called me a baby. I wanted to swear at them dreadfully, but I remembered what our pledge said about "profane swearing," and I just held my tongue.

PAPER II.

Mother wanted me to take care of the baby while she got supper the other afternoon, but I wanted to go in the woods with Allie and get nuts. I'd promised her ever so long, and this was the last chance, it's so near winter. I was just going to say "No" to mother, and tell her babies were a nuisance, when I noticed how tired she looked, and thought how she was always doing things for all of us. Then I remembered our pledge, and I took the baby and tried to be "cheerful and helpful" in amusing her, setting the table between whiles. And in the evening, mother said she did not know how she could have got along without me, she had such a headache all the afternoon, but now she felt quite rested.

PAPER III.

Five of us girls are going to form a bee. We haven't much time, but we can take one evening each week, and we're going to make skating-bags for our brothers and some of the other boys, so that they can keep their skates clean and bright. We mean to hurry, so as to get them ready by the first frosty weather.

There were several other papers, but these specimens are enough to show the kind of work the Do Good Society was engaged in, and the nature of the reports brought in from time to time. They were sometimes very funny, and Miss Etta felt a little inclined to laugh as they were read, but little by little they were educating the children to be unselfish and helpful, and that, next to being godly, is the best thing in the world.

——- [Footnote 3: Condensed from the pledge of the Lookout Legion.]

CHAPTER XXII.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

The long-anticipated Harvest Home Festival arrived at last. All Wednesday evening, and far into the night, the boys were busy, under Etta's directions, in putting up the carefully prepared colored leaf emblems, and arranging the grasses, fruits, and vegetables. Over every pointed window was a garland of variously colored grasses, mixed with bearded golden grain, and between each, one of the leaf emblems was lightly tacked to the wall. From each gas-burner depended a rustic basket, made of twisted sticks dipped in a cheap solution of gilt powder, and filled with purple and white grapes, mixed with scarlet and golden apples. Bouquets of ferns and grasses graced pulpit and baptismal font. Against either end of the communion-table leaned a wonderfully constructed cornucopia, from whose capacious mouth seemed to be pouring out green squashes, yellow pumpkins, red and white beets, brown potatoes, cabbages, cauliflowers, parsnips, and golden ears of corn, packed in with cereals and nuts. On the table itself was a mighty pile of all the fruits attainable so late in the season, and the decorations were completed by a cross nearly six feet in height, composed entirely of white everlasting flowers, placed in the window just above.

It was great fun to arrange all these pretty things, and the fun might have degenerated into irreverence, but for the presence of Mr. Morven, who occasionally said a few words concerning the sacredness of the place, and managed to give the whole affair the appearance of a happy service of the Lord and his church, so that each boy and girl went away with a share of the gladness of those who work for God.

The Thanksgiving congregation was an unusually large one. The mills were closed, of course, and many of the work-people who, perhaps, would have hesitated at the idea of spending their rare holiday time in a church, thought better of it when they remembered that doing so would certainly please their employer. Not a very worthy motive, certainly. But there are many motives which draw people to the house of God, not all of which will bear close

inspection. None the less, however, are they thus brought under hallowed influences, and it may be that germinating seed will be thus sown in their hearts, which the wayside birds will not quite carry away.

The Methodists, who usually held Sunday services at the school-house, three miles off, held none on Thanksgiving day, and were glad of a good opportunity to see and attend the pretty new stone church on the hill. Many of the neighboring families in the country round had city visitors come to "spend Thanksgiving." And more than all, the fame of the harvest decorations had spread far and wide, so that curiosity helped to fill the church to overflowing. Mr. Morven was glad of the opportunity to show how religion claims a place even in our festivities and helps to brighten all our joys. He was especially desirous that the children and young people should never look upon Christ's service as a thing of gloom. He dwelt upon Thanksgiving day as an essentially national festival, reminding his audience how it had originated when the Pilgrim fathers met at the close of the first year of their hard life among New England rocks to thank the God, in whose name and by whose power they had laid the foundations of the new commonwealth on this side of the sea. Then he told how the observance had gradually spread from State to State; at first being appointed by the State Governor, on such day as seemed to him fittest. Till at last, the wise and lamented President Lincoln sent out a Thanksgiving proclamation, and appointed a uniform day for the whole, great, reunited people.

"For what we are to give thanks, in addition to our great public blessings," continued the preacher, "each one of us must look into his individual life and surroundings to discover. These beautiful decorations remind us of our indebtedness as a people for an abundant harvest, not only of the grains and cereals which support our lives, but also of the delicacies which make that life one of rich enjoyment. But, my friends, this is Cain's sacrifice. Let us beware lest, as in his case, it take the place of Abel's, and we learn to care more for the things of our perishing life than for those eternal glories to which the great sacrifice of which Abel's was typical is our only title. For myself, as pastor of this church, I find special occasion for thanksgiving in the large number who have, during the past year, publicly given themselves to Christ, nearly all of whom, as I have

every reason to hope, have set out in earnest upon their heavenward pilgrimage. These souls are a seal to my ministry among you, and for them I gladly to-day render unto the Lord thanksgiving. An added cause of thanksgiving to me personally is the able and earnest corps of assistants who are here holding up my hands. Surrounded by mill-owners whose first object is not so much money-making as the elevation of the men, women, and children in their employ; with Eunices and Louises, who labor with me for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom in young human hearts, and with a society of little folks whose purpose is to follow their Great Master by going about to do good, I feel myself well sustained in my responsible position; and, as I look forward to the cares and duties of another year, I 'thank God and take courage.' And no doubt, as you look down into your own hearts and back on the events of the past year, you also see much cause for thanksgiving. Some of you remember how, when you tossed on beds of fever, God's presence rebuked the death-angel and you came back to a new and, as we trust, a better life. Many of you know how, while the pestilence raged around you, both you and your loved ones were safe from his fiery breath. Others of you can recall how, when the swift punishment that sometimes visits those who do not like to retain God in their knowledge and seek their own pleasure rather than his service came among us, it was not your boy, your brother, your dear one who met with a fearful and sudden death. Even such of you as have been called to suffer during the year that is gone by, to resist temptation, to conquer sin, to mourn over loved ones, or to meet poverty and distress, know that, having received help of the Lord, you continue unto this day. His strength has assured the hard-won victory, his presence has lightened the gloom, his hand wiped away the tear, his bounty fed the hungry. In all things he has more than kept his promises, and I call upon you this day to

"'Render unto the Lord thanksgiving.'"

