



BLUEGRASS
AND
WATTLE



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BLUEGRASS AND WATTLE

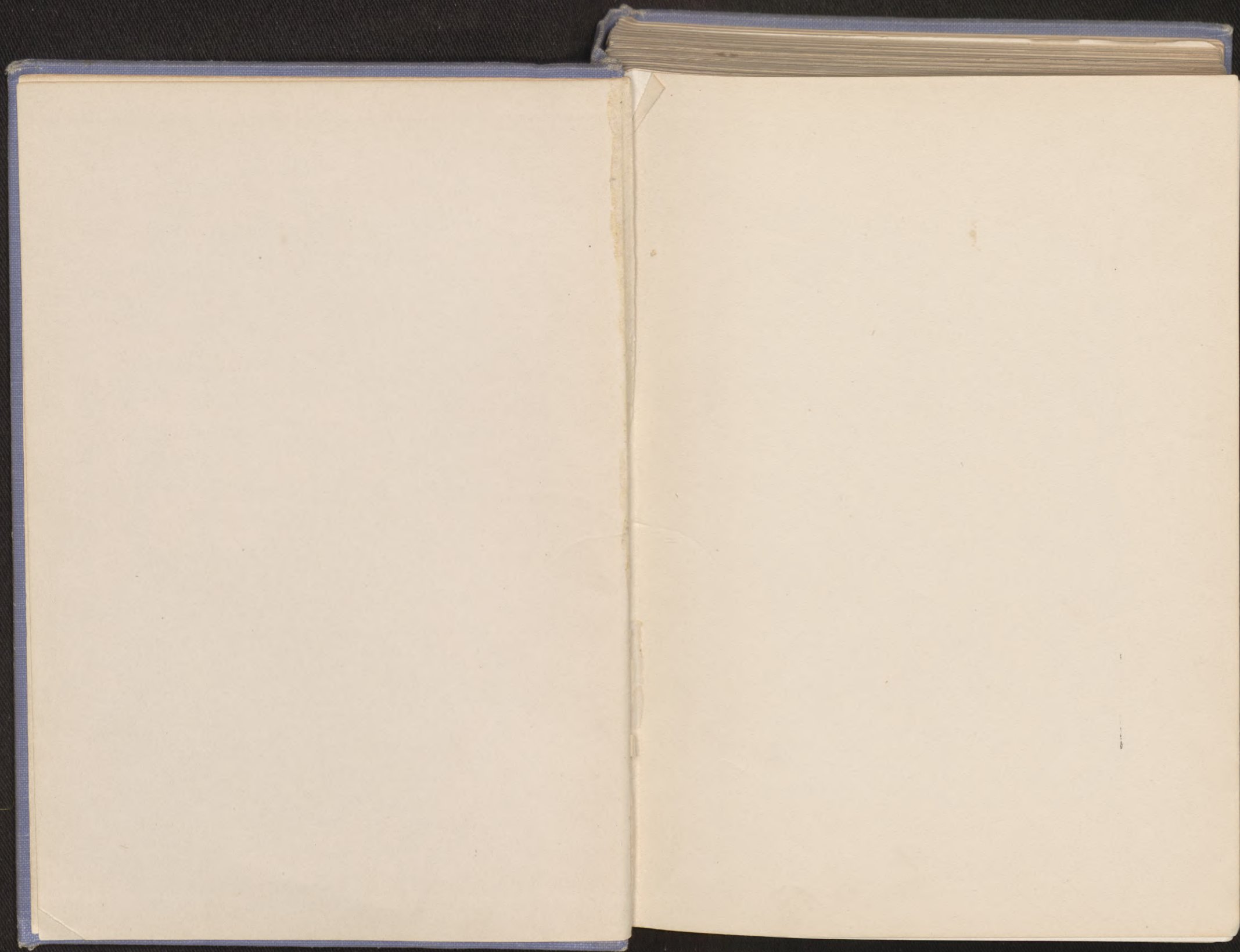
MARY ADDAMS BAYNE

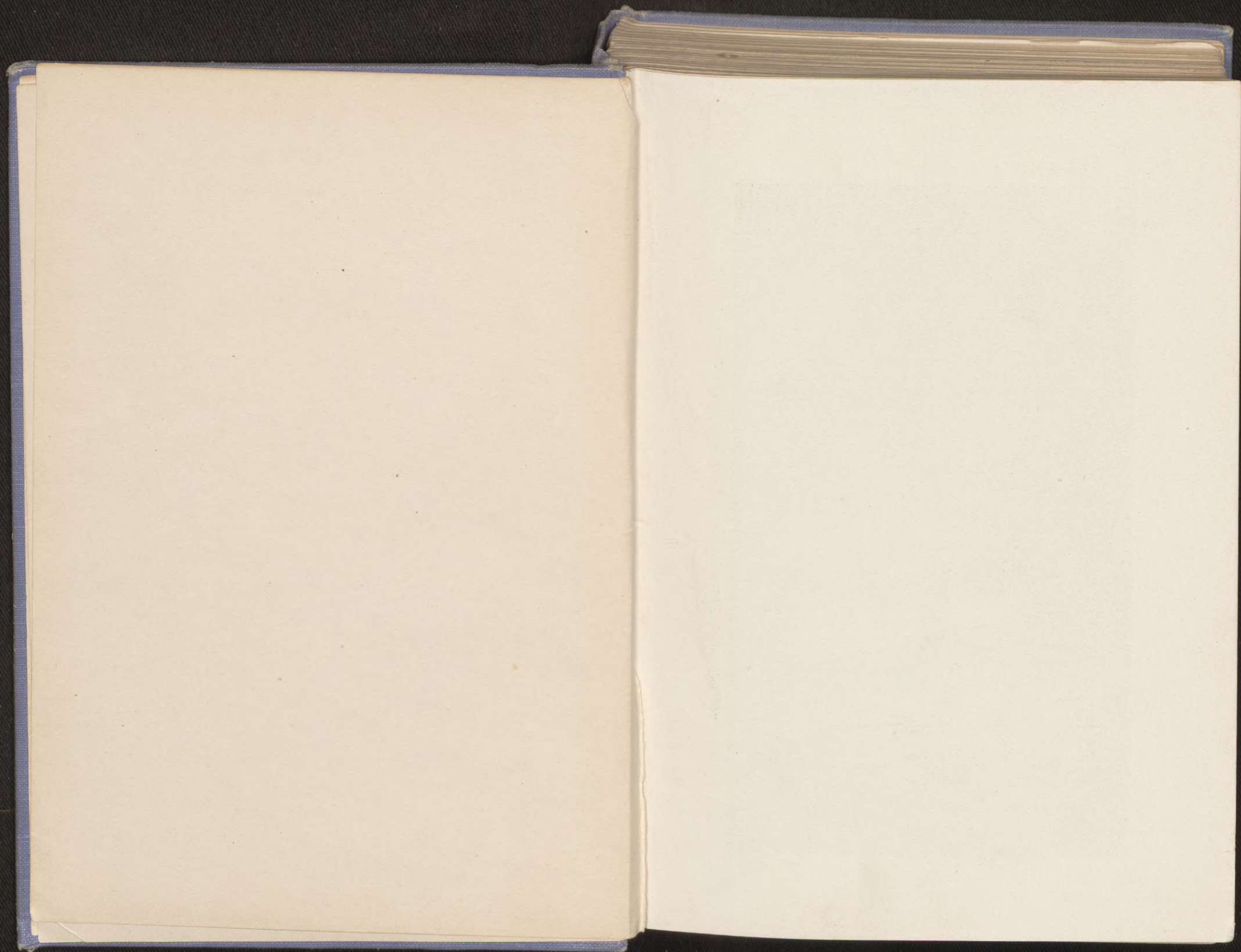
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"Let this sunshine, this tender bloom of field and woods, plead for me."

BLUEGRASS AND WATTLE

OR

THE MAN FROM AUSTRALIA

BY

MARY ADDAMS BAYNE

Author of "Crestlands"

ILLUSTRATED BY O. A. STEMLER



THE STANDARD PUBLISHING COMPANY

Cincinnati, O.

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DEDICATION

To my husband

James C. Bayne

in

grateful recognition

of his

loving and unfailing

encouragement.



CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
"UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS"	1
CHAPTER II.	
"ROCKED IN THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP"	9
CHAPTER III.	
SIGHTSEEING IN COLOMBO	17
CHAPTER IV.	
A DISH OF GOSSIP	30
CHAPTER V.	
A COMMITTEE MEETING	39
CHAPTER VI.	
HIS FIRST APPEARANCE	45
CHAPTER VII.	
PROBATIONARY	49
CHAPTER VIII.	
"ARE YOU MR. BRIGHT?"	53
CHAPTER IX.	
WILLOW BROOK FARM	63
CHAPTER X.	
A KINSMAN OF "THE GREAT PACIFICATOR"	72
CHAPTER XI.	
MISS MARSHALL RECEIVES	79
CHAPTER XII.	
OF A PEDAGOGICAL NATURE	91
CHAPTER XIII.	
THE LADIES' AID	95
CHAPTER XIV.	
THE SOCIAL VORTEX	106
CHAPTER XV.	
AN AUTHORITY ON THE RAINCROW	111
CHAPTER XVI.	
AN OLD FOLKS' CONCERT	120
CHAPTER XVII.	
A LITERARY SYMPOSIUM	135

	PAGE
CHAPTER XVIII.	
"RANTING 'ROUND IN PLEASURE'S RING"	144
CHAPTER XIX.	
FLEETFOOT TO THE RESCUE	158
CHAPTER XX.	
LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM	168
CHAPTER XXI.	
THE AWAKENING	176
CHAPTER XXII.	
SUNDAY AFTERNOON VISITORS	185
CHAPTER XXIII.	
FRIENDS IN ADVERSITY	195
CHAPTER XXIV.	
THE LIGHT THAT FAILED	202
CHAPTER XXV.	
EPISTOLARY	217
CHAPTER XXVI.	
WEDDING BELLS	222
CHAPTER XXVII.	
THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION	230
CHAPTER XXVIII.	
THE MOUNT OF VISION	240
CHAPTER XXIX.	
AUNT CASSIE AND "DE RABBIT FOOT"	245
CHAPTER XXX.	
STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL	251
CHAPTER XXXI.	
THE CLOUDS DISPERSE	263
CHAPTER XXXII.	
"THE UNDIMMED HOUR"	270
CHAPTER XXXIII.	
"WHERE THOU GOEST"	278
CHAPTER XXXIV.	
THE MAGNETISM OF THE CROSS	286
CHAPTER XXXV.	
UNCLE CHARLEY GETS HIS MONEY	293
CHAPTER XXXVI.	
CONCLUSION	299

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- (1) "LET THIS SUNSHINE, THIS TENDER BLOOM OF
WOOD AND FIELD, PLEAD FOR ME." CHAPTER
XX. Frontispiece.
- (2) "YES, SUH, DAT WUZ DE WAY OB IT." CHAPTER
XV. Page 114
- (3) "NOT SO!" THUNDERED PETER HENSON.
CHAPTER XXIV. Page 210
- (4) "I HAVE TOLD YOU THAT I LOVE YOU. DO
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?" CHAPTER
XXXII. Page 276

*"Each fiery test of experience that
stirs the depths of one's being, trans-
forms one by scorching away superficial
little foibles and vanities, and arousing
into consciousness the sterner and pro-
founder elements of character."*

—HJALMAR HJORTH BOYESEN.



EXPLANATION OF THE TITLE

While this story was running as a serial under its subtitle, "The Man from Australia," the publishers offered a reward of fifty dollars to the person who would submit the best name to be used as a title for the story when it should appear in book form.

From the many names submitted by the prize competitors, "Bluegrass and Wattle," a title sent in by Leslie W. Baker, a student in Transylvania University and a native of South Australia, was selected by the judges as the most attractive because of its oddity and its aptness.

The setting of the first three chapters of the story is South Australia; that of the remainder of the story is central Kentucky; and, as wattle is to the people of South Australia what bluegrass is to the people of central Kentucky, the correlation of the two emblems, in the title, is singularly appropriate.

The natural habitat of the wattle (*acacia saligna*) is the southern portion of Australia. It is a handsome, umbrageous shrub or tree with long, smooth, lanceolate leaves and large racemes of fragrant yellow flowers.

BLUEGRASS AND WATTLE

OR

THE MAN FROM AUSTRALIA

CHAPTER I.

"UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS."

A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.

—*Longfellow.*

With face upturned, hands clasped beneath his head, and with thoughts projected far into the future, Philip Bryce, a dark-haired youth of twenty, lay under one of the majestic gum-trees that border the sloping banks of the Gawler River in the state of South Australia. He was a large-framed, well-grown specimen of young manhood, with clear-cut features and deep-set hazel eyes; but his extreme pallor, thin cheeks, hollow temples, and the emaciation of his tall form bore evidence of recent illness. He was just recovering from a prolonged attack of fever; and on this Sunday afternoon in early February he had, for the first time since his illness, sought this, his favorite solitude under the trees.

It was midsummer, a season often arid and of fierce heat in this subtropical clime; but in this favored locality, near the beautiful city of Adelaide, the heat even at noon-day was tempered by the invigorating ocean breeze; and at this kindly afternoon hour the light of the declining summer day shone over all the land with a caressing radiance brilliant enough to charm, but neither glaring nor oppres-

sive; and in this sheltered retreat under the gum-trees the gold of the descending sun glinted through the foliage and was reflected upon the stream with still softer radiance. There was a sense of fragrance in the air; and the breeze whispering through the leaves, the rhythmic murmur of the river, and the subdued evening chatter of bright-plumaged birds mingled into a soft and magical harmony. But the problem of the future was bearing hard upon Philip Bryce that afternoon, and his thoughts were not in accord with his peaceful environment.