The afternoon was devoted to the Harvest Home Festival, and a very pretty and successful service it was.

Long before three o'clock the main body of the church was filled with parents, friends, and anxious spectators, many of whom had never been inside of a church before. The front seats had been

reserved for the Sunday-school, whose members marched in singing as a processional:—

"Come, ye thankful people, come,
Raise the song of Harvest Home,"

at the close of which the whole congregation rose and sang:—

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

A brief opening service followed, the infant class chanting the Lord's prayer, the verses of Psalm lxv being read alternately by boys and girls, after which Psalm cxxi—

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills"—

was sung by the whole school.

The infant class then came forward, and standing in a group before the desk recited each a text, which the superintendent called:—

"Autumn Leaves from the Tree of Life."

The verses were selected with great taste and care, and the little ones did their part well. The following are some of those selected:—

Exodus xxvi, 16.
Leviticus xxii, 10.
Psalms l, 19; cxlv, 14; cxxxvi, 1, 25.
Isaiah lv, 10.
1 Corinthians x, 26.
Hebrews xiii, 2.
Revelations xix, 5.

The very little folks here closed their part of the performance with a
"Harvest Song," in which they had been well drilled.

Then the older classes arose and recited selected portions of Scripture in unison, class by class.

Eunice Mountjoy's class gave "The harvest feast." Deut. xvi, 13-15.

Etta Mountjoy's class: "The harvest fruits are the gift of God." Psalms cxv, 10-15.

James Mountjoy's boys: "Trust in the giver of the harvest." Luke xii, 22-28.

Another boys' class: "The harvest of the world." Rev. xiv, 13-17.

Still another: "The harvest of the tares." Matthew xiii, 37-43.

And then the whole school sang:—

"What shall the harvest be?"

Then the recitations commenced again.

First class: "Men compared to fruit-trees." Matt, vii, 16-20.

Second class: "Different kinds of fruit." Gal. vi, 1-10.

Third class: "The curse of unfruitfulness." Matt, xxi, 18-20.

Fourth class: "Danger of setting the heart upon earthly fruits." Luke xii, 15-21.

Fifth class: "Necessity of labor in harvesting." Prov. x, 3-5.

Sixth class: "Now, the harvest time." John iv, 35-38.

Whole school in unison: Psalm cl, entire.

The festival was closed by the singing of the hymn:—

"Praise to God, immortal praise,
For the love that crowns our days,"

as the children marched back to the schoolroom.[4]

The whole performance was considered a great success. The superintendent and his young assistants received many congratulations, and the parents carried their little ones home well satisfied with their share in the exercises.

——- [Footnote 4: The above programme was actually carried out in a country school of the writer's acquaintance, and is given in full for the benefit of others who may be inclined to try a similar festival. It may bevaried and prolonged by the introduction of poetical passages concerning autumn, etc.]

CHAPTER XXIII.

SERVICE.

The first meeting of the "Do Good Society" had proved so successful that another was appointed for next week, at the request of the little members. Mr. Morven came in and opened the meeting with a prayer this time, after which he retired while the children were singing their first hymn. Then the president read and explained the pledge again, and asked all who had not done so already to sign it, after which she again produced the box with a slit in the cover, into which she asked every one to drop the papers on which they had written whatever they would like to have read to the society.

There was a little tittering, a little rustling, some blushing, and considerable hesitation, after which a good many of the girls and some of the boys came up in a confused mass, and dropped some folded papers into the box.

"Now," said Miss Etta, when all was quiet again, "I call upon the secretary to read what is on these papers without the names,—for that is the Bible way of not letting our right hand know what the left does,—and if any of our little members, who don't know how to write, have anything to report to the society, they may get some of the bigger ones to write it down for them. Here are some slips of paper and pencils I have provided on purpose."

Then there was another pause and some more rustling, whispering, and laughing, and some more curiously written and folded papers were dropped into the box.

These are what the secretary read:—

I.

I was coming home from school one day when I saw old Mr. Kelly trying to push his wheelbarrow of potatoes up the hill. He looked so weak that I thought I would help him, so I called Jim Byers, and we took hold of the wheelbarrow and wheeled it all the way to his door, where we emptied the potatoes into a barrel and put them away in the cellar. It was great fun!

"No doubt, it was," said Miss Etta.

II.

Kittie always calls me names when she gets mad, and I always used to think of the worst I knew to call her in return; but I thought I wouldn't since I belong to the Do Good Society. So the next time she got mad, and began to call names, I said: "Don't, Kittie, dear, let's love each other. Here's a beautiful piece of lace to make a *fichu* for your doll!" She hasn't called me names since.

"Of course not; who could?" was the comment.

III.

I met four boys with cigarettes in their mouths one day. They all took off their hats to me, but I looked the other way, as if I did not see them. "Hallo," said one of them, "—is getting stuck up." "No, I ain't stuck up; but I've promised not to encourage the use of tobacco." The boys all laughed at me, but they threw away the cigarettes, for all that.

"Who wouldn't be laughed at to accomplish such results?"

IV.

My sister will tag onto me, wherever I go. She wanted to go nutting with me and some other fellows. I was just going to tell her we didn't want babies, when I remembered the pledge, so I took her along. She picked up as many nuts as any of us. And she didn't cry a bit, even when she fell down and scratched her hand dreadfully. I sha'n't call her cry-baby any more.

V.

I work on a farm. The man I work for gives us beer sometimes. Last
Saturday night he offered me some. I wouldn't take it. "Why?" said he.
"Because I have promised to use my influence against the use of liquor.
I can't drink it."

VI.

Four of us boys have given up swearing. It's hard work, though, sometimes—we're so used to it.

"Yes, it's hard work to give up any bad habit," said Etta. "But God will help us if we ask him, and the sooner we begin, the easier it will be."

VII.

I wanted to buy, oh, such a lovely book! But I spent the money for crackers, and took them down to the poor little Ryans, whose mother is dead. I enjoyed seeing them eat them a great deal more than I should have enjoyed the book.

VIII.

I wanted to stay in bed awfully one morning. I do hate to get up! But I thought about poor old Mrs. Payne, and how cold she would find it to get up and make her fire in the dark, so I jumped right out of bed, ran down to her cottage, made the fire, and set the tea-kettle over, and got back in time for breakfast, after all.

IX.

I finished my work in the mill real early on Wednesday, because I wanted to be first at Miss Eunice's. But Jennie Ray is so slow that she never gets through hers till the last minute, so I turned to and helped her, and we both got away at half-past five. I didn't get to Miss Eunice's as early as usual, but Jennie did, a great deal earlier; so I didn't care.

The following were from the little children:—

"I helped mother wash the dishes."

"I set the table."

"I took care of the baby."

"I picked up apples."

"I made the fire," etc. etc.

* * * * *

"These are all very little things," said the president, as she detected a smile upon the faces of some of the older girls and boys "But if they are done really for the sake of 'doing good,' and pleasing God, they are just as great to him as the 'cup of cold water,' which he says 'shall not lose its reward.'"

"Here are some questions which were asked me last week after the meeting," said Etta, as she finished reading the papers. "I wonder if the girls to whom I gave them have found answers."

1. "Why is it wrong to drink beer?"

Several hands were raised and several answers given; such as:—

"Because it makes people drunk."

"Because it killed Harry."

Eric Robertson produced the following slip, which he had cut from a paper, and read it aloud:—

"Beer is regarded by many in this country as a healthy beverage. Let me give you a few of the ingredients frequently used in its manufacture. The adulterations most commonly used to give bitterness are gentian, wormwood, and quassia; to impart pungency, ginger, orange-peel, and caraway. If these were all, there would be small need of warning the young against the use of beer on account of its injurious ingredients, but when there are added, to preserve

the frothy head, alum and blue vitriol; to intoxicate, cocculus indicus, nux vomica, and tobacco; and to promote thirst, salt,—then indeed does it become necessary to instruct and warn the innocent against the use of this poisonous beverage."

2. "Are cigarettes good for boys?"

No one answered, and Etta said:—

"Boys think it manly to smoke, but it isn't. It's very dirty and very unhealthy. I heard of a little boy only twelve years old, who died very suddenly, and when the doctors examined him after his death they found the coats of his stomach all eaten up with tobacco, and yet he had only smoked cigarettes. Cigarettes are made of a little tobacco, a great deal of cabbage-leaves, old leather, and dirty paper, with snuff and ginger and *strychnine*, a deadly poison, to flavor them. The oil of tobacco itself is rank poison. Two or three drops of it put on the tongue of a dog or a cat will kill it in a few minutes. Besides, the smell of tobacco lingering in a boy's clothes or breath is very foul and disgusting. And worse than all, the effect of smoking is to create a thirst which pure, cool water does not satisfy, and those who begin by smoking or chewing tobacco are very likely to end by drinking beer and whiskey, and finally becoming drunkards."

Then questions to be answered at the next meeting were called for, and the following were given:—

1. Is it wrong to wear pretty clothes?

2. Why shouldn't people be selfish?

3. Is it swearing to say "good gracious!" and "mercy on us!"?

Miss Etta did not answer these, but wrote them down in her note-book, saying she would look up the subjects by the next meeting, and she wanted the members of the "Do Good Society" all to do the same, and then they could compare their answers.

The last part of the programme to-day was the reading of a story by the president. She half-read and half-told about a young man named Harry Wadsworth, who, although he was only a clerk in a railroad company, managed, by giving all his spare time and thought, to do so many kind things for other people, that when he died they all set about to honor his memory by each doing kind things for others, and others again followed their example, till thousands of people were all busy in hundreds of different places,

doing just as much as they could to help other people and to discountenance everything evil, and to throw their influence on the side of everything good.

Harry Wadsworth had four mottoes, which they all adopted. They were:—

"Look out and not in.
"Look forward and not back.
"Look up and not down.
"Lend a hand."

Miss Etta also told them that all sorts of clubs and societies, chiefly composed of children, had grown out of this story, and that they were called by different names; such as, "Wadsworth Clubs," "Lend a Hand Societies," "Look Out Guards," and "Look Up Legions."

One of these Wadsworth clubs, a class of great, rough, overgrown boys in a New York mission school, had supported a sick companion for a whole winter out of the savings of their own scanty earnings. Another, a group of rich Boston girls, kept three or four families of poor children constantly dressed in the clothes which they made themselves. A third had originated the idea of sea-side homes for sick city children.