For months before his illness a longing for change and adventure, natural in a degree to every boyish heart, and which in his case amounted to passionate craving, had made him dissatisfied with the peaceful life at Undulata, his father's station. But now when his dreams of change and travel appeared likely to become realized, and when, too, it would have seemed natural that his former restless longings should have clamored with the more insistent force by reason of his long confinement to a sick-room, he felt a strange reluctance to leaving home. In truth, it would seem as though the life to which he had hitherto been accustomed might have afforded sufficient charm to have contented any one. On either side the river lay the rich lands of Undulata. In the deeper shade on the opposite bank herds of cattle were tranquilly grazing, and the pastures to right and left of him were dotted with sheep. Farther back from the river, and separated from the pastures by a wide, white road, there stood in an environment of trees and tropical shrubs the old, many-roomed and double-balconied stone dwelling, its walls covered with vines and climbing roses, its front doorway sentineled by a pair of noble eucalyptus-trees. At Undulata, which was an unusually large holding for even South Australia, where large holdings are the rule, there were single fields each as large as an ordinary Ameri-

can farm, and hundreds of acres of grain were cultivated annually. Big droves of Herefords and Durhams and short-horns browsed upon the rich meadowlands, and thousands of sheep were gathered each year under the shearing-sheds of the estate. There were orchards and vineyards, and training-stables for the finest breeds of horses. There were likewise commodious tenant-houses, forges, mills, shops, stores, and all things necessary for the comfort and well-being of the large population of workers on this mammoth estate where the pulse of rural activity beat strongly and steadily, and where life was free, beautiful, and of infinite variety.

Hitherto Mr. and Mrs. Bryce had tried to curb their son's restless spirit, but since his illness they appeared not only willing, but anxious, that he should, for a time at least, cut adrift from his moorings and launch out upon the deeper waters of life.

As he lay there in the afternoon shade he pondered over this changed parental attitude. "Can it be," he thought, "that they fear the effects of that fever? This cough does trouble me at times, but I'm getting stronger every day, and shall soon be able to throw it off. But, whatever their reasons, father and mother are certainly strongly in favor of my leaving home; and, after all, their present views are in accord with what until now has been my chief ambition. So I'll throw off this perverse, contradictory mood and do my best to carry out their wishes.

"Shall I try mother's idea—a long visit to Tasmania and New Zealand; or father's suggestion of a year's travel in England, to be followed by a three years' course at Oxford? The long sea voyage would set me up in health, the year of travel would be delightful, and Oxford would fulfill my fondest dreams of a classical education."

As he thus pondered and planned he thrust his fingers

into an inner pocket of his coat, and drew forth a little box containing some small white tablets. He was about to take one of these, when a revulsion of feeling came over him, and with an ejaculation of disgust he flung box and contents far from him. "Has it come to this," he muttered, "that I can't plan anything, or even think connectedly, without resorting to that accursed stuff? Is this why father and mother have all at once overcome their reluctance to my leaving home, and now urge a change of scene and travel and all that? Do they fear my becoming a morphine fiend? Thank God! their fears are groundless. Now that I no longer need the drug as I did during that terrible fever, I can and I will be man enough to resist the craving."

By this time the sunset hues had faded from the western skies; but the lad still lingered until the first pale, shimmering starlight had begun to tremble into being, and there was borne to him through the clear air the peal of church bells. He sprang to his feet, and quickly wended his way homeward, where the rest of the family were awaiting his coming to set forth for evening service at the village of Merdin, half a mile from Undulata.

The beloved old minister, William Hammond, did not preach that evening. The sermon, or rather the address, was delivered by a visiting preacher, Charles Elbridge, a young man of about thirty years, who had just returned from America, where he had recently been graduated from Kentucky University,* and who was now beginning his labors as an evangelist in South Australia. His descriptive powers and his eloquence were above the average, and his theme that evening was an inspiring one. He painted in glowing terms life in America, especially in what he termed "the garden spot of the Western Hemisphere," the blue-grass region of Kentucky. He then spoke enthusiastically

*Now Transylvania University.

of the advantages, to any one intending to enter the ministry, of a course of study at this university at Lexington, Ky.

Hammond, who had been preaching for the church in Merdin for the last twenty years, was himself a native of Kentucky and a graduate of this university; and during his visits to Undulata the Bryce family had often heard him speak with enthusiasm, but with half-suppressed sighs of homesickness, of this land of his birth and young manhood. These recitals by the old preacher had always found an eager listener in the boy Philip, who felt that this far-off western country was almost as homelike as his native land. And this summer evening, swayed by the evangelist's eloquence, he felt again the longing to visit this magical Kentucky land.

After enlarging upon the glories of America and the advantages to be had at this western university, Elbridge took up the next phase of his subject—the needs of the Australian churches. He spoke of the rapid growth of the cause in Australia during the last decade, and of the growing necessity for more laborers who were not only gifted with earnestness, piety, and native ability, but who had been trained and equipped by an education at this western university, which was, he claimed, especially adapted to the training of young men for the Christian ministry, and with which in this one particular no other institution of learning, however thorough and classical, could compete.

To Philip Bryce, as he listened, old things seemed to pass away, old plans and dreams and ambitions lost their charm, and his impulsive, impressionable boy heart was on fire with a longing to follow the example of this eloquent evangelist.

Present in the congregation were a number of young men of whom many were enthusiastic "Endeavorers" and

Christian Association workers. Elbridge made a fervid appeal to these young men to go to Kentucky to be trained in Biblical knowledge, and thus to be the better prepared to preach to the Australian churches.

He requested the congregation to join in singing that stirring Endeavor hymn, "I Want to Be a Worker for the Lord." He then again appealed to the young men, and begged if there were present any who felt that they could then and there dedicate themselves to the ministry, and who were desirous of going to America for the preparatory course of study, to come forward while the hymn was being sung.

The hymn was started, and quickly caught up by many voices, until the stone walls of the old building resounded with melody. Ere the completion of the first stanza David Jones and Tom Carey, two young men from Adelaide, who had driven out to Merdin that evening to attend service, came forward. They were classmates of Philip Bryce at Prince Alfred College.

Grasping the hand of each of these two young men, Elbridge exclaimed in tones that rang out above the singing voices: "Are there not others who will join these noble volunteers? Is there not in this audience one more young man whose talents fit him for this great work, and who will this night dedicate himself to the Christian ministry? Come now. This is the convenient season. Why doubt? Why hesitate? The moments are passing, and it may be that never again will there be an hour so favorable for you to enlist in Christ's army."

To Philip Bryce, standing with his hands clutching the back of the bench in front of him, and his heart thrilled with emotion, it seemed that the speaker's appeal was directed especially to him, and that David Jones' and Tom Carey's eyes were imploring him to come. It was no time

for sober thought, and, swayed utterly by the influence of the hour, he walked down the aisle, and took his stand beside his two friends.

At the conclusion of the hymn Hammond came forward, and in a voice which shook with feeling he addressed the three young men. He reminded them of the gravity of the step they were taking, and of the sacred obligations of the work upon which they were about to enter.

"While I," he said tenderly, "do most fervently thank God for the noble enthusiasm which influences you to-night, I would not have you enter upon this solemn work with hearts unprepared. We will all," he continued, "now bow our heads in silent prayer; and I beseech you, my dear young brethren, that, while we are praying, you search carefully your hearts, and if you find there any doubt of your fitness, that you pray for courage to turn back now before committing yourselves further to this great undertaking; for it were far better to acknowledge by returning to your seats that you have acted hastily than to enter unprepared upon the Lord's work."

Did doubt or hesitation assail those young men while listening to those words of the old preacher, or later when in the stillness pervading the building all heads were bowed in prayer? It may be; but those who would judge them should consider how hard it is for a boy to acknowledge himself guilty of an error of judgment, and also how prone are the young to misconstrue their own motives, and to mistake impulse for deep-seated conviction.

The prayer finished, Hammond turned to the young men, and, clasping the hand of each in turn, he asked, "Do you, my boy, this night dedicate your life to Christ's service, and pledge your energies and talents to the ministry of the Christian Church?" There was perhaps a deeper note of tenderness in the old man's voice as he questioned Philip,

whom he had known from infancy, and whom three years ago he had received into the church.

After each had responded to the questions propounded, another hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," was started, and the congregation filed down the aisles to extend the hand of congratulation and encouragement to the volunteers. Silas Bryce, a proud and happy look on his rugged features, was among the first to grasp his son's hand; nor was Helen Bryce, Philip's only sister, slow to follow her father's example; but Mrs. Bryce sat with bowed head, tearful eyes and bursting heart, silently praying, until at last, sustained by her trust that the God she worshiped would guide her boy, she, too, came forward, and shook the hand of each young man.

CHAPTER II.

"ROCKED IN THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP."

When the family from Undulata reached home that night, Mr. and Mrs. Bryce and Helen, seeing how white and worn Philip looked, and how little inclined he seemed for conversation, did not seek to detain him in the sitting-room. His sister lighted his bedroom lamp, and the tears were glistening on her eyelashes as she bade him good night. As he was leaving the room, his father came to him, and, laying a hand upon his shoulder, said: "My son, you have acted nobly to-night. I pray God to give you strength to persevere in the grand mission to which you have dedicated yourself; and," he continued huskily, "although our hearts are wrung with anguish when we think of the years in which you must necessarily be far away from us while you are preparing for your life-work, yet we know it is best that you should go to America—best for your health and best for the work you are to do. God bless and keep you, my son, and comfort us!"

Then Philip's mother, silently gathering him into her arms, kissed him, and her wistful, tearful gaze followed him as he crossed the hall and mounted the stairway to his room.

It was long before the boy could sleep that night. The warmth of enthusiasm that had influenced him while under the spell of the evangelist's eloquence had vanished, and in its place were utter heartsickness over the prospect of the long separation from his kindred, and chilling doubts as to the wisdom of the step he had taken. He tried to banish his heartache by picturing the glorious voyage before him,

and by thoughts of all that he would see and learn and experience in America. He tried to reason away his doubts by planning the good he would accomplish in the vocation he had chosen; but the pictures were blurred and the attempts at reasoning futile. He could not plan. He could not think connectedly. Neither could he sleep; and more than once he was tempted to yield to the appetite acquired during his late illness, and resort to morphine to quiet his nerves and induce sleep; but he manfully resisted the temptation.

After hours spent in tossing in wide-eyed wakefulness upon his bed, or in restlessly pacing the floor, he went to his window, and, leaning his arms upon the sill, he looked out upon the night fragrant with the perfume of flowers and aromatic shrubs, and bejeweled with the stars of that most beautiful of constellations, "the southern cross." At last, soothed by the fragrance and beauty of the summer night, he again sought his pillow, and fell asleep.

When he awoke, the morning sunlight was flooding his room, and his mother, seated beside him on the bed, was bending over him with a look of brooding tenderness upon her tear-stained face.

Thinking her grief altogether due to the prospect of the long separation before them, Philip, in spite of his own misgivings and heartache, said all he could to comfort and reassure her; and finally, as she still seemed un comforted, he even offered to give up all thought of America. But she told him that his father and herself knew it to be best for him to leave home for a year or two; that their anxiety for his health and future career had reconciled them to parting from him; and that, moreover, his going to America need not involve a much longer absence than his adoption of her own suggestion of a trip to Tasmania and New Zealand, or his father's plan of travel and study in England.

"Then, can it be, mother," asked Philip, "that you do not want me to become a preacher? I imagined that would please you better than any other calling I could have chosen."

"Philip," she replied, "from your very babyhood it has been the dearest wish of your father and myself that you should some day enter the ministry; but we have always refrained from expressing this desire to you for fear that our wishes might prove a snare to your conscience, and influence you to choose a vocation which no man without fixedness of purpose, earnest, deep-seated conviction of duty, and entire consecration of heart should enter. Were I sure that you, my precious boy, possessed these qualifications, I should be the first to bid you Godspeed; but—but," she faltered, "as it is, I tremble for your future."

She then besought him to think well before committing himself further in this undertaking; and she begged him if after prayerful consideration he felt himself unfitted for the work, to give it up, notwithstanding the pledge he had rashly taken the previous evening.

While she was speaking, and all during that day, he thought earnestly over the advice she had given, and at times he was resolved to give up his plans; but, Tuesday morning, David Jones and Tom Carey, full of bright anticipations, came to see Philip; and he, again carried away by the impulse of the moment, and overpowered by his school-fellows' enthusiasm, resolved to go forward in the path he had chosen. After that, his mother, seeing that he now appeared bent on carrying out the plan, and fearing, too, that if she said more she might influence him wrongly, spoke no more in opposition to the plan. Instead, she joined with her husband in encouraging and making ready their boy for his long journey.

Instead of following the usual course of voyagers from

Australia to America—the Pacific route—our three travelers, who had relatives in England, decided to go by way of that country. Accordingly, early in July, Philip Bryce, Tom Carey and David Jones took passage on the "Ormuz," a big mail vessel bound for England. The "Ormuz" was freighted at Port Adelaide, but our three young men did not board the vessel there. Accompanied by a score or more of relatives and friends, they drove from Adelaide to Largs Bay—a distance of ten miles—and there engaged a launch in which they reached the mail steamer. The relatives and friends, after seeing the voyagers safely aboard the "Ormuz," bade them a long farewell, and returned to their homes; and our three young men then turned their thoughts seaward.

The combined effects of seasickness and homesickness rendered most of the passengers exceedingly miserable during the four days in which the vessel was tossing and rolling and seesawing her way through the turbulent waters of the Great Australian Bight; and after leaving Largs Bay no land was sighted until the "Ormuz" reached Freemantle, the last port of call on the Australian coast for boats of this line. From Freemantle, after a stop of one day, the vessel pushed boldly out into the Indian Ocean, and, passing to the south of Sunda Islands, headed northwest for Ceylon.

Seasickness was now a thing of the past. The vessel steamed steadily along over waters glossy and placid as an inland lake, and beneath a silvery blue expanse of sky flecked here and there with clouds of fleecy whiteness and of fantastic forms. Cricket, jumping contests and other sports on deck, morning concerts by the band, and evening concerts by the musically inclined among the passengers, serve in a measure to relieve the monotony of life on shipboard; and the pleasure of this particular voyage was enhanced by the unusual mildness of the weather, the gor-

geous beauty of the sunsets, and the resplendent glory of the moonlit nights.

Bryce, Jones and Carey found much in their novel surroundings to interest them and to mitigate their homesickness. The occasional appearance of flying-fish and porpoises, the frequent fire drills, the weekly deck parade of the entire ship's crew, and the many droll occurrences attendant on the semi-weekly "baggage day"—all commonplace incidents enough to the experienced voyager—were to these untraveled South Australian boys extremely diverting. The course of the "Ormuz" was a much frequented one; hence she encountered numerous ships of many nations. If during the daytime it was a pleasing pastime to watch these vessels going to and fro over this great ocean highway, and to interpret their different flag signals, watching for "ships that pass in the night" was of entrancing interest. Sometimes while the watchers were quietly pacing the decks, there would suddenly shoot up, far out across the waters, the fiery arc of a great signal rocket; and presently there would glide into view some huge, silently moving, mysterious form, whose myriads of terraced lights rising tier above tier amid the surrounding gloom, transformed what in daytime would have been but an ordinary mail steamer into a floating palace of enchantment.