"Our Do Good Society is to be like one of these," she said; "only we must have for our motive something higher than just kindness to other people. We must do good for Jesus' sake; because he does good to us and because we want to please him by doing good to his other children. And, boys and girls, we sha'n't be doing it the right way at all, if we are the least bit proud of what we do and take any glory to ourselves about it. We can not even think any good thing without the aid of the Holy Spirit; certainly we can not perform any righteous action. So we must always remember to ask for his presence, his direction, and his strength, and in this, as in all our other ways, acknowledge him."

The Do Good Society set in motion a good many other things; for the younger members, who had more time at their disposal, began to conceive a passion for performing helpful acts, and they ferreted out cases of distress which were often far beyond their power to relieve, but which thus got into the right hands.

For instance, when the children reported the case of the poverty-stricken Ryans, Miss Eunice set her "tea-party" to work to make a set of clothes for the unexpected twin-baby, for whom there was no provision, and sent a strong poor woman, whom her father paid, to take care of the helpless little ones till some better and more permanent arrangement could be made. When the boys found Harry Pemberton's mother without "oven wood," which the strong arms of her unfortunate boy used to prepare, they set about to gather and cut up enough to last her all winter; and in doing so made the further discovery that she had neither tea, sugar, nor flour in the house. This they reported at the next meeting of the society, and the result was that abundance of provisions of all kinds found their way into the poor old widow's dwelling, and she was well cared for the short remainder of her sad life. Even Bertie Sanderson caught the infectious enthusiasm, and devoted the money sent by her city aunt to get her a velvet hat and feathers, just like her cousins, to procuring a warm woolen dress and hood for a little girl in the neighborhood, who could not go to school without it. She wore her old felt all winter with content that would have been impossible a year ago.

Many opportunities of doing good offered themselves as the winter came on and sped away. There was what is called a crisis in the paper trade. A great deal more had been manufactured than could possibly be used, and no new orders were coming in. All that Mr. Mountjoy could do was to go on making paper in the hopes of selling it in better times. But as no money was coming in, it was hard to find enough with which to pay so many work-people. Many mill-owners closed their factories at once, thus throwing hundreds of workmen who had families dependent upon them out of employment. Mr. Mountjoy was advised to do this, but he could not bear to be the cause of so much suffering, and his son would not hear of it.

As the only other thing that was possible, he called them all together one day at the close of the day's work, and explained the situation to them, asking them if they would rather accept a much lower rate of wages, or have the mill close altogether and go elsewhere in search of work.

There were some blank looks as men and women thought how hard it had been to live at even the present rate of wages, but when

the young man showed them that even his proposal was only possible at a great sacrifice to himself and the family, there was not a murmur. Everybody accepted what must be, and though as the winter went on there was much poverty and privation, there was no bad feeling, no signs of that terrible desolation, so dreaded at such times—a strike.

The Mountjoys dismissed all their servants but one, the three daughters cheerfully doing each a share of the housework, and assisting in the preparation of broths, gruels, and other things needed for the sick and poor, who greatly missed the higher wages which their natural protectors had been earning. Neither girl bought a new article of wearing apparel, and Etta decidedly declined to make her usual winter visit to the city, saving thus a considerable sum of money and much still more valuable time for the blessed service to which she had devoted herself.

And so the storm was weathered, and when work recommenced in the spring with even better prospects and at the old rates of remuneration, every one was glad; but no one had really suffered, thanks to the "Do Good Society" and the consecrated hearts that were faithfully endeavoring to acknowledge God "in all their ways."

CHAPTER XXIV.

EDUCATIONAL.

With so many interests to fill her leisure hours, as well as such a pleasant and restful home, our little Katie continued to bear the confinement and hard work of the mill better than her friends had expected she would. Though she grew rapidly taller, she did not become either pale or thin. She continued to like her work, and became more and more of a favorite, both with her companions and her employers. The affair of the fifty-dollar bill had been thoroughly explained, and for a time Katie was looked upon quite as a martyr heroine. She was a little in danger of being spoiled by the attention she received, and but for the remembrance of how nearly she had yielded to the temptation to do wrong, her Christian character might have been seriously injured.

Poor Bertie, however, had a hard time of it when she first went back to the mill. Of course, it had been impossible to right her companion without implicating herself, and it was hard for her to meet the significant looks and tones of some of the other girls, who did not believe in the new saintship and did very much despise the old malice and deceit.

Although forgiven for the guilt of her sin, the poor girl had to find that she could not avoid all its punishment. No one can; and though God may forgive us freely for the sake of his dear Son, and give us a new heart or a new purpose of action, we shall still have to suffer many of the consequences of the wrong we have done, and it can never be quite as though we had never sinned, which fact it would be well to remember *before* we are led into evil.

Many a time the poor girl, quite unaccustomed to control herself, would almost break out into some furious response to an unkind word or implied taunt, and remember just in time that she was pledged to the Lord's service and must not disgrace his cause. A swift, silent prayer for help then would always bring the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, and so by degrees Bertie learned to conquer herself and to lead others to see that her repentance was sincere and her faith genuine. Katie's friendship was a great blessing to her at

this time. Katie had entirely forgiven her treacherous friend's part in the affair which had caused her so much sorrow. She remembered only her dangerous illness, and that they were both now fellow-Christians and members of the same church. She was anxious to do all in her power to help Bertie in her struggle against the sins of her heart and the bad habits of her life, and, as is apt to be the case when we forgive and try to help any one, she soon came to love her very much. And this friendship and support served, more than anything else, to reinstate Bertie in the good graces of the other girls.

It was stated some time since that Mrs. Robertson had other plans with reference to her family of girls and boys, which she intended to put in operation when the long winter evenings came. This was the formation of a class for regular study, of at least one or two of the branches which her own children had attended to at school. But these plans were afterward merged in those of the young manufacturer.

The mill-girls, although they had generally had fair common-school advantages before they commenced work, were, of course, from that time totally deprived of them. They knew how to read, write, and "do examples" in the simpler rules of arithmetic. Perhaps this would be quite education enough for those girls who are to pass their lives in factories of the older world. But it is not so in America, where everybody reads and everybody thinks, where no one is stationary, no position permanent—where the operative of to-day is the employer of to-morrow—where many a girl steps from a position of toil and honorable self-support into that of mistress of a mansion, and is called to dispense a hospitality which in other lands would be called princely. In our as yet unsettled mode of existence, education is the one thing needful, because education is the only thing of which the "chances and changes" of life can not strip us—the only thing which will adapt itself gracefully to any position, from the cottage and tenement-room to the presidential chair.

Eunice and James Mountjoy had often talked over the loss of educational advantages to which boys and girls entering the mill at so early an age were of necessity subjected, and this winter they took their youngest sister into confidence. The result was the commencement of a "night school," held, however, from four o'clock till seven. The mill was now only working three-quarters time, so

these three hours remained to be filled up, and no one objected to putting off supper an hour for this purpose.

The school-house did double duty—the day scholars departing just as the more advanced classes assembled, and the trustees gladly gave the use of the building for so beneficent a purpose. But it was not to be expected that the poor young overworked teacher could do double duty too. She was, in fact, only a girl, not much in advance of the "night scholars," either in age or acquirements, and well calculated to profit with them by superior advantages. Another hired teacher was not to be thought of, for the school committee were not entrusted with spare funds, and the Mountjoys, who might have furnished a teacher's board and salary upon ordinary occasions, were this winter taxed to the utmost strain their finances would bear.

In this dilemma Etta made the startling proposition of becoming teacher herself.

"You!" said Eunice, in astonishment. For to her, her sister always seemed the little child whom her dead mother had confided to her care. "You're not old enough. I thought of offering myself, but really my hands are full, I can't do another thing."

"I should think not," said James. "You do everything for us all. You need four hands for what you do already. But why should not Etta? You don't need her help in the afternoons, and surely she ought to be competent."

"I am afraid"—

"I know," broke in the girl. "You are afraid I will get tired of it, and drop it as I have done so many things. You've a right to think so. But you know I have a new motive and a new strength now. Eunice, what is the use of my superior education, if I can't do something with it for the Lord? It seems to me that this is one of the 'ways' in which I can 'acknowledge him.' Won't you let me try it?"

"If papa will consent," said her sister. And that settled it, as they all knew; for Mr. Mountjoy always consented that Etta should do exactly as she pleased. He only stipulated that her brother should always be on hand to bring her home, as during the winter months the school would not be over till after dark.

Etta proved—as all knew she would prove—a very efficient and interesting teacher. It was quite amusing to her brother, when he

sometimes came for her half an hour before school was over, to see the quiet dignity with which she kept the great rough boys in order. But the work soon became too much for her alone. The "night school" grew into such a popular institution that it had more pupils than one person could properly attend to in the short space of three hours. So Mr. James arranged his time at some personal sacrifice to himself, and managed to take some of the classes. While, to the great astonishment of all, Rhoda, the middle sister, came out of her shell sufficiently to volunteer to give drawing lessons to such of the boys and girls as should show any decided talent or inclination. There is something contagious in beneficence. Those surrounded by its atmosphere are sure, sooner or later, to take the infection. Of course this school was better for the children than any plan of Mrs. Robertson's devising could have been, and her whole family were among its most enthusiastic and energetic members. Gretchen learned to write English, and Tessa to read and care for better things than sentimental fiction. And Eric, while far outstripping her in his studies, seemed to find great pleasure in assisting in hers, helping her over difficulties, and carrying her books to and from the school. But by far the brightest of the scholars were Katie and Alfred Robertson. They both learned so easily, and exhibited so much enthusiasm in the pursuit of knowledge, that once Eunice Mountjoy said to Mrs. Robertson:—

"It seems almost a pity that your children should be obliged to perform mill-work. My brother says that Alfred shows quite an uncommon taste for natural science, especially chemistry. And I think our little Katie would, after a few years' study, make a capital teacher, and you know she would make a great deal more money in that way than she ever can in the mill, with much less expenditure of time and strength."

"Yes," said Mrs. Robertson, with a sigh. "I never thought that my husband's children would have to work for a living."

"Working for a living is not degrading, Mrs. Robertson. The doctor himself did that."

"Of course. But he did it as a gentleman—not in a mill."

"My father and brother, too, earn their livings in a mill, and neither they nor we feel at all degraded by it," said Eunice, quietly. "Only, if your boy has talents which will fit him for a profession

beneficial to the human race, like that of his father's, it seems almost a pity that they should not be cultivated. Depend upon it, self-support is always honorable, for man or woman, and we should consider our work high or low, not because it is considered 'genteel' or not, but because it does or does not do the most good. I wish that something could turn up to help both Alfred and Katie to better educations, for I believe they might thus do a great deal more good."

And Mrs. Robertson wished so too. But she was wise enough not to say anything to her children about it.

Better things were in store for the children, however, than their mother's heart had dared to hope for; and for once she felt thoroughly ashamed of her murmurings and want of faith. One evening toward spring, when the merry group came from school more noisily than usual, and, as usual, greatly in want of their delayed supper, they were all slightly astonished to see a light in the window of the seldom-used sitting-room. They noticed, as they went in, a strange hat in the hall.

"What can your mother be doing in the best room?" said Tessa, as she and
Katie reached their own room.

Tessa was always inquisitive, and the sight of a strange man's hat had greatly excited her curiosity.

"I am sure I don't"—but at that moment the girls were interrupted by Alfred, who rushed in without knocking, and shouted, though quite out of breath with excitement:—

"Katie! Katie! Mother wants you! Come quick! Who do you suppose is here?
It's Uncle Alfred—all the way from California! Isn't it splendid?"