On shipboard little regard is paid to the conventionalities and social restrictions of every-day life; hence acquaintances are informally made, and intimacies, which on land would be months or even years in forming, are here effected in so many hours. By reason of their engaging manners and refreshing boyishness, the "Kangaroo Triplets," as one of their fellow-travelers dubbed the three Australian youths, were soon extremely popular with the entire ship's company. Tom Carey was further distinguished from his compatriots by the appellation "The Chicken," in sportive

reference to "Mother Carey's brood." Of course, too, young Jones received many solicitous inquiries in regard to the safety of his locker; and equally, of course, their fellow-passengers prognosticated of the certainty of a wet sea and a calamitous voyage because "Davy Jones' locker" and one of "Mother Carey's chickens" were aboard.

Among those who embarked at Freemantle was a young Welshman, Jonas Evans, who was returning to his native land after a year's prospecting in West Australia. Evans was a hearty, fresh-faced, broad-shouldered, big-footed young giant, who must have numbered among his forbears some one of Irish blood; for combined with his Cymreig qualities were the engaging naivete and irrepressible wit of a son of the "Emerald Isle." Philip, Tom and David were not many hours in discovering in this young "Cymro" a kindred spirit; and for the rest of the voyage to England the four were almost inseparable comrades. The pseudonym "Taffy" was conferred upon Mr. Evans by the whimsical Tom Carey, whose reason for this was, as he explained, that the only historical information he had hitherto been able to glean concerning any inhabitant of Wales was that contained in the classic poem, "Taffy was a Welshman," etc.; and although this particular Welshman, young Evans, displayed no predatory tendencies nor any overweening fondness for his neighbor's beef, "Taffy" he was henceforth to his three Australian mates.

Notwithstanding all prognostications as to rough weather, the "Ormuz" encountered no storms or other calamities; but as she neared the equator the heat grew intense. Winter garments were exchanged for the lightest of summer apparel, the large electric fans in the saloons were on constant duty, and at night many of the travelers would exchange their hot, stuffy little staterooms for the decks, where, curled up in their rugs, they managed to

keep moderately comfortable; but, like the proverbial hare, each found it expedient to sleep with one eye open, and to arouse himself betimes next morning in order to escape the sportive "navvies" who every morning at about three o'clock would turn on the hose, and deluge the decks with water, regardless of the maledictions, threats or pleadings of those who were utilizing these decks as sleeping apartments. "Swabbing the decks" was the ostensible object of these navvies; but those whose morning slumbers were thus heartlessly interrupted were fully persuaded that the only purpose was to sweep them out into the briny deep.

On the eighth day out from Freemantle the "Ormuz" crossed the equator, and passed into the Northern Hemisphere—a new world to the three Australians on board—and on the ninth day it was reported that the boat was nearing Ceylon. By daybreak of the tenth morning the decks were thronged with those on the lookout, and soon the watchers saw an irregular dark band outlined against the horizon, which, as they approached, resolved itself into a row of trees that at first appeared to be growing out in midocean. Presently, however, a low, broad stretch of coast-line fringed with these tall, graceful cocoanut palms was discernible. In another three-quarters of an hour a huddled mass of domes, spires, minarets and flat roofs came into view; and soon the whole city of Colombo was visible, basking in the morning sunlight.

The "Ormuz" moved steadily onward, until about seven o'clock, when, having rounded the vast breakwater, she glided smoothly into the harbor.

Although the coming of large ocean steamers is of frequent occurrence at Colombo, the arrival of one is a great event to the natives; and as soon as a vessel is sighted, numberless small crafts of every conceivable grade and pattern, from the pretentious steam-tug to the rude

little raft consisting of three or four logs lashed together, push out from the shores. The decks of the "Ormuz" were soon swarming with brown-skinned natives or coolies or Singhalees, jabbering and jostling, yelling and gesticulating, pushing and thrusting each other in their efforts to sell their fruits, shells and curios. Other coolies on rafts, canoes or tugs surrounded the steamer for the purpose of hiring their boats to convey the ship's company ashore; so that the erstwhile peaceful harbor was transformed into a pandemonium of noise and confusion.

Bryce, Jones, Carey and Evans engaged a canoe manned by four half-grown, half-naked, sleek, brown rogues whose merry ways, broken English, skill in handling their rude craft, and their agility in diving for and invariably capturing the small coins which the four young men threw into the water, so delighted David Jones that he immediately avowed his intention of turning missionary among these natives of Ceylon. His missionary ardor speedily cooled, however, when, the party of travelers and their oarsmen having landed, one of the grinning little natives besought Jones to change a sixpenny into its equivalent in loose coins. David obligingly complied; and the native and his three confederates, grinning and squealing out, "All lightly! all lightly!" quickly scampered away, leaving Jones to discover that the coin they had given him was a threepenny piece instead of a sixpenny. David joined his comrades in laughing at his having been "done" by native talent immediately after landing; but he decided that "Ceylon's lovely isle" should not be the field of his future missionary labors.

The crowds of coolies who had besieged the ship and infested the harbor were now replaced by a no less vociferous throng in charge of queer-looking vehicles, while still others of the denizens of Colombo, desirous of acting as guides, clamored about the strangers.

CHAPTER III.

SIGHTSEEING IN COLOMBO.

What though the spicy breezes
B'ow soft o'er Ceylon's isle—
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile!—*Heber.*

Our quartet of sightseers decided to "do" Colombo in style, and to that end each hired a jinrikisha, or "rikshaw" as it is familiarly termed. Sitting in state, each in his rikshaw with a stout Singhalee between the shafts, they proceeded on their tour, "feeling," as Jonas averred, "like Hindoo nabobs," or, as Philip said, "like the heroes of some of Rudyard Kipling's East Indian romances."

The commercial section of Colombo is run mainly by Europeans who are monarchs of all they survey, and live luxuriously off the toil of their native slaves. The streets of this portion of the city are broad and well shaded by fine tropical trees, but sidewalks are an unknown luxury. Our sightseers made their way through the crowded thoroughfares as best they could—sometimes their four rikshaws moving abreast down the middle of the street; sometimes threading their way single file through the jostling throng; and sometimes so closely pressed up to the shops and bazars that the sides of their rikshaws grazed the walls of buildings. They were glad to get out of this center of traffic and into the more open portions, where they rode along between rows of lovely palm-trees shading the palatial residences of rich Europeans, and the curiously constructed but roomy and even luxurious bungalows of high-caste natives. They visited the fruit markets, the

museum, the beautiful public parks, and the celebrated cinnamon gardens where they spent an hour, enjoying the beauty and fragrance, while their dusky rikshaw bearers rested from their labors. Here, while lounging under a group of trees, and recalling with a shudder the many strange odors they had encountered in passing through the busy portions of the city, Philip remarked that Bishop Heber's immortal stanza about "Ceylon's spicy breezes" must have referred solely to these cinnamon gardens; "for," said he, "nowhere else in this great island metropolis does the atmosphere bear the remotest hint of spicy breezes—at least, to Anglo-Saxon nostrils."

"And," agreed young Jonas, breaking off a twig from a cinnamon bough, and inhaling its perfume, "with all due respect to the denizens of this island, their breezes would be vastly improved by being spiced."

Returning from the gardens about the noon hour, they dined at a European restaurant; and then, having dismissed their rikshaws out of compassion for the patient but weary bearers, they engaged two little bullock wagons or "hackeries," each drawn by a sturdy, shaggy animal about three feet high, hornless, but having a large hump like a buffalo. A ride in one of these little wagons furnishes a sharp contrast to the easy, swaying motion of a rikshaw; and in bone-shaking, nerve-racking discomfiture a bullock wagon outrivals every other vehicle on earth. The wheelbarrow, the camel, the mountain burro, the haycart, and even the two-wheeled Irish car when driven at breakneck speed over the roughest of cobblestones, are miracles of ease in comparison with these springless, rumbling carts propelled by shambling little brown buffaloes. But our four indefatigable sightseers were young, and could stand any amount of jostling, and they greatly enjoyed their experiences in these Colombo bullock wagons.

The young men visited the most congested parts of the city, the native quarters, where the most pessimistic of psychologists could not fail to find ample refutation of the theory of race suicide. The visitors found these quarters extremely interesting; although it was quite apparent that combs and hair-brushes were not among the toilet accessories of these people; that soap, hot water and fresh air were not their favorite cosmetics; and that housecleaning was an untried virtue. The older children of this region were clad in almost Edenic simplicity, and the smaller youngsters were unhampered by even the traditional fig-leaf. All, however, were agile, sleek, straight-limbed little urchins, and so playful and picturesque withal that young Jones' missionary enthusiasm was again aroused. To prevent this enthusiasm from crystalizing into fixed purpose, his companions thought it well to withdraw him at once from this engaging region. They, therefore, hired an Indian guide whose speech was an unassorted mixture of many tongues, and who, as Jonas Evans put it, "could *parley voo* equally well in pigeon English, pickled French, or a variegated dialect of Dutch, Spanish and Hindoostanee."

With this compendium of polyglot language in tow, they drove to the Buddhist temple—a costly, unique structure containing many interesting relics and curios, and whose walls were decorated with a series of frescoes and mosaics depicting sundry scenes in the career of the great heathen deity. The most interesting of all the interesting features of this wonderful temple was a huge, beautifully graven white stone image of Buddha, stretched at ease upon a sort of stone dias or bench. In this vicinity the boys saw many specimens of the sacred banyan-tree. Another small tree which was growing within the temple inclosure appeared to be an object of peculiar reverence. This, as the guide explained, was because "the ever-to-be-adored, god-of-all-

gods," the great Buddha himself, had once slept under the shelter of the grandfather of this tree; and, in consequence, said tree and this, its offspring, partook in a measure of the nature of the god. The guide also stated that, instead of ordinary sap, some of the blood of Buddha flowed in the veins of this sacred palm. Whereupon the rashly sportive Tom Carey whipped out his penknife, and, saying that he meant to see if Buddha's blood was royal ichor or of the color and quality of the blood of ordinary mortals, made as though he would cut a gash in the sacred tree. With that the priests and temple attendants began to screech and howl and threaten, while some of them even drew forth daggers, knives and like murderous-looking weapons, as though they meant to slay these godless intruders. After many abject apologies and considerable bribery the visitors managed to appease the wrath of the temple attendants, and to make good their own escape. There were several other Buddhist and Brahman temples in this part of the city, but the quartet of young men felt that they had had enough of heathen temples; and, as at this juncture their guide manifested a horrified reluctance to the further companionship of these would-be iconoclasts, they dismissed him. Feeling, too, that they had had sufficient jostling for one day, they dismissed their wagons and, not dreaming that it was unsafe for strangers to wander unattended through the streets of Colombo, they proceeded on their tour on foot.

As they were passing through one of the less crowded streets of the business section, two coolies who had been squatting in the sunshine at the door of a dingy little shack scrambled to their feet, and made after the strangers. Catching up with them, the two Orientals began jabbering rapidly in some outlandish gibberish. At first they were mistaken for beggars—of whom the boys on their rounds had encountered a large number—until the supposed beg-

gars, seizing hold of the strangers, faced them about and pointed to a sign over the door of the little shop. The sign read:

"HAIR CUT—1 / —
BEARD TRIMMED—3a
SHAVE—6d."

Beard-trimming was, of course, an impossibility with these four beardless youths, who, moreover, stood in no very great need of a barber's services in any other capacity; but as in all probability they would never again have opportunity to patronize an Oriental barber, they decided to try what could be done for them by these two obsequious natives.

Tom and Jonas, who had that morning been so eager to catch the first glimpse of land that they had neglected their daily shave, now elected to have these barbers render them this service; while the whim seized David and Philip to have an Oriental hair-cut. Accordingly, the four graciously accompanied their besiegers back to the tonsorial parlors, where they found two more obsequious natives.

In the hair-cutting process the client is seated on the floor, his face to the wall, and his legs and feet doubled up under him. The barber then plants a knee in the victim's back; with the left hand lays hold of the victim's forelock; and with a curious implement, a cross between sheep-shears, wire-cutter and tree-trimmer, he cuts and clips and pulls away at the victim's hair. The operation is the reverse of soothing to the captive, but, let him squirm and protest never so energetically, he is at the mercy of his captor, who does not loose his hold until the work is completed in accordance with prevailing Oriental style; namely, with the hair on the back and sides of the head a succession of

jagged, uneven terraces extending in irregular lines around the head, and terminating at the forelock, which, fortunately for the client, is left unclipped.

As Jones and Bryce emerged from this ordeal, the latter, after gazing at his comrade's irregularly shorn cranium, remarked that it looked like a miniature copy of the steppes of Russia.

"Speak for yourself, my friend," retorted David; "your own headpiece resembles a miniature copy of the hanging gardens of Babylon." Philip, after anxiously passing his hand over his own shorn head, ruefully acquiesced in David's dictum.

When Tom and Jonas emerged from the inner room where they had been incarcerated during the shaving bout, their plight was even more deplorable than that of their companions. Their faces were gashed and bleeding to such an extent that David declared that they looked as though they had fallen face downward on a jig-saw or into the midst of a brier patch. Philip's comrades concurred heartily in his assertion that, rather than ever again submit to the untender mercies of an Oriental barber, he would take the Nazarite vow.

After they had paid the barbers they still lingered, and, having recovered from their chagrin over their mutilated appearance, they laughed heartily, and agreed that the experience was well worth the temporary sacrifice of their good looks. Carey's facetious humor again came near getting them into serious trouble. Seeing on the floor the heap of red, curly hair that had been cut from David's head, Tom declared that, although combustibles were not allowed in the mails, he meant to smuggle through to a certain fair lassie in Adelaide one of these ringlets as a memento and a proof that the vicissitudes of travel had not diminished the ardor of her lover's heart or faded the radi-

ance of her lover's locks. But no sooner had he touched the hair than the barbers began screeching madly, and, rushing to Tom, they thrust him away from the hair, and then, turning to the other intruders, were so hostile in their gestures that the strangers stood not upon the order of their going, but quitted the place with all possible expedition. They were at a loss to account for the anger of the barbers until Jonas remembered having read that it is a law among the Singhalees that all hair cut from the head of any one not a worshiper of Buddha must be made a burnt offering to appease the god whose wrath the barber has incurred by polluting himself by touching the head of a dog of a Christian. The boys laughed at this instance of heathen superstition, and David said that, like the famous "Barber of Seville," these barbers of Colombo deserved to have their deeds commemorated in song. "But not in light opera," protested one of the boys; "something tragic and weird would be more appropriate." Another suggested that "The Slaughter of the Innocents" would be an appropriate title for the proposed musical production.