"I didn't know we had an uncle in California, did you?" said Katie.

But there was no opportunity for her brother to answer, as by this time they had reached the parlor door, which stood open now, and both children were warmly embraced by a gentleman whom at first neither of them could see.

"What an old man I must be," said the gentleman, as he released them, "to have three such grown-up people for nephews and nieces! And it seems only the other day since Eric and I, and you too, Linda,

were no bigger. Yet they were all born after I went away. Such a little time!"

"But many sad things have happened since then, Alfred. It seems to me a very long time since your brother Eric went away never to come back, and left me to battle with the world with no one to help me feed and educate his children."

There was a slight tone of reproach in the widow's tone as she said this, but the returned brother did not seem to notice it, as he said reverently:—

"No one but God. You would have told me in the old days when I didn't believe it or care for it that you could not have a better or more efficient friend; and now that I do believe it, I am sure that you have found it true."

"Yes, I have," said the mother, looking with thankful pride upon her well-grown boys, and bright and healthy, if diminutive, little girl. "God has been very good to us, and I have every reason to think well of his protecting care."

"And the children," said their uncle, "have they too learned to trust in their Saviour and do his will?"

"Eric and Katie have. Alfred is, I am afraid, a little too much like his uncle of old times."

"I am sorry to hear that. He loses so much of the joy of youth and the strength of growing up into true manliness. I hope he will never have cause to be as sorry as his uncle is that he did not give his Saviour 'the kindness of his youth.' But we will have plenty of time to talk about all these things by-and-by. Just now I am as anxious for my supper as these young folks must be. I remember of old, Linda, what a good supper you can give a hungry traveler, and I don't suppose I need an invitation."

"Why, no!" said his hostess, with a little flush of embarrassment. "Only you must prepare yourself for a somewhat large tea-party, and not of a very aristocratic kind. For, you know, I keep a sort of factory boarding-house."

"One who has camped with California miners is not likely to be very fastidious," said Mr. Robertson. "But I suspect if your boarders are companions of this niece of mine, they will be good enough company for me."

CHAPTER XXV.

OUT INTO THE WORLD.

"So you wouldn't like to be my little girl and go to school and be educated for a lady," said Mr. Alfred Robertson to his niece, a few days after he had made his unexpected appearance among his relatives.

"I'd like to go to school and study, of course," said Katie. "Uncle, don't think me very rude or ungrateful, but I wish you would send Alfred."

"Why, rather than yourself?"

"Because Alfred is a boy, and he wants to be a doctor like father. He never told mother, because he thought it would make her feel badly. He knew she hadn't any money to send him to school or college, so he just worked on at the mill, though I know he hates it."

"But, little girl, it would cost a great deal of money to send a boy through college and support him while he was studying a profession. Have you thought of that?"

"I don't know, sir. I don't know much about money. You are not rich enough to do it then? I'm so sorry," and there was a tone of great disappointment in the young voice.

"I am rich enough perhaps, but"—

"Oh, sir! Alfred would be sure to pay it back as soon as he became a doctor. I could begin to pay you now. I make six dollars a week in the mill as it is, and I could make more if mother would let me work over hours. Alfred wouldn't like to take charity, and I wouldn't like to have him."

Her uncle laughed. "So it is because she is an independent little piece that she does not want to go to school and learn to be a lady," said he.

"I'd like very much to learn to be a *teacher*," said she. "Miss Eunice thinks that teachers can do a great deal of good, and I could make money to help mother with, just as well or better than I can in the mill."

"Well, you shall go to school on your own terms. You shall have the education anyway, and do what you like afterward. And since you are so very independent, I will lend you the money and you may pay it all back to me when you begin to make your fortune by school-teaching. Is it a bargain?"

The little girl blushed with delight, threw her arms around her kind uncle, giving him a kiss by way of thanks, and rushed off to tell her wonderful news to her mother. But she found it was not quite such news as she expected it to be. Mr. Robertson and his sister-in-law had talked it all over after the little folks were in bed, and he had definitely offered to give the two children the education which their mother had so greatly desired. He had amassed considerable property during his seventeen years' sojourn in California, and having no children of his own, was anxious to make up to those of his brother for his long neglect.

"I never thought anything about my duty toward them," he said, "until God brought me to myself, and showed me what a sinner I was, and then brought me to himself, and showed me what a Saviour he is. Then I began to remember all my neglected duties, and I determined to come home and atone for the past as soon as I could."

The proposal of sending Eric, also, to school had been made to him. But he gratefully declined. He was almost a man now, and was used to his work and liked it. He stood well with his employers, and hoped before many years to rise to the position of superintendent of one of the departments. His one great ambition was to become such a manufacturer as Mr. James. And in the meanwhile he would be at home to watch over his mother and contribute to her support. His uncle admired his pluck and independence, and did not press his offers farther upon him. Alfred was delighted. It was as Katie had said: he had endured the bindery because he must, and he was a boy of too good principles to worry over the inevitable, or to make people unhappy because of his likes or dislikes. But, all the same, he had disliked his work, and longed to do something more in accordance with his tastes. Only to Eric and Katie had he confided his indefinite longings, and his mother had never guessed how much he had desired a change. Now he was full of plans for the future; looking forward especially to the days when he should restore his father's

sign to its old position, fit up the house and office as it used to be, and support his mother in ease and comfort once more.

But that was a long way off. A great deal of hard studying had to be done first, and Alfred was far behind other boys of his age—in book knowledge, at least. Perhaps he had, during his three years' experience in the factory, learned a good deal which would eventually prove very useful in a profession which dealt with practical details of practical things. About one thing he was quite decided. Delicate little Katie should never again work for her living. When she left school she should be a lady, like Miss Eunice and Miss Etta at the great house, and idle all day long if she chose to do so.