It was now past the twilight hour, and it was suggested that, as a fitting close to their day in Colombo, they should patronize an Oriental restaurant; "for," reasoned Jonas, "having visited these charming people in their homes, worshiped in their temple, and paid tribute to the skill of their barbers, it is but meet that we sup with them." They found their way into one of the resorts run altogether by native talent, and to first appearance very much after the manner of European restaurants. Our four hungry boys, however, found the entertainment somewhat of the nature of a Barmecide feast. They secured a table to themselves, and presently there was placed before them, with an accompaniment of the inevitable rice and curry (neither of which edibles was at all to the liking of the four guests), a platter

on which reposed a mould of stuff, round of form, and in color and consistency resembling leather. This they discovered to be bread, and no doubt bread of excellent nutritive quality, only their Anglo-Saxon molars were unequal to the mastication of it. Beside each plate was placed a cup containing some drink, queer of smell, still queerer of taste, and greenish red of color. This concoction, for want of a better name, they decided to call tea. One sip of the beverage satisfied all desire for a further acquaintance with it. Four kinds of meat were placed on the table. But, unfortunately, a speculation as to the nature of these meats arose before any of them had been tasted. "This," said Jonas in reference to a dish containing something resembling a small and much battered doormat, "is neither 'fish nor fowl nor good red herring;' what can it be?"

"It must be monkey meat," said David, "which, I've heard, is much in favor with the natives, as an edible."

"And this," said Philip, indicating the contents of another platter, "looks like a cross section from the torso of an attenuated cat."

These remarks decided against the four meats; "for," said Tom, "if one is monkey and another cat, I shudder to think what may be the nature of the other two."

They made a light meal off of fruits and lemonade, and then turned their footsteps in the direction of the docks; and by nine o'clock that night they were again safe on board the "Ormuz"—tired and spent, but greatly delighted with the experiences of their day in Colombo.

The day after leaving Ceylon the "Ormuz" met another large English vessel that signaled, "Bad weather ahead." Accordingly, the "Ormuz" altered her course to a more southerly one, thus avoiding the worst of the bad weather, but finding the sea, even here, very choppy; and the next day was the roughest the vessel had yet encountered, for

she crossed the tail of the Monsoon against which the other vessel had warned her; and, although there was no cause for serious alarm, the steamer pitched and tossed and disported herself in a manner even more erratic and distressing than when crossing the Bight. But after reaching the Arabian Gulf, it was peaceful voyaging upon an unruffled sea with an occasional glimpse of land far away. By this time the passengers had again entirely recovered from seasickness, and their only discomfort was due to the hot winds blowing from off the sandy Arabian coast.

Two days later they entered the beautiful Gulf of Aden. That night the moon and myriads of stars illumed the broad vault of sky, and their reflected radiance shone back in softened beauty from the clear waters beneath. Standing on the larboard side of the vessel, David, Tom and Philip gazed for the last time for many a night upon their favorites, bright Canopus of "The Ship," brilliant Bungala and Archenar of "The Centaur," and the four most dazzling of all the blazonry of stars, those of the "Southern Cross." Then, crossing to the starboard side of the vessel, they saw for the first time the steadfast white light of the North Star, which they then and there accepted as their polar guide through the new country for which they were bound.

From Aden through the famous "Gate of Tears" the steamer entered the Red Sea, and all on board felt that they were nearing the land of the Pharaohs. A refreshing breeze, which obligingly continued during the four days from Bab-el-Mandeb to Suez, made the passage of the Red Sea much more agreeable than it is ordinarily found to be. The "Ormuz" dropped anchor in Suez harbor late at night, and by daybreak next morning many were on deck with their field-glasses turned toward the east, where the lofty peak of Mount Sinai loomed in the distance—at first through a foggy mist; but in a short while the sun, shoot-

ing up suddenly from behind some intervening hills, dispelled the fog, and afforded the watchers a clear view of lonely, rock-bound Sinai. Nothing else seen on the voyage equaled in impressiveness this sunrise vision of the historic mount.

Upon leaving the town of Suez the steamer arranged her searchlights and took other precautionary measures for working her way through the narrow, tortuous canal. Notwithstanding that the passengers confidently expected the vessel to get stranded on a sand-bar, or to meet with some serious accident, the passage was made without misadventure; and, after a short stop at Port Said for coal, the ship steamed on into the Mediterranean.

Skirting the Isles of Greece, the vessel entered the Straits of Messina. The entrance being made in the night, the passengers failed to see the snow-topped peak of Etna; but upon emerging from the straits late the next afternoon there could be seen to the north, and rising abruptly out of the ocean, a grim, desolate, rocky island with a huge pillar of smoke issuing from its loftiest summit. This was Stromboli; and presently, when darkness had settled down upon the waters, Stromboli began to display great volumes of intermittent flame and smoke, and to behave altogether as a renowned volcano should for the entertainment of travelers from distant and benighted lands which could not boast of volcanoes.

"'See Naples, and die,'" quoted Jonas the next morning to Tom and David, who were leaning on the railing of the deck with their glasses directed so as to catch a distant view of beautiful, bewildering Naples, with her great bay stretching out in miles of sparkling loveliness; her near background of vine-clad hills and grassy slopes, and her distant background, rugged, awe-inspiring Mount Vesuvius. A more experienced traveler, who overheard Jonas'

remark to Tom and David, and who by reason of long familiarity with this Italian metropolis had lost many of his former illusions, said that "*Smell Naples, and die,*" would be a more appropriate quotation. Those on board the "Ormuz," however, had no opportunity to ascertain—at close range—the aptness of either quotation, and must need comfort themselves with the thought that "distance lends enchantment" to smell as well as to view. Owing to a rumor of plague on board a west-bound steamer whose coming was daily expected at Naples, the authorities would not allow the "Ormuz" to enter the harbor, unless she first submitted to a fourteen days' quarantine. Nor were any of her passengers permitted to land. Vesuvius, as though to make amends for the inhospitable conduct of the city, bestirred herself; and while those on board the vessel lying to outside the harbor were awaiting the result of the parley between the Neapolitan authorities and the ship officials, they saw the volcano in action. As it was broad daylight, the demonstration was not so impressive as it would have been had it occurred at a later hour. Nevertheless, Vesuvius, although hampered by bright sunshine, threw off immense quantities of "fire, smoke, ashes and lava" (as the primary geographies express it); and did all in her power to live up to her reputation of the most wonderful volcano in the world.

At Marseilles the steamer was again forbidden to land unless she first complied with certain quarantine restrictions to which she had no mind to submit. However, the hours spent outside this inhospitable harbor were not altogether without entertainment, as some beautiful Marseillaise girls came out to the vessel in gaily decked barges laden with fruits, flowers and silks to display to those on board the vessel.

A rough time was anticipated in passing through the

Gulf of Lyons, which is considered to have the most difficult coast line on the globe; but for once the usually turbulent waters were placid, and the only thing the passengers on the "Ormuz" found to remark was that freak of nature—the broad, steady current of fresh water out in mid-stream.

Emerging from the gulf, and leaving the Balearic Islands to the east, the vessel made for Gibraltar, and through this renowned passage, with the low stretch of African coast on the one hand, and the impregnable fortress on the other, the steamer entered the Atlantic, and proceeded northward to Plymouth; then into the Channel—going through the proverbial fog all the way from Plymouth to Tilbree Docks. Here, our three Australians bade adieu to the good ship "Ormuz," and took express train to London—sorrowing most of all that they would see no more the genial Welshman, Jonas Evans.

After a month of sightseeing in London, and in visiting friends and relatives in Lancastershire, Philip, David and Tom, thinking they would enjoy the novel experiences to be had on an emigrant vessel, took passage from Liverpool on the "Baltic," a large, somewhat crowded, but comfortably appointed emigrant ship bound for New York. But, before paying in their passage money, each must needs satisfy the proper officials on certain points; namely, that he had no tuberculosis microbe or other hereditary or transmittable disease germ lurking in his system; no small-pox, yellow-jack, or other pestilence concealed about his person; and neither dynamite bomb nor infernal machine among his effects. Then, having signed a declaration to the end that he was not an anarchist or a bigamist; that he had never committed a felony; and that he had never been incarcerated in a lunatic asylum or a feeble-minded institute, the trio were graciously permitted to pay their pas-

sage money, and to trust themselves to the vicissitudes of another long ocean voyage.

On account of the heavy lading of the "Baltic," the voyage across the Atlantic was a long one; but at noon of the tenth day the vessel entered New York Harbor, and her nineteen hundred passengers were landed on Ellis Island immediately under the shadow of the Statue of Liberty. Then, having again passed triumphantly through the ordeal of governmental inspection, our trio of Australians were accorded the freedom of the land of the "Stars and Stripes."


Without waiting to visit places of interest in the "Modern Gotham," they proceeded at once by train to Lexington, Ky., reaching that place one Sunday morning in late August. The next week they matriculated at the university, and began their three years' course of study.

CHAPTER IV.

A DISH OF GOSSIP.

Ginseng, a quaint, tree-embowered, straggling village of about five hundred inhabitants, was environed by a well-to-do farming community of northern Kentucky. Commerce in Ginseng was represented by one drug store, three general merchandise establishments, and one millinery emporium. The chief industrial features were a large roller flour-mill, one blacksmith's, one cobbler's, one carpenter's shop, and a clock and watch repairing establishment, also serving as a tonsorial parlor. The *Filson County Jupiter* was, in the opinion of its editor and proprietor, the chief educational and refining influence of the place—not excepting church, school or public hall.

The only hotel in Ginseng, an old, drab-painted frame house, bore this sign over the gateway:

GINSENG HOTEL.
 (FOR MEN ONLY.)

This house was kept by Miss Miranda Hogg and her widowed sister, Mrs. Jane Burgess. Miss Hogg was a large, fresh-faced, stout spinster with piercing, dark eyes, inquisitive nose and grizzled hair. Mrs. Burgess was spectacied, bent shouldered and sharp nosed, and her hair was brushed severely back from her forehead, and gathered into a tight little knot over which she usually wore a large silk kerchief tied under her chin, she being a sufferer from neuralgia. The sisters were addicted to shoulder shawls, dipping snuff, unbounded curiosity and uncompromising

frankness. No other reason for their exclusion of feminine boarders was ever discovered than that conveyed in Miss Miranda's oft-uttered declaration, "We want no pernicky women boardahs a-messin' an' pott'rin' 'round—allus wantin' hot watah, fresh towels, aired beds, an' all sorts uv fool waitin' on."

Although women as boarders were tabooed, as callers they were always welcome; and the ladies of the community, far from resenting the above given strictures on their sex, frequently dropped in to exchange with the sisters the compliments of the season, to partake of their delicious tea-cakes, and to be regaled with their ever-ready and ever-fresh dish of gossip.

One sunny afternoon in March, Mrs. Jane was seated in a chair near one of the front windows in the big, old-fashioned sitting-room—her feet planted on the rung of another chair on which was a big, round gourd used as a receptacle for garden seed, her lap filled with packages which she was examining with a view to the spring planting. Farther back in the room Miranda, with spectacles astride her nose, and her stout person ensconced in the depths of a cushioned rocker, was reading aloud from the latest issue of the *Jupiter*.

Presently she threw aside the paper and exclaimed: "I declare! If Shelburn Broadus don't improve his papah, he kin jes' scratch me offen his list uv subscribahs—I don't keer if he *is* a boardah. The *Jupiter's* gittin' so it hain't wuth a pinch o' snuff."

"You're 'bout right," assented Jane. "Them whut wants politics an' State news an' book notices an' sich rubbish kin git plenty frum the big dailies, but whut we want in our home papah is the news uv this neighborhood; an' thah hain't a thing in the *Jupiter* about any uv the Ginseng folks whut we didn't know already." This was not to be won-

dered at, since the editor's chief source of information concerning the social and domestic happenings of the community was the hotel sisterhood.

Hitching her chair forward to the other front window, Miss Miranda said, as she nodded to a tall, dark, soldierly-looking young man walking leisurely down the street: "Thah goes Dr. Moreland! I thought he wuz in Durrith to-day to consult with them two Louisville doctahs on Ned Simms' case."

"No, the ap'intment's fuh to-morrow," said Jane.

"Humph!" ejaculated her sister, "pore Ned'll like as not die while the big medical bugs is gittin' ready to set on his case."

"Thah's Jule Fowler turnin' in at our gate," said Jane after a pause. "Now I reckon we'll l'arn all about the chu'ch meetin' last night."

Neither sister arose as the visitor, a short, stoutly built, florid woman, tapped at the open door leading into the hall; but both greeted her affably.

"Howdy, Jule? Glad to see you. Lay off your bonnet an' rest your head," said Jane.

"Have that cheer, an' make yourse'f comf'table," urged Miranda, indicating the twin to the rocker she herself was occupying. "Well, whut do you know?" she queried, as Mrs. Fowler, having deposited her gingham sunbonnet on the bed, seated herself in the proffered chair.

"Reckon I'd bettah ask you that, Randy," retorted the caller. "You're so centrifugally located heah on the middle o' Main Street, you kin have fust grab at all the news; while I might as well be livin' in a cave as way out thah on the farm—fur all the news that comes my way—an' I hain't been offen the place, 'cept on Sundays an' prayer-meetin' nights, fur more'n a month."

"Whut's been keepin' you?" inquired Jane.

"My buggy nag's lame, an' ole Nell, the only other hoss whut hain't wuckin' on the farm, has a colt; an' much as I wanted to git to town, I jes' p'intedly won't drive a mare with a colt follerin', an' gittin' underfoot, an' all tangled up in the buggy wheels. But I was detarmined to come this evenin', whether or no; an' I told Jim Dick at dinner that I meant to have a hoss, if every plow on the place had to stop; so he 'lowed I might have ole Roan, an' here I am. Lookin' ovah your garden seed, are you?" she continued after a time.

"Yes, but the mice got in the gourd, an' nibbled considerable; an' whut they left is mostly worm-eat. Jes' look at them beans, will you?" indicating a parcel wrapped in a yellow bit of newspaper.

"Throw 'em to the pigs, an' I'll send you some beans whut is beans," said Mrs. Fowler, good-naturedly. "Congressman Gilbert, he sent 'em to Jim Dick straight out uv the Agricultural Bureau at Washington. We got more'n we need, so you're welcome to some."

"Look at Dell Mason, will you," here spoke Miss Hogg, as a stylishly dressed girl passed up the street. "Ain't she on a dike—new Eton cloth suit with hat an' gloves to match!"

"An', as I live, a silk petticoat!" added Mrs. Fowler, as Miss Mason, in crossing to the other side of the street, lifted her skirt and displayed a changeable silk underskirt. "Della's a dresser, shore," remarked Jane, "an' a right purty gal, too, when she's fixed out in her finery, an' harnessed up in them new-style corsets with strops to hold down her hips, an' to make her look slim an' shapey."

"Well, yes," admitted Mrs. Fowler, grudgingly, "Della's good 'nough lookin', I s'pose, though I never could abide red hair; but it riles me to see her strainin' every narve tryin' to dress like gals whut kin afford fine clothes. Last

summer Daut couldn't have a new thing but whut Dell Mason tried to git somethin' jes' as fine."

This reminded the sisters to inquire about Mrs. Fowler's daughter.

"When'd you heah frum Sadie Jean?" asked Randy. "Hope she's in good health. I thought her lookin' anything but well, though, when she wuz home Christmas."

Mrs. Fowler had a family of five children of whom the eldest child and only girl, Sadie Jean or "Daut" (short for daughter), was, as her mother proudly informed all newcomers, "off to boardin'-school at Harrodsburg, polishin' up in all the accomplishments."

"Yes, Daut she give me a heap uv worriment when she wuz home, Christmas," said the fond mother. "She had headaches an' couldn't sleep, an' looked pecky as a sick kitten."

"You ought to have had Moreland proscribe fuh her," said Jane.

"Pshaw!" replied Mrs. Fowler, "Ralph Moreland hain't no manner 'count when it comes to d'agnosin' young lady-like complaints; but I did call in Dr. Clark, an'—"

"Doctah Clark!" interrupted Randy, contemptuously. "A body'd be likely to die while waitin' Clark's pokey motions. It takes half an hour fuh him to git his specs settled on his nose."

"Clark's slow, as you say," admitted Mrs. Fowler; "but he's sure, an' that's better'n swiftness. He examined Daut throughly, an' said jes' whut I'd suspicioned, that she was on the varge of narvous prosecution. He contributed it to her studyin' too hard. When I l'arned she'd been studyin' eight books, 'sides her music, I knowed he wuz right; an' says I to her when Dr. Clark had went: 'No wonder you need boneset tea an' liver pills. Your head must feel like the tower of Babble with all them sciences an' ol'gies an'

fur'in tongues a-rattlin' 'round in it.' I set right down that very night, an' writ a letter to the facurlty uv that college, whut was enough to make 'em open their eyes fur once. This term they've lopped off four of them studies, an' Daut she writes that she's gainin' flesh right along, an' sleepin' like a top."

The stream of Mrs. Fowler's eloquence, which when started upon the subject of the idolized "Daut" was likely to flow endlessly if not interrupted, was at this moment checked by the entrance of Mrs. Milton Bright, a comely, motherly-looking woman in the early forties.

"Where'd you hitch?" asked Mrs. Jane after preliminary greetings had been exchanged.

Mrs. Bright explained that she had left the horse and vehicle at the blacksmith shop. She also said that she and Mrs. Goodloe, who had accompanied her to town, had been spending the day at Mrs. Henson's.

"Where's Mrs. Goodloe?" asked Miss Hogg.

"She stopped in at Charity Bird's to see about having a dress made. She'll be in by and by," replied Mrs. Bright, hesitatingly, knowing that the hotel sisters were not on speaking terms with their next-door neighbor, Miss Charity Bird, dressmaker.

Mrs. Burgess only frowned and drew in her lips, at this reply, but the more outspoken Miranda ejaculated: "Sally Goodloe ought to have bettah gumption than to patronize Charity Bird. Like's not she'll skimp the dress, an' steal a lot uv the goods."

"Why don't Mrs. Goodloe go to one of them stylish Durritt dressmakers?" asked Mrs. Fowler. "Charity Bird'll make a botch of the dress, if she don't do wuss. I wouldn't trust her to make even a calico wrapper."

To prevent further remarks of this nature, Mrs. Bright hastened to say: "Ain't Zerelda Henson's new house splen-

did? She took us all through it to-day, and it's so handsome and convenient."

"Yes, I reckon 'tis handsome," was Miss Hogg's grudging admission, "but to my notion there's too much gingerbread fixin's an' shingle trimmin's an' garthic porches to be very tasty."

"And the very idey," put in Julia Fowler, "uv any fam'ly here in Ginseng havin' a bathroom like city folks—with hot an' cold water pipes—an' a big, posslin-lined contraption shaped like a coffin, to wash in! Daut, she put after her pa last summer to have us a bathroom rigged up (fur she's got a lot o' citified notions since she started to boardin'-school); but I set my foot down on that. There's lots o' ways we kin spend money better'n wastin' it on bathrooms. The Bible says 'cleanness is next to godliness,' an' I've allus tried to live up to that; but to have a place fixed up jes' to perform your ablutions in is a-wastin' uv good house room."

"Why, I think a bathroom so convenient," said Mrs. Bright, "and we're thinking of having us one built out at the end of the back porch, handy to the kitchen for the hot water."

"Well," said Madame Fowler with an air of finality, "the big wash-tub brung into the porch room ev'ry Saturday night has sarved fur me an' mine to scrub ourselves in all these years; an' I reckon I'm as clean as Zereldy Henson ever dared be."

Further discussion of the Hensons ceased with the entrance of the next caller, Mrs. Sarah Goodloe, a sister of Peter Henson.

"I s'pose you all wuz at the business meetin' las' night," said Miranda as soon as Mrs. Goodloe was comfortably seated. "Me an' Jane didn't git thah. We hurried an' got soppah ovah airly, an' wuz ready to go when two drum-

mers driv ovah frum the station. So me an' Jane had to lay off our bonnets, an' hustle 'round to git 'em something to eat. By the time we'd fed 'em, an' got their room ready, fuh the night, it wuz too late to go to meetin'."

"I reckon Carr wuz elected, seein's he wuz the only one to be voted on," said Jane. "Me an' Randy 'lowed he'd board heah, convenient to the chu'ch, an' we're goin' to fix up that nice room ovah the dinin'-room fuh him."

"You're countin' your chickens before they're hatched, this time," observed Mrs. Fowler.

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Bright, "I don't think you need be in any great hurry with your plans for boarding the preacher. We haven't secured one yet."

"And, from present prospects, it will be quite awhile before we do, I'm afraid," added Mrs. Goodloe.

"Whut! Ain't Carr comin'?" asked the sisters.

"No, indeed, he was voted down," replied Mrs. Goodloe.

"Voted down? How could that be, seein' as thah warn't no other name to be voted on?" asked Randy.

"Foster and Lane got into a wrangle, as usual," said Mrs. Bright, "and between them Brother Carr is out of the running."

"The way them two men do squabble an' take on is a positive disgrace," declared Mrs. Fowler. "I don't keer if Sammy Lane is my fust cousin. He an' Jake Foster ought to be turned out of the church. They hain't no more religion than you could hold on the p'int uv a needle, an' are as quarrelsome as two tom-cats."

"Who or whut wuz finally settled on?" asked Mrs. Burgess.

"Yes, tell us jes' whut happened aftah Jake and Sam got through their hair-pullin' scrap," urged Julia Fowler. "I had to leave, you know, before meetin' broke."

"After some discussion it was agreed that the matter

of finding a preacher should be placed in the hands of a committee of three brethren," explained Nancy Bright.

"Who's on that committee?" inquired Miranda.

"Mr. Bright, Mr. Mason and brother Peter," answered Mrs. Goodloe.

"Well, I hope they'll hurry mattahs," observed Miss Hogg. "It's time things wuz settled. Any reg'lar preachah will be better'n this samplin' business. We've had nigh on to fifty diff'runt men to preach fuh us in the last two year, an' the chu'ch's goin' to rack an' ruin in consequence uv sich a loose way uv manigin' things."

CHAPTER V.

A COMMITTEE MEETING.

During the weeks following the church business meeting, the new committee, consisting of Peter Henson, Milton Bright and Robert Mason, held many conferences, considered many applications, and agreed upon several men, only to find upon application in each instance that he had made other arrangements or that the position offered did not suit him.

"'Another Richmond in the field!'" exclaimed Mr. Bright one evening in April, when the committee sat in Mr. Mason's library. As he spoke he broke the seal of a letter. "This," he explained after a hasty glance at its contents, "is from one of the officers of the church at Fairtown, recommending S. C. Tiber to our consideration. I'll tell you what it is, brethren," he went on, laying the letter on the table, and looking ruefully at his two conferees, "if this business isn't soon settled, we'll have to hire a secretary. This is the seventh letter since our last conference, only three days ago, and about the seventieth since we began our quest for a preacher."

"What we need," amended Peter Henson, whimsically, "is a ministerial bureau. There are teachers' agencies, domestic help bureaus, and even matrimonial agencies; so why not ministerial bureaus? During the last five weeks we've had letters from sixteen church officers, each eager to fit us out with some preacher of his own choosing; we've written to twenty-one preachers, and we've had applications from about thirty others, each desirous of entering this Macedonian field. I didn't know there were

so many unattached preachers in our whole brotherhood; and each one of these men, who has applied either directly or through some one else, seems to possess every recognized clerical virtue, as well as some other qualities which until now I never dreamed of being virtues at all."

Robert Mason next spoke. "Well, we can't possibly choose more than one man; so the only course left us, it seems to me, in order not to offend any of these brethren who've taken such an interest in supplying our need, is to ignore every application or recommendation we've had, and for you, Brother Henson, to nominate a new man. We'll agree to stand by any one you may select—eh, Bright?"

"But I tell you it isn't possible for me to think of a fresh name," said Henson; "the whole field has already been too thoroughly canvassed."

"If you gentlemen are quite at the end of your resources, I've a name to propose," said Mrs. Mason, who until now had been sitting by, apparently intent upon the fancy work in her hands.

The three men turned towards her, inquiringly.

"Perhaps, though," she continued, "it would be out of place for me to suggest any one."

"Not at all, not at all," Mr. Henson assured her. "Any suggestion from you will be most gratefully received."

"Who is your man, Mary?" her husband asked.

"P. S. Bryce," she replied.

"Bryce? Bryce?" murmured Henson. "I don't remember ever to have heard the name—ah, yes! I do," he added quickly. "Philip Bryce! An Australian, isn't he? I now recall a young Australian of that name, who delivered a very able address at our National Convention two or three years ago. You were at that Convention, Bright. Don't you recollect that address?"

"Yes, indeed I do," assented Mr. Bright. "But doubt-

less this Bryce has returned to Australia; had he stayed in this country until now, we'd have heard more about him."

"He was still here winter before last," remarked Mr. Mason, "when I was visiting in Fulton, Mo.; for he'd just closed a meeting at that place which had resulted in seventy additions to the church."

"But where is he now? Can you tell us, Sister Mason?" Mr. Henson asked.

"I met him in Louisville two months ago," she answered. "He'd been engaged in evangelistic work, he told me, but was thinking of giving it up, and of locating with some church. At that time we had Gates and Stetson in view, so I said nothing to Mr. Bryce as to having him preach for us."

"Why," said Milton Bright, "this seems to be the very man for us. What say you, brethren, shall I write him? What's his address, Mrs. Mason?"

"His address, two months ago, was Indianapolis," was the reply.

"Hold on a bit, Milton," interrupted Henson, as Bright drew forward writing materials, preparatory to beginning a letter. "I'm not at all sure that this young Bryce is the man for our pulpit. There can be no doubt about his ability and culture; and at the time we heard him in that Convention, and later, perhaps, when he held that meeting in Fulton, no young man in the ministry stood higher with the brotherhood than he. But haven't I heard somewhere that since then he has taken a course of study at one of those big universities in the East?"

"What if he has?" asked Milton Bright.

"Why, if he's been through a course at one of those Eastern seats of scholarly profundity," answered Henson, "the chances are that he has become tainted with the 'New Thought' heresy; and let me warn you, brethren, we want

no one infected with that pestiferous 'New Thought' or 'Higher Criticism' germ turned loose in our pulpit."

"I think you're needlessly alarmed in this instance, Henson," here spoke Milton Bright. "This Bryce was, I understand, a student of Lexington Bible College for three or four years, when he first came to America; and during those years under the tuition of President McGarvey and his corps of professors, he would have become so rooted and grounded in the truth that it would take more than a nine or ten months' bout at Harvard or Yale to knock him out."

"Besides," added Robert Mason, "these Australian students aren't the kind to be seriously jostled by any of that 'New Theology' nonsense. To a man, they're zealous, staunch and sound in the faith. Their having forsaken home, friends and country to come here to be educated for the ministry proves that."

Peter Henson still shook his head doubtfully. "We've known others, Robert, just as zealous and consecrated, seemingly, as any of these Australians—those, too, who've had the advantage of Lexington Bible College training, who have, nevertheless, completely lost their bearings. Look at young Trent—practically an infidel. Look at Macklin, Boyd, Jarvis, Tanner, and a score or more of others, who deny the authenticity of about all of the Old Testament, belittle Hebrew prophecy, doubt the inspiration of Paul's teachings, scoff at baptism, repudiate the atonement—in fact, repudiate the whole plan of salvation. And, still worse, these men haven't only gone astray themselves, but they've disturbed—yea, even wrecked—the faith of others, and have in many instances split the churches for which they preached.

"Still, Mr. Henson," said Mary Mason, "while all you say is only too true as regards many of our bright young

preachers, I'm inclined to think from what I've seen and heard of this Brother Bryce that he's not one to be much influenced by any of these latter-day, speculative heresies."

Henson, however, still looked grave. Finally, Robert Mason proposed that the committee correspond with Bryce concerning the soundness of his religious views and his availability for a call.

Milton Bright then suggested that, instead of adopting Mr. Mason's plan, they simply invite Mr. Bryce to take charge of the work at Ginseng for six months, with the prospect of a more extended call if both preacher and people so willed. "We can," he went on, "find out, long before the six months have expired, the trend of his teachings."

But Henson reminded his two colleagues that in six months' preaching Bryce, if himself tainted with the higher criticism microbe, could inoculate many of the congregation, and thus work infinite damage.

"Well," suggested Mason, "make it three months instead of six."

They finally agreed to write Bryce, asking him to take charge of the work for three months, with the understanding that if both sides were suited, he should then be called for three years.