"But I don't choose," laughed Katie. "Do you think an independent young lady, who has made her own living for more than a year, will ever consent to be dependent upon any one, even if he is her brother? Besides, who wants to be idle? I am sure Miss Eunice isn't idle; nor Miss Etta, now. They are both as busy as they can be all the time; and Mr. James, too. Think how much good he does, and all of them!"

"Oh, if you mean *that* kind of work! Miss Eunice and Miss Etta don't get paid for what they do. They don't work for a living."

"I think they do," said Mr. Robertson, who had listened quietly to the talk of the children. "I think that every noble, honorable man and woman works, and is glad to work, for a living. The old saying that 'the world owes us a living' is a very fallacious one. The world doesn't owe us anything, and God does not either. Indeed, he has said: 'If any man will not work, neither shall he eat.'"

"Everybody does not work—for money, I mean," said Alfred. "Some people are gentlemen and ladies."

"If you call idlers gentlemen and ladies, we do not agree as to terms; but if you mean, as I suppose you do, that some people, especially a large proportion of women and girls, do not formally receive a definite amount of money for a definite amount of work, that is true. Don't you think, though, that mothers and sisters and wives, who keep house, take care of little children, do all the family sewing, care for the sick, and attend to the many details of a woman's life, work?—yes, do a great deal of work for a very small amount of living? Think of your mother for a moment."

"Yes, sir; I see."

"And," continued his uncle, "when ladies devote themselves faithfully to good works, Sunday-school work, work among the poor, teaching, etc., they are as really working for their living as if they were in a factory."

"It doesn't seem so."

"No, it doesn't seem so, because we have wrong ideas about the nobility of labor. If we really believed what the Bible says,—that the servant of all is the chiefest of all,—we should value work and workmen just in proportion to the use which the work they do is to the community and the world. In that sense, Alfred, a doctor's work or a minister's work might stand a little higher than a manufacturer's, a teacher's position be more desirable than that of a factory-girl, because in all of these professions there is more opportunity to do good to the bodies and souls of men; and yet I doubt if any are in a position to do more good than your Mr. James Mountjoy and his family. And as to being gentlemen or ladies, it is just as much your duty and just as possible to be those in the rag-room as in a palace, should your lot be cast there."

"It is not considered so genteel," said Tessa, who had not quite forgotten the teachings of her novels.

"By whom? Foolish butterflies? or men and women of sense? Gentility meant, originally, gentleness: that gentleness which better opportunities of education were supposed to give. But so much culture as that is now within the reach of every one, and there is no reason why it should not exist in the mill and the counting-room, the kitchen and the store, as well as in the parlor and the library."

"But after all," said Mrs. Robertson, "there seems something low and sordid in working for money."

"That is because we should not work for money—as the motive of work, I mean. If every one in the world were a Christian, and did the work which came to him to do, upon Bible principles, endeavoring to fulfil the precept: 'Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,' and accepted his living, small or great, from his hands, just as a little child accepts his from his father's hands, we should hear nothing about the degradation of service. Every one would constantly say: 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' And we

should take our daily bread, as well as all the pleasant things of our lives, thankfully from him who has given us all things to enjoy."

Mr. Robertson was rather answering his sister and talking a little above the level of his auditors, but some of them understood and remembered his words. To Katie, henceforth work had an added dignity. It was raised even above the high level upon which she had thus far placed it,—that of helping her mother,—and became something that she might do for Jesus who had done, and was still doing, so much for her. She was quite impatient to enter upon those studies which were to fit her for future usefulness, and many a time during her school life, when the novelty had worn away and her energies might have flagged, she was stirred up to new zeal and perseverance by the recollection of this conversation.

To the other girls also this talk about work and compensation was beneficial. Perhaps they might have felt a little jealous at Katie's apparent elevation above themselves,—even Christian girls have wrong feelings sometimes,—but if factory-work could really be done to the glory of God as much as teaching could, there was nothing degrading in their work, nothing aristocratic in Katie's. God had given her one kind of work to do, and them another—that was all. They could please him as well as she; and he would give to all alike a great deal more than they deserved.

And now began a busy time in the doctor's old house. Brother and sister must be fitted out for school with such wardrobes as they had never possessed in their lives before. Uncle Alfred's ready purse provided these, but he was careful not to destroy the independent spirit of his young relatives, and let them consider this as the first instalment of his loan.

Katie left the factory at the close of the week, receiving with her usual weekly wages an extra five-dollar bill, as a testimonial from Mr. James for her uniform faithfulness and the good example she had always set in the mill.

"We are sorry to lose you, Katie," he said, "but I am glad that you are to be advanced to better work and a wider sphere of usefulness. Wherever you go, the prayers of Squantown Sunday-school will go with you, and I am sure that you will always find, as you have done already, the truth of the words:—

"'Commit thy way unto the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass.'"

Nor did the pleasant incidents stop here. On the Wednesday following, Miss Eunice again invited all the girls of her sister's class to unite with those of her own. There was no lesson that night, and very little work done. All the brothers and friends, who usually acted as escorts, were invited to come to tea, and all the members of the "Do Good Society." There was room for all, and all had "a splendid time." Games were played, and songs sung, and everybody was made to understand that this was a farewell party in honor of Katie Robertson.

At nine o'clock Mr. Morven came in, and, with a few pleasant and earnest words, presented the little girl with a beautifully bound Bible, to the purchase of which every one present had contributed a little.

"I trust," said he, "that our little Katie will make this book 'the man of her counsel, and the guide of her youth,' in the new life upon which she is entering, and that, as the Saviour to whom she has consecrated herself will surely keep his promise 'never to leave or forsake her,' she will be faithful 'in all her ways to acknowledge him,' and grow in grace as she does in knowledge."

Then, calling his little congregation to join with him, the good pastor prayed that the dear Lord would guide and guard this lamb of his through "all the chances and changes of this mortal life, and finally bring her to his heavenly kingdom."

And so, with loving kisses, and gifts, and solemn words of prayer, they sent Katie Robertson out into the world to meet its responsibilities.

The next morning, in the early dawn, she and her brother set out with their uncle for the schools in which they were to be fitted for their life-work. And as these schools were a long way off, and the journey thither rather expensive, it was many months before Squantown saw them again.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

And now we must draw our story to a close. The reader has become acquainted with its characters, and knows about the agencies for good which are at work in the manufacturing town of Squantown, as well as the influences brought to bear upon the Christian development of our boys and girls. The machinery is all adjusted, the power is applied, the wheels are in motion—nothing can hinder continued and beneficent work, except the possible weariness in well-doing of any of the parts, and the failure to look to God in faith for his promised strength, thus cutting off the connection with the source of all good things. So long as manufacturers and operatives, teachers and scholars, pastors and people continue in all their ways to acknowledge God, this will not be the case; and the manufacturing village will realize the scriptural idea: "Happy is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

We may expect to look ahead and see the boys and girls with whom we are acquainted, growing up into good, useful, and happy men and women. Bertie Sanderson will, little by little, overcome her natural and acquired faults of character. Envy and malice have already received their death blow, vanity and idleness will follow in their train. The higher interests of Christian love and church-work will dwarf the importance of dress and display, and Bertie will grow into a useful girl, faithful to, and contented with, her position—a help to her mother at home, a good example to Nina and the younger children.

We may expect to see Gretchen growing into a strong, sturdy German woman, sending home from time to time the savings of her earnings, which will help to make her far-off brothers and sisters very comfortable, the deep, though quiet, force of her affections expanding themselves to embrace many others on this side of the sea. We may be sure that her constant nature, upheld by divine grace, will never lose its hold of the Saviour who came to take care of

her in answer to her Sunday-school teacher's call that Sunday evening when she seemed to be so near to the other world.

We may hope to see the other members of Miss Etta's class, Miss Eunice's tea-party, and the "Do Good Society," all growing wiser and better as they grow older, and becoming more and more Christ-like as they follow in his steps. And we may be sure that Etta Mountjoy, cured of her erratic moods and wayward temper, first by being anchored to the rock of ages, and then by the safeguards and helps which the church of Christ throws around its members, will be still foremost in leading the little phalanx, her energy and enthusiasm insuring success in every good thing undertaken. She will find time for home duties as well as those of a more public kind, will be a right hand to Eunice as she continues on the even tenor of her way, and the sunshine of home to her father and brother James, until some good man discovers the sunshine and bears it away with him to be the illumination of another circle and the centre of another home.

We may see "Mr. James" still the considerate Christian mill-owner, conducting business on the strictest principles of integrity, and treating his employees as though of the same flesh and blood as himself, for whose bodies and souls he is in some measure responsible. And when at length Eunice drops the housekeeping into the hands of "Mrs. James," we may be sure that she, as well as her husband, will continue to "honor God with their substance" and "in all their ways acknowledge him."

If we turn our prophetic gaze upon the Robertson family, we shall find that the mother thereof is gradually exchanging her grumbling and forebodings of evil for hope and thankfulness at the success and good prospects of her children, who are profiting largely by the opportunities afforded them by their uncle's kindness.

While greatly missing her from her home, the mother does not feel Katie's absence as she would have done but for the girl boarders, who, while affording her both society and support, give her such ample occupation that she has little time to realize her loneliness or to indulge in fretfulness. Indeed, Tessa has already forestalled her future position, and become to the widow as a beloved daughter. The sweetness and softness of the Southern girl fit her to take culture and refinement very easily. She quickly assimilates with her surroundings, and models herself upon those she loves and

admires—who are, in this instance, Katie Robertson and Etta Mountjoy. From the first, bold, bright Eric has felt the charm of her black eyes, and loved to listen to her soft, foreign accent, and it would not be surprising if, when he reaches the height of his ambition, and becomes either superintendent of the bindery or first foreman of the mill, he should ask Italian Tessa to share both his name and his success. But that is a great way off.

Katie is our first friend. With her character and fortune we have the most to do. It would be nice, did the limits of our volume allow, to follow her into her new school-life, to see how her energy, industry, independence, and cheerfulness go with her, rebuking homesickness, and causing her to make the most of every moment, and the best of every advantage. We should see that her path at school is not all strewn with roses, any more than was that at the mill; that different circumstances bring different temptations and develop different traits of character. We might perhaps find that silly school-girls at first decline to admit on terms of perfect equality one who had "worked for her living," and was, in their not very elegant parlance, "nothing but a mill-girl." Perhaps we might have to chronicle some lonely and sad hours in consequence, and some rebellious feelings hard to be kept down.

But Katie's life is in the keeping of One wise enough to arrange all its discipline, "as it may be most expedient for her," loving enough to sympathize with and comfort her in all times of sorrow and perplexity, and able with every temptation to make also a way of escape.

So, guarded and guided, Katie Robertson will be able to live down all that foolish and proud girls may say about her, and in the end become a favorite, not only with the wise, discriminating teachers, but also with warm-hearted, if wrong-headed, companions. We believe that throughout life, as in its beginning, she will continue to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and that, as she daily endeavors "in all her ways to acknowledge him," he will "give her the desires of her heart."

THE END

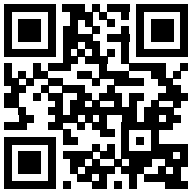
Katie Robertson

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