After this matter had been settled, Mrs. Mason said: "I'm not at all sure that our church as a body isn't making too great a hue and cry about this 'Higher Criticism' business, anyway. By being too severe on these young disciples of what they're pleased to term 'New Thought,' we cause their views, which before were merely visionary or nebulous, to crystalize into conviction; and these men then become partisans of the new doctrine where before they were merely passive."

"Yes," agreed her husband, "I'm convinced that what a

good many of these new Biblical doctrines need is a good dose of letting alone. Put these young fledglings of the 'New Theology' poultry-yards to work; arouse them to strenuous effort along missionary, Sunday-school and pastoral visiting lines, and soon, in the stress of church activities, their new views on the atonement, the authenticity or inspiration of certain Scriptures, and all that, will gradually fall away from them."

"There's much good sense in what you say, Robert," finally agreed Peter Henson. "Many of these new views are nothing but fads which, if let alone, will be forgotten; but which, if warmed and fed by opposition, grow from a fad into a cult. So, perhaps a Gamaliel-like policy is wisest. If this thing be of men, it will come to naught, but if it be of God, no man can fight against it. Only, brethren, remember this, it can't be of God—at least, not of the God we know and reverence; for if these new theological doctrines be true, the God revealed to us through the Bible, and whom we in our ignorance have blindly worshiped, doesn't exist."

"Well, Milt," said Robert Mason, as Henson and Bright were leaving, "write to this Brother Bryce as soon as possible. I sincerely hope he'll prove the right man for us. Our church has sampled so many different candidates and sermons during the last eighteen months that we're suffering from spiritual indigestion; so the sooner we settle down to a steady diet, the better for our souls' health."

CHAPTER VI.

HIS FIRST APPEARANCE.

Philip Bryce accepted the call to Ginseng, and upon a Friday morning in May Milton Bright met him at the station, and carried him off to Willow Brook Farm, where he was to remain the guest of the Brights for a few days until he should find some suitable boarding-place.

The five years that have elapsed since that February afternoon when Philip, then a pale-faced, hollow-cheeked, listless boy of twenty, lay under the gum-trees on the banks of the Gawler River, have wrought great changes in his appearance, and great development of his character. He is now erect, deep-chested, broad-shouldered—every line of his tall figure betokening strength and grace. His complexion is ruddy, his finely shaped head is well poised, and his face, with its broad, intellectual forehead, steadfast hazel eyes, refined nose, large, well-formed mouth, and resolute chin, is one to inspire confidence and to win friends.

Upon Sunday morning Milton Bright, desirous that the new minister should be spared the embarrassment of entering church in full view of the entire congregation, contrived that he should reach the building while Sunday-school was still in progress in the basement, and before the rest of the congregation had started for morning service.

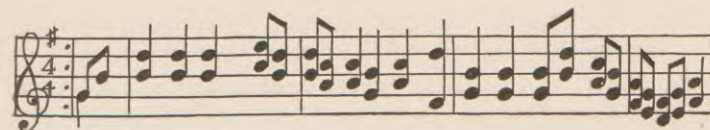
Sunday-school being over, the people began to flock into the auditorium. It is always a trial to a young and inexperienced man to speak for the first time to a large audience of strangers; and this Sunday morning as Philip Bryce, from his post of observation behind the pulpit, saw

the large and critical-looking audience before him, and realized that he was to preach a trial sermon, was he seized with something like stage fright. At the close of the opening anthem he rose, and, advancing to the front of the rostrum, stood facing the congregation. Opening the Bible on the stand before him, he, in a voice which he could with difficulty keep from trembling, read a short selection of Scripture, and then called upon "Brother Bright" to lead in prayer.

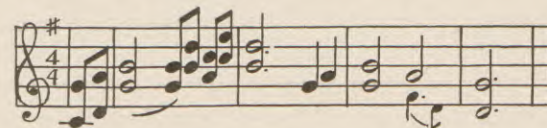
In the quiet interval following the prayer, while the deacons were going noiselessly from pew to pew taking up the morning offering, the young minister tried to still his perturbed spirit, and to fix his thoughts on his sermon. He had not brought his manuscript to church—only a short outline of it; and now as he glanced over this outline it seemed utterly meaningless, and his mind, so far as any memory of his carefully prepared sermon was concerned, was a complete blank. As the deacons, after depositing the offering upon the table, returned to their seats, and the young man realized that the moment had come for him to stand again before that expectant audience, he was certain of nothing but that he would make an ignominious failure. But he had yet a moment's respite. The choir leader announced another hymn, and with a sigh of relief Philip sank back in his chair, and again tried to collect his thoughts.

The hymn announced, "Welcome, Delightful Morn," was one frequently sung by the little congregation at Merdin, Australia; and now as the familiar tones of the beautiful old song filled the room, a wave of recollection and of homesickness swept over Philip Bryce. He was no longer conscious of the waiting people before him. Time and distance seemed annihilated. In spirit he was a boy again in South Australia, and like pictures painted on a

screen there flashed across his mental vision a Sunday morning scene in the dear old home church—the white-haired old preacher; the congregation of familiar faces; his father and mother side by side in a front pew, and singing from the same book; his sister Helen at the little cabinet organ, with the other members of the choir ranged about her. As the congregation actually before him, but of whom he was for the moment unconscious, reached the second part of the familiar tune, he heard again as in days gone by his sister's full, sweet, bell-like voice leading the other sopranos in the beautiful strain:



"From the low train of mor-tal toys I soar to reach im-mor-tal joys,



I soar to reach im-mor-tal joys"

That vision of the old church acted as a stimulant, and at the same time it steadied Philip. He thought of his parents' hopes; of their confidence in him, and of their prayers for him. What to him by comparison were the thoughts and expectations of this congregation of strangers that he should be abashed before them?

His whole being was in a neutral mood of equipoise when he came forward at the conclusion of the hymn. He read the seventeenth chapter of Exodus, telling how Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands as he raised on high the rod

of God before the Israelitish hosts battling in the plains below against the Philistine armies. The sermon which followed was based upon this passage of Scripture, and his theme, "Co-operation of Preacher and People," was well suited to the occasion. His full, resonant tones carried to the remotest parts of the room; his manner was simple, forceful, magnetic; his address, brief, but clear and convincing.

The new minister held the attention of every one present while he was preaching, and at the close of the service the congregation flocked around him to congratulate him on his sermon, to speak words of welcome, and to express a hope that he would feel at home and happy in their midst.

"No moth-eaten thoughts in that sermon! no gallery play, either, and no striving for spectacular effect," commented John Henson, as he walked down the street with Tom Slocum and Dr. Moreland after the morning service.

"And better still," was Ralph Moreland's verdict, "there was no side-stepping into the flowery paths of poetical quotations."

"Yes, the gentleman from Australia appears to be all there when it comes to pulpit oratory. I think even those chronic old grumblers, Brer Foster and Brer Lane, couldn't find much amiss with this morning's sermon," added Tom.

CHAPTER VII.

PROBATIONARY.

And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?—*Scott.*

At the suggestion of Peter Henson, who had learned that Mrs. Burgess and Miss Hogg were desirous of boarding the new minister, Philip Bryce decided to take up his quarters at the hotel, instead of seeking accommodations in some private family.

"My prophetic eye foresees that Ginseng Christian Church will shortly be again a flock without a shepherd," remarked John Henson upon hearing of this arrangement; "for long before the expiration of his three months' novitiate, Sisters Jane and Randy will have talked him to death. Of course I've no legal right to interfere, but I hate to see this guileless young Australian, far from home and kindred, offered as a sacrifice upon the altar of village gossip, or done to death by vigorous tongues, as he surely will be if he finds lodgment in 'Ginseng Hotel—for men only.'"

"And," added Diana Henson, "even should he miraculously survive the incessant chatter and the officious meddling of the hotel sisters, he'll mortally offend them should he at the close of his three months' trial change his boarding-place. These two women who are now his staunch supporters will then become his vituperative enemies."

"Vituperation coming from such a source has no power to sting a sensible man," said Peter Henson to his son and daughter; "so let Miranda and Jane do their worst. Besides, the arrangement is already made for him to board

at the hotel, and to alter the plan now would make the two sisters his enemies at the very outset of his career."

The favorable impression made by the new preacher that first Sunday grew and strengthened with each succeeding week. Both old and young of the community were pleased with his preaching, and his work outside of the pulpit met with no less favor; for he possessed a pleasing personality, and the gift—rare in so young a man—of adaptability. At the close of the three months there was but one opinion about his suitability for the position, and he received a unanimous call for three years.

Contrary to John Henson's predictions, Philip Bryce for that first three months found his quarters at the hotel, if not congenial, at least comfortable. But shortly after accepting the three years' call he was so unfortunate as to greatly offend his two hostesses, and in consequence he was obliged to change his boarding-place. As has been mentioned, the hotel sisters were not on speaking terms with Miss Charity Bird, dressmaker, a rosy, brisk little maiden of some forty-odd summers, who lived in a tiny cottage adjoining the hotel, and separated therefrom by a small yard and a stout board fence. Until within a few years back there had been no fence between the two domains, and Miss Bird had lived in neighborly harmony with Jane and Miranda. Then trouble had arisen—the cause, a serious difference of opinion between Charity's idolized cat, Tom, and the presiding genius of the hotel demesne, Jakey, a fat, blear-eyed old pug. Jakey's favorite post of espial was the stile block in front of Miss Bird's abode; and although Thomas did not scruple to perambulate the hotel grounds at his own good pleasure, he resented what he chose to consider Jacob's usurpation of the Bird stile block. Matters finally culminated in a sharp encounter, teeth and claws; and Jakey was routed with great damage.

Miranda and Jane demanded the instant execution of Thomas. Charity refused to immolate her darling upon the altar of justice. Nevertheless, she lost no time in carrying over to the hotel two olive branches consisting of a box of vaseline and a bottle of witch hazel for the relief of the sufferer. The sisters, however, met her on the threshold with such a storm of abusive epithets that she hastily decamped, leaving on the porch settle her box and bottle, which Miranda immediately hurled after her, thereby shattering some of Miss Bird's window-lights, and utterly wrecking all neighborly feeling between the two domains. Early the next morning Charity had the shutters of those of her windows that looked out toward the hotel nailed up, and she likewise demanded the instant removal of that portion of the hotel clothes-line which projected into her yard and was fastened to her plum-tree. Miranda and her sister, not to be outdone in civilities, erected the afore-mentioned tall board fence. Jakey finally recovered, although for weeks after the battle he presented a woeful spectacle as he sat in the broad front window of the hotel—his slit eyelid and torn ear done up in sticking-plaster and his fore-paw bound in splints.

Learning of the unhappy state of affairs existing between the hotel and its adjoining cottage, Mr. Bryce deemed it his duty to bring about a reconciliation between these three members of his flock. Hence, with the best motives in the world, but with perhaps ill-advised zeal, he preached a discourse on Christian love and neighborly forbearance, which was eminently practical in its nature, and in which, to use an expression of Tom Slocum's, "he hit those two old cats at the hotel squarely between the eyes."

Charity Bird, who, be it said, had for some time greatly deplored the existing feud between herself and her nearest neighbors, and who had made more than one timid effort

at reconciliation, took the lecture in good part. Miss Hogg and her sister might have borne in silence the sermon, although they thoroughly understood its application, had not the young man, with more zeal than discretion, followed up the discourse by a private remonstrance with Mrs. Jane and Miss Miranda. This was more than they could submit to, and after one extremely painful scene in which the two women spoke their mind in regard to what they were pleased to term the misguided young man's "imperdent meddlin' with things whut warn't no consarn uv hisn," they informed him that henceforward his room would be considered better than his company, and that the sooner he moved his belongings, the better it would be for him.

Banished from the hotel, Mr. Bryce found a pleasant refuge at "Elmarch," the home of Mrs. Sarah Goodloe, whose only other boarder was Dr. Ralph Moreland

CHAPTER VIII.

"ARE YOU MR. BRIGHT?"

What's in a name? That which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet.—*Shakespeare.*

The only passenger to alight from the west-bound train at Ginseng Station one sultry afternoon in early September was a graceful young woman stylishly attired in gray, tailor-made traveling garb. As the train moved off she stood upon the dilapidated board platform and looked about her expectantly; but although the group of village loafers standing around the little station building eyed her with some curiosity, none of them appeared to have any but a passing interest in her arrival. She was about to make some inquiry of the station agent, when a tall, dark-haired, blue-spectacled man in light tweed suit and straw hat, and carrying a buggy whip in one hand, came into view from behind the station. After pausing a moment, and looking up and down the platform, he hesitatingly approached the girl. His manner betokened that he was looking for some one, and as he drew near, she timidly accosted him, "Beg pardon, sir, are you Mr. Bright?"

"I am," he answered, lifting his hat, bowing, and looking somewhat surprised: "and are you—is—your—name—" he began confusedly.

"Marshall," she interrupted quickly, to relieve his embarrassment, giving him as she spoke a surprised glance. "You are here to meet me, I presume," she added inquiringly.

"Why, yes—ah, certainly—that is to say—I—J—" he faltered. Then, recovering some measure of self-possession, he continued, "Will you be so kind as to wait here until I

can return for you? My horse," he explained with a smile, "isn't accustomed to the cars, and in order to prevent mischief I was obliged to unharness him, and secure him some distance in the rear of the station. But I shall not be long in returning." Lifting his hat, he started off; then, turning back, with polite solicitude he suggested, "Perhaps you'd be more comfortable in the waiting-room; it's cooler there."

"But my trunk," she began, as, after showing her into the waiting-room, and depositing her suitcase on a bench, he was quitting the room.

"Ah, yes," he answered; "but perhaps you'd better retain that" (referring to the baggage check she was holding out to him) "for the present. I'm here in a buggy, and not prepared to carry your trunk, but I shall arrange to have it delivered you promptly."

From the grimy, iron-barred window of the bare little waiting-room, she watched him a few minutes later as he, in a shiny, rubber-tired buggy drawn by a glossy-coated, high-stepping bay horse, drew up at the rear platform of the station.

He assisted her into the vehicle, and soon the dreary little village was left behind, and they were speeding along a smooth white turnpike bordered on either side by undulating fields and cool-looking woodland strips.

Upon first starting, the restive horse required all his driver's attention, and the girl had opportunity to give her companion a scrutinizing look. At the station she had been too bewildered and hurried to notice what manner of man he was—save that at first he had appeared singularly ill at ease. He had now removed the blue spectacles, and she was rather pleasantly surprised to find that Mr. Milton J. Bright was much younger and more debonair looking than her brief, business correspondence with him had led her to expect. When about half a mile had been traversed, and

the horse had quieted down into a steady gait, she ventured to accost her still silent companion. "How far have we to drive? I thought you lived in Ginseng?"

"Ah! that," he assured her, indicating the hamlet they had left behind them, "isn't Ginseng, but Ginseng Station. Did you think we lived in that squalid little place? The real town is four miles from the railroad, and is a much older and a far more desirable town than that little station."

"Ah, I see!" she murmured.

"You've been in service two years, I believe," he tentatively remarked, after a pause; as he spoke, noting the blooming freshness of her cheek, the exquisite molding of her throat, and the sweet curve of her lips.

"Yes, two years," she replied, flushing, assuming her most rigidly dignified air, and deciding that Mr. Bright's manners were by no means as prepossessing as his appearance. "'In service,' indeed! as though I were a cook or a chambermaid," she thought indignantly. "But perhaps," was her more lenient afterthought, "this is merely a local mode of speech; and, after all, a teacher *is* 'in service.'"

After another space of silence which was becoming embarrassing, she, remembering that in his last letter Mr. Bright had casually mentioned that his youngest child was ill, inquired with polite solicitude, "How is the baby?"

"The baby! Which one? There are two of them—twins, you know."

"Oh, indeed! I—I didn't understand," she faltered.

"Ah! I beg pardon, I thought you understood there were twins."

She made no reply, and he continued, in answer to her inquiry: "They're at present enjoying robust health, I should think. At least, I can testify to the soundness of their lungs. They're without exception the noisiest and the worst spoiled children I ever encountered."

anything to atone in a measure for my stupidity in mistaking your identity."

"What wonderful eyes she has! Gray? No, deep violet blue," he thought, as the girl gave him a momentary look. "And such long, silky lashes!" was his next thought, as she lowered the "wonderful eyes."

"Thank you," she said with ungracious stiffness. "I have no alternative but to accept your kind offer."

Just then there rounded a bend of the road a man in a surrey, driving toward them at a brisk speed.

"There's Mr. Bright now," Mr. Bryce exclaimed.

Opposite each other, both drivers drew rein. Mr. Bryce introduced Miss Marshall. Mr. Bright leaned out of the surrey, extended his hand to the young lady, and explained that his delay had been occasioned by some accident to the harness soon after leaving home.

"You haven't Miss Marshall's trunks, I see, Brother Bryce," he continued. "So, if you'll drive her on to our house, I'll proceed to the station for her luggage."

The baggage check was accordingly handed him, and he drove on.

For awhile the couple in the buggy went on their way in silence—she brooding over her wrongs and nursing her hurt dignity; he struggling against a desire to laugh—until she, glancing covertly at him and meeting his eyes, wherein was an expression in which solicitude, admiration and mirth were commingled, the absurdity of the situation dawned upon her. Her wounded sensibilities were forgotten; she smiled, dimpled, and finally joined him in a merry laugh. Perhaps there is nothing which so speedily and completely breaks down the barriers of strangerhood between two people as a laugh together; and after once yielding to their inclination to merriment, the two young people felt at ease with each other.

"To think," she smilingly exclaimed, "that I should live to be mistaken for an Irish nurse-girl! Especially, too, when I'd hoped to make so favorable a first impression upon Gingseng society, and was flattering myself that in manners and attire I was strictly up to date."

"Do forgive me!" he humbly entreated, bending toward her with a beseeching look in his hazel eyes. "How could I have mistaken for a nursemaid a young lady so elegant, refined, charming and—" pausing because he could think of no more adjectives to conquer.

"Were it possible, Mr. Bryce," she said laughingly, "I'd rise and make you my best curtsey for that gallant speech. But," she continued in pretended scorn, "the idea of your taking me to be a 'Martha O'Mallory'!"

"As you are strong, be merciful, Miss Marshall," he pleaded in contrite tones, and with a deprecatory look. "I'm willing to do anything to show my penitence. You've only to say the word, and I'll crawl out of the buggy, prostrate myself across the pike, and permit you to drive right over me. Shall I?"

"I must take the will for the deed this time," she demurely replied. "Being a stranger to this section of country, I have need of your services as a guide."

"You see," he continued presently, "I had been asked to meet a girl named Martha; I understood you to say your name was Martha; and as you were the only woman in sight, I naturally concluded you to be the one I was looking for."

"And," she added, "when I asked, 'Are you Mr. Bright?' you thought I said Bryce; hence the situation. Really, Mr. Bryce," she continued with mock seriousness, but with a lurking smile that brought into play a charming little dimple in the rosy oval of her right cheek, "if you'll pardon me for advising you, I think you should consult a specialist in

regard to your hearing. Deafness is liable to grow on one, and it's a terrible affliction."

"I need not only an ear specialist, but an eye specialist," he gallantly made answer; "sight as well as hearing must be defective, else I should never have made the blunder of thinking you a nursemaid. But even to my dim vision you didn't look the character. I took you to be a new order of nursemaid—a glorified, idealized specimen; or else some princess slightly disguised."

"That sounds like a passage out of some old-fashioned fairy tale," she commented severely.

"Well, then," he amended, "some brilliant society belle grown tired of 'ranting 'round in pleasure's ring,' and seeking under the guise of working girl to—to—"

"And that, like the plot of an up-to-date problem novel," she interpolated.

"To be a blessing to her country," he finished serenely.

"I don't know that I fancy being considered like the bewitched princess of some fairy story or—" she began.

"Not bewitched, only bewitching," the foolish young man interjected.

"Or the silly heroine of a problem novel," she went on, ignoring his interruption, "any better than I did being thought an Irish nursemaid."

"But what about your own mistake?" he retorted audaciously. "To think me a prosaic, middle-aged *pater familias* is a Roland for my Oliver, isn't it?"

She answered demurely. "In truth, you were far from realizing my idea of doting fatherhood when you spoke of those twins. 'Even to my dim vision you didn't look the character,'" she quoted mendaciously. "So I concluded you were a new order of *pater familias*, a stern-voiced, unjust, tyrannical specimen of the class."

He laughed heartily at her counterthrust, and said:

"After all, 'it's an ill wind that blows good to nobody,' and our blunders have already brought me the great pleasure of a drive with you. Later on, when you are surrounded by a large circle of admiring friends in this community, Miss Marshall, will you not allow priority of acquaintance to tip the scales in my favor?"

"As to that, I shall never under any circumstances undervalue the claims of the gallant, blue-spectacled knight who so promptly came to my rescue when I was stranded on that dismal railroad platform," she replied. "By the way," she continued as she looked at him, inquiringly, "I began to have some vague doubts of your being Mr. Bright, as soon as I saw you without those disguising lunettes."

In answer to her mute inquiry, he explained that when driving he sometimes wore the glasses as a protection from the glare of sunlight on the white road; and that he had discarded them upon setting out from the station because, as the sun would be at their back during the homeward drive, he would not need them.

"This is your academy," he said after awhile, as they approached a frame building from whose roof a large flag mounted on a tall staff swung lazily in the breeze. "Still sits the schoolhouse by the road," he quoted; "but not 'a ragged beggar sunning,' though; but a substantial structure surmounted by the imposing flag of yo—our country, and envired by a grove of locust-trees."

"Why, I thought I was to take charge of a town school!"

"So you are, although the town is a quarter of a mile farther on. Those who chose this site doubtless thought the 'young idea' would shoot better if the temple of learning were 'far from the madding crowd;' and it really is a pleasant arrangement, suiting both town and country patrons."

"And there," he said presently, "is Mr. Bright's place, 'The Willows' or 'Willow Brook Farm.'"

Half hidden by trees and shrubbery was a white house with red chimneys, green shutters, and many gables. The yard extending in front to the road sloped on either side to a ravine at the bottom of which could be dimly seen through its border of willows a little, glinting stream which, after winding between the whitewashed farm buildings in the rear of the house, came into view again on the other side, and emptied into a larger stream crossing the pike farther on. Between the yard and the schoolhouse were a woodland pasture and a cornfield, and on the other side of the yard, between it and the creek, was a big apple orchard. As a background to the scene was a dim line of forest.

"I think you'll find Willow Brook Farm a delightful home, Miss Marshall," Mr. Bryce said heartily as they were drawing near the house. "Like the academy, it combines the advantages of both village and country. That creek ahead of us marks the town limits. That's Ginseng just beyond," pointing, as he spoke, to where through the trees could be discerned a church steeple, numerous chimney-tops, and the roofs of several houses.

CHAPTER IX.

WILLOW BROOK FARM.

As they stopped at the stile-block, a large brown collie and an excitable little black pup rushed forward to investigate the new arrivals; and, recognizing in Mr. Bryce a beloved friend, they clamored about him in eager welcome. Quieting their transports as best he could, the young man assisted Miss Marshall from the buggy, as Mrs. Bright, tying in the voluminous folds of her blue calico Mother Hubbard with a white apron, came hastening down the walk.

"Very happy to make your acquaintance, Miss Marshall," exclaimed Mrs. Bright, extending her hand to the girl in hearty welcome as Mr. Bryce made the necessary introductions. "Hitch, and walk right in, Brother Bryce," she added, as she led Miss Marshall up the broad rock walk.

"Warm weather for September, ain't it?" she continued. "Must be one of the 'dog days' stolen from August. Sit right here in the porch, my dear, and cool yourself," pushing forward for the stranger's benefit a low rocker, relieving her of hat and parasol, and handing her a palm-leaf fan.

Having hitched his horse, Mr. Bryce entered the wide, breezy, vine-shaded porch. Crossing to one side, he was about to seat himself in an arm-chair from whose cushioned depths he had ejected an enormous, glossy-coated gray cat with an abbreviated caudal appendage, but his hostess handed him another chair, and said: "Better take this seat, Brother Bryce; Ichabod seems to have pre-empted that arm-chair, and if you take it, he'll be sure to jump into your lap, and cover you with hairs, for he's shedding."

Mr. Bryce hastily took the proffered seat, and Mrs. Bright continued: "But where's Mr. Bright? He started for the station two hours ago."

"He was delayed on the way," answered Mr. Bryce, "and as I happened to be at the station, I was so fortunate as to secure Miss Marshall's company for the drive back. We met Mr. Bright on the road, but he very kindly waived his claims in recognition of my prior rights, and drove on to the station for Miss Marshall's luggage."

"I'm real glad you happened to be at the station," said Mrs. Bright. "Miss Marshall would have formed a gloomy first impression of the community if she'd had to wait long at that detestable little railroad village. Had you a pleasant journey, Miss Marshall? When did you leave home?" etc., etc.

The young lady made satisfactory replies to these polite inquiries, and her hostess then turned to Mr. Bryce. "How's Mrs. Goodloe, Brother Bryce? And why don't she ever come over to see us? She wasn't at last ladies' aid meeting, either. I hope she ain't sick?"

"She's in good health, I believe, although she finds this warm weather rather trying; and, too, she's had a great deal of company this summer, you know," was the reply.

"That's true," assented Mrs. Bright. "I s'pose her niece is still at Elmarch? When does she think of going back to Georgia?"

"Yes, Mrs. Fletcher's still with us; but she expects to return home next week, I understand."

"Has that nurse for the twins come yet?" was Mrs. Bright's next query. "I heard Mrs. Fletcher'd hired one—an Irish girl from somewheres back in Ohio."

The young man flushed and glanced hastily at Miss Marshall as he answered, "She hasn't come yet, but Mrs. Fletcher is expecting her."

The young couple were spared further discussion of the embarrassing topic, for just then there came full tilt around the corner of the house a startling equipage consisting of an immense tree root with numerous gnarled rootlets branching out from the main stem, and surmounted by a wooden box. Hitched to this vehicle, which looked like an enormous spider, was a tawny-haired, freckled-faced little girl with a checked sunbonnet hanging down her back. She wore a soiled pink calico, whose abbreviated length afforded the display of two fat, sunburnt legs and a pair of bare, dusty feet. Her companion in harness was a curly-headed boy of about three years, clad in nankeen pants and a long-sleeved apron. He, too, was barefooted and had a sunbonnet stringing down his back. Catching sight of visitors on the porch, the two prancing steeds took fright, turned and fled precipitately, dragging overturned vehicle, and spilling out of the box a choice collection of rag dolls, kittens, broken bits of china, toy cooking-stove, doll's bedstead, and a tin bucket containing jam biscuits and the battered remains of a pie.

"An enterprising couple conveying their Lares and Penates to some remote settlement on the other side of the yard," observed Philip, gravely. "It's too bad the procession came to grief."

"It's Puggie and Buddy, my two youngest," laughingly explained Mrs. Bright, turning to the new teacher. "That old root was grubbed up last spring out of the woods pasture, and ever since it's been the favorite plaything of the youngsters. It's an unsightly object, but I really believe they'd rather have it than the finest doll wagon."

"What did you say were the children's names?" here inquired Miss Marshall.

"Margaret is the girl's real name," answered the mother, "but she's such a fat, dumpy little girlie that her nickname,

Puggie, suits her better. The boy's name is Robert Graham—after the preacher, you know—but it might just as well have been 'Norvall on the Grampian Hills' or Melchizedek or Nebuchadnezzar, for all he ever gets of his name. I declare," she continued, laughing with easy good nature, "if they weren't written down in the Bible, I believe I'd actually forget the rightful names of my own children. This is a great family for nicknames. Even our dogs and cats have them. Doc's right name" (indicating the collie who was dozing at Mr. Bryce's feet) "is Ralph, after Dr. Moreland. That mischievous puppy was christened Carlo; and our yellow cat, Becky; so why the children call the pup Toby, and the cat Brindle, the dear only knows. That gray cat yonder was named Tiger, until he got his tail cut off in a steel trap; then pa dubbed him Ichabod, because 'his glory hath departed;' and Ichabod we've called him ever since."

None of the children seemed eager to form their new teacher's acquaintance; at least, not one came forward to welcome her, although at intervals she caught glimpses from around the corner of the house, or from the shelter of the doorway at her back, of what appeared to her a perfect medley of children of all sizes and ages. "How many children have you, Mrs. Bright?" was Miss Marshall's very natural inquiry.

"Only six," was the reply. "I hope you didn't think all those youngsters who've been lurking around ever since you came, trying to get sight of you, belong to me. Four or five of them are the Fowler and Clay boys who've come over to see Alec, and two more are Nettie and Lucy Bates, neighbors and playmates of my Polly and Susie. Neither my own nor those other kids are generally very bashful about coming forward; but, I s'pose, they're not dressed to receive strangers, this evening; so they're keeping in the background.

"If you and Brother Bryce will excuse me, I'll leave you to entertain each other while I 'tend to some matters in the house," she added, presently.

After her departure the two endeavored to converse on various topics, but the overheard scraps of conversation, presumably upon the young lady's appearance, made by the group of children within the house, rendered this difficult.

"Ain't she a jim dandy!" "She's got a long gold watch chain!" "My! don't she look stylish?" "Ain't her hands white!" were some of the remarks from the unseen critics.

Although pleased that her appearance was approved by her future pupils, their fire of comment was embarrassing to her, and rendered more embarrassing by her certainty that Mr. Bryce could hear all that was said—as an appreciative twinkle of his eyes indicated.

The situation was relieved by the reappearance of the lady of the house, bearing a pitcher of new-made cider and a plate of delicious jumbles.

Soon after partaking of these refreshments, Mr. Bryce, after expressing a hope that Miss Marshall would find her stay in Ginseng pleasant, and asking that he might soon have the pleasure of seeing her again, bade both women adieu.

"Come again, real soon, Brother Bryce," his hostess urged heartily, as she shook his hand. "You know you're always sure of a welcome, and I want you to feel that this place is just like home to you."

"Ain't he nice?" she asked, turning to Miss Marshall as Mr. Bryce drove away. "I don't know when my husband and I ever were more drawn to any one than to that young fellow."

"Has Mr. Bryce been preaching for you for some time?" asked the young lady.

"Only since last May, but we hope to keep him several

years. He's an Australian, and hasn't been in this country more than four or five years. One or two of the members of the church here have had their feelings ruffled because he has seen fit to preach a little too pointedly against some of their pet sins. But, aside from that, he's universally beloved. He's splendid in the pulpit, and he's so pleasant with every one. When he first came, he took board at the hotel; and when he left there, he wanted to come here, for he said this seemed more like home to him than any house he'd been in since he came to America. I wish we could have taken him, but we had no suitable room. He has now found a very pleasant boarding-place at Elmarsh with Mrs. Goodloe. Dr. Moreland boards there, too; so he has congenial company."

After a time, their own visitors having gone, Ann Elizabeth or Cissy Bright, a shy, thin-faced girl of fourteen, and Alec or, to give him his full title, Alexander Campbell Bright, aged twelve, appeared on the veranda; and their mother, having some domestic cares demanding her attention, left them to entertain Miss Marshall. But Cissy and Alec had little to say for themselves, and conversation was anything but brisk until Polly (Mary Louise), Susan and Puggie, who shared neither their elder sister's bashfulness nor their brother's momentary lack of conversational resource, joined the group.

Having confidently acquainted the young lady with the principal details of domestic and neighborhood affairs, the three artless little girls began to catechize her. "Did she paint her cheeks?" "Did she use curl papers or crimping-irons to frizz her hair?" "Did she sleep in gloves to make her hands so soft and white?" "How old was she?" "What did her watch cost?" "What number shoes did she wear?" were a few of their ingenuous queries.

Alexander presently took his turn as interviewer, and

began to question the new teacher on educational matters. "Did she use a key in teaching arithmetic like Miss Eunice had done?" "Could she read Latin right off or did she use an Interlinear, as Miss Shanklin had done?" "Did she believe in whipping?" et cetera, et cetera.

Cissy's timid efforts to restrain the curiosity of her brother and sisters were in vain, and the examination continued until, Mr. Bright having returned from the station with the young lady's luggage, Mrs. Bright appeared in the doorway and suggested that Cissy take Miss Marshall to her room to rest until supper-time.

There was no hall to the house, and the door from the veranda opened directly into an immense room some twenty feet square, furnished as a parlor, with horse-hair chairs and sofas, a marble-top table, a "whatnot," a well-filled bookcase and a square piano. From one corner of this room was an enclosed stairway up which the stranger followed her conductress to another large room. Crossing this, she was ushered into one of the two smaller apartments opening therefrom.

"This is your room, Miss Marshall," said Ann Elizabeth; "but ma says you can, if you'd rather, just use it as a dressing-room, and sleep in the big room with us girls. This little old room ain't big enough to swing a cat in," she added contemptuously. "Pa's going to build a fine, new-fashioned house like Mr. Henson's, some of these days."

Like the immortal "Mr. Dick," Miss Marshall didn't want to swing a cat, and she thought this room, small though it was, infinitely preferable to the big room with the four girls as her companions.

Soon the tinkle of a bell summoned to the supper-room, and presently all were seated around a typical Kentucky tea-table. Fried chicken, hot biscuits, batter cakes, roasted potatoes, sliced tomatoes, butter, honey, pickles and pre-

serves, with coffee, sweet milk, buttermilk and cider, formed the first course, followed by a dessert of cake and ice-cream.

Supper over, Mr. Bright and Miss Marshall took seats upon the front porch, with Puggie and Buddy upon their father's knees. While talking with her host, the stranger took in the lovely moonlit scene: Majestic oaks, tall maples, clumps of shrubbery; a flower space fenced off with wire netting and filled with geraniums, pinks, verbenas and portulaca; the willow-bordered ravine at one side, the whitewashed fence; and, in front, the smooth, white turnpike. The occasional barking of a dog, the weird cry of peafowls roosting in the willow-trees in the ravine, and the clatter now and then of some horse and vehicle crossing the bridge spanning the creek not far distant, were the only sounds to disturb the peaceful stillness.

Presently there came stumbling up to the porch a decrepit old negro, tottering and bent nearly double under the weight of a big stick of wood across his shoulders. As the negro mounted the steps, Mr. Bright accosted him. "Why, Uncle Charley, where are you taking that wood?"

"I's a-totin' in a nice backlog for Miss Nancy's fire, suh. It's gwintah be a tur'ble cold night; dah's snow in de air, suh."

Without attempting any argument, Mr. Bright said: "Take that log back to the woodpile, Uncle Charley, and go to bed. Miss Nancy doesn't need any wood to-night."

The old negro obediently departed with his backlog. Mr. Bright and Miss Marshall laughed heartily at the idea of "snow in the air" while the thermometer registered nearly seventy degrees; and Mr. Bright said, "Uncle Charley's ideas of time as well as of temperature are considerably confused to-night; for it's been fully ten years since I substituted grates for our old fireplaces, and since we began to use coal instead of wood."

He went on to explain to the young lady that the old darkey was subject to occasional crazy spells, due, it was thought, to a kick on the head from a mule, years before. "Some folks," said Mr. Bright, "advise us to send him to an asylum, but he's perfectly harmless; and it would break his heart to leave this place where he has lived all his life. Besides, if we were to send him away, his wife, Aunt Cassie, would go too; and she's my wife's right hand, and the best cook we ever had. When the old fellow isn't in one of his spells he's the sharpest old darkey I ever knew. He has a grim sense of humor, too, and I sometimes suspect his crazy fits are partly assumed, just for the sake of having some fun at our expense. At any rate, he furnishes us a good deal of amusement by his vagaries, though he is a bother at times."

The rest of the family soon joined the group on the porch, and after another half-hour all adjourned to the parlor. Puggie and Buddy, who had gone to sleep in their father's arms, were placed on the sofas; and the rest gathered around the center table. A Bible was handed each one. A short selection of Scripture was read, each person taking a verse in turn. Then the mother went to the piano, and played a familiar hymn which all joined in singing. Mrs. Bright was not an accomplished musician, but she played the hymn with feeling, and added a tolerable alto to the air which Miss Marshall and the children carried; while Mr. Bright contributed a mixed part, sometimes like soprano, sometimes like tenor, and sometimes a part which must be called bass, merely because it wasn't anything else. After the hymn Mr. Bright offered a prayer. Then "good nights" were exchanged, and all sought their several sleeping apartments.

CHAPTER X.

A KINSMAN OF "THE GREAT PACIFICATOR."

While the family were at breakfast next morning, Elihu Clay, a tall, hatchet-faced man with shrewd eyes, wide, thin-lipped mouth, red hair, and a fringe of sandy chin whiskers, appeared at the back door of the dining-room. Refusing a proffered chair and Mr. and Mrs. Bright's invitation to join them at breakfast, he seated himself in the doorway, and tossed his hat on the porch floor.

Mr. Clay was Ginseng's postmaster, who lived across the fields from Willow Brook Farm. He explained that he had "jes' dropped in a minit" on his way to the office, to see the new teacher.

"How're your folks, Mr. Clay?" asked Mrs. Bright, after introducing the caller to the young lady.

"All's well but the baby. He's teethin' and cross as a bear. Rett is wore out, worryin' with him, and tryin' to git the boys' waists and things ready fur school Monday."

The caller gave Miss Marshall a scrutinizing look as he took a twist of tobacco from his pocket and bit off a generous portion. He then turned to Mr. Bright and said bluntly: "Well, Milt, judgin' by appearances, your advertisement scheme has panned out fine. Rett, she allus said she believed you got together all the scrawniest, sallerest teachers in Kentucky, stood 'em up in a row, and picked out the ugliest of the lot; but Miss Marshall's a big improvement on your Miss Eunices, Miss Shanklins, and the whole kit and b'ilin' of our former schoolmarms. Are you any kin to Humphrey and Tom Marshall, young lady?" he inquired with another searching look at the girl.

Blushing at the implied compliment to her good looks,

she replied, "Not to my knowledge, sir; but I really know very little about my relationship."

"That's a pity," observed Mr. Clay. "We Kentuckians don't pay enough attention to relationships. Good blood's everything. Where wuz you born?"

"In Mason County."

"Then, I'll bet you're kin to Humphrey and Tom. They had lots of kin 'round Maysville and Washington, and there's a look about you that reminds me of Humphrey's picture. Who wuz your mother?"

"A Miss Logan."

"Ah, young lady, you've some of the best blood of this country in your veins. No matter whut branch of the fam'ly tree you belong to, you can't miss it, if you're a Logan. There's a host of them, but they're all kin, and fine stock, too—old F. F. V."

He stepped to the edge of the porch, ejected from his mouth a quantity of tobacco juice, then returned to his position in the doorway, and said: "There's my wife, now. She's a Morris, related to the famous Pennsylvanny Morris, and traces her fam'ly back to Edmund the Second or Edmund Ironside, king of England, whose daughter in 1009 A. D. married an ap-Morris, ancestor in direct line to my wife's people. Rett's got it all down in a little book she prizes next to her Bible. Now, I'm kin to Henry Clay," he said, drawing himself up proudly, "and some folks tell me I look like him. But be that as it may, my Robert certainly inherits his wonderful speakin' talent from this great kinsman. That boy's a born orator, Bright," he declared, turning to his host, "and, if I ain't mistaken, he'll some day make his mark as a speaker."

"If he isn't hanged first," ejaculated Mr. Bright, *sotto voce*.

Mr. Clay, not hearing this comment, continued: "You

ought to hear him speak 'Battle of Hohenlinden,' Miss Marshall. I'll swannie! when he says that part, 'Wave, Munnick, all thy banners wave; and charge with all thy cavalry!' it fairly makes your hair raise."

Having finished breakfast, the children were excused from table, and left the room. Mr. and Mrs. Bright and Miss Marshall, however, still remained seated, and Mr. Clay again addressed the young lady. "I hope," said he, "you pay due attention to grammar and elocution, Miss. 'Cordin' to my notions, they're the most important branches in the school corricklum. History and g'ography are well enough in their way, of course; so's a reasonable amount of physiology—though we don't send our children to school to make practicin' physicians of 'em. As for mathematics, any boy or gal can soon pick up a sufficiency of that for all ordinary purposes; and I've allus noticed that if a feller's a real fine mathematician, he's generally a born fool in all other respects. There's algebray, now, with its x's, y's and z's, and roots—all tomfoolery! Bookkeepin' and higher 'rithmetic ain't much better, either; but spellin' and readin' and grammar and elocution show the finished scholar; so I want you to drill my boys well in them branches."

"What modes of punishment do you use, Miss Marshall?" was the postmaster's next query. "Do you favor keepin' in, standin' on the floor or corpo-*re*-al punishment?"

She hardly knew how to reply; but she finally said she did not confine herself to one mode, but she thought whipping, if practiced at all, should be the last resort.

"That sounds mighty fine," her inquisitor commented, "but experience with my own shavers has larnt me that a good hickory limb, well laid on, is the best way to move a boy. It loosens up the hide and makes him grow, too. It's old-timey, I know, but it's more effectin' than any of that new-fangled stuff about kindness and persuasion. Now,

Bright here, he's a good Campbellite (beg pardon, Milt, I should 'a' said 'Christian' or 'Disciple'), but I tell him he can't reasonably renounce the good old Calvin doctrines of predestination, total depravity, and the rest of the 'Five P'int's,' as long as there's such boys in the world as his Alec and my Robert and Edmund. They're living examples of 'original sin' and 'actual transgression,' and it's their teacher's duty to see that the old Adam (or the old Nick) is thrashed out of 'em, eh, Milt?"

"Yes," laughingly admitted Mr. Bright, "moral suasion doesn't seem to reach the case of the average boy."

"You're right about that," said the caller. "One dose of good hickory's wuth a dozen bottles of moral suasion; and I know there ain't nothin' fetches my boys to time like the tickle of a keen switch. So remember, Miss Marshall, I want you to tan them two shavers good whenever they deserve it, and I'll follow up every whippin' you give 'em with another as soon's they git home."

After a short silence the visitor resumed his catechism of the new teacher by observing, "I reckon, Miss, your church affiliation is the same as Mr. and Mrs. Bright's—else he wouldn't 'a' been so keen about hirin' you fur our school."

The girl modestly asserted that she was a member of the Christian Church.

Mr. Clay continued: "Oh, I've no fault to find with you on that score. I claim to be a sort of half-brother to that church myself, on account of Mrs. Clay's bein' a member."

"Our church would be glad to welcome you into full brotherhood, I'm sure, Mr. Clay," exclaimed Nancy Bright, cordially, "if you could see your way clear to uniting with us."

"Well, I must confess," replied the postmaster, "that sermon on 'Church Union' your new parson preached a

month or so back, tickled me mightily; and a leetle talk I had with him soon after that come nigh fetchin' me into the fold. Havin' been sprinkled as a infant, you know, and havin' been brought up to think that was baptism enough, I allus balked at your doctrine of emersion. But, Bryce, he intermated that the form of baptism didn't count for so much, and that baptism itself, as well as obedience to some other of the old-time requirements, wasn't nowadays considered so essential as it used to be. I gethered, too, frum whut he said that the church had been layin' too great stress on a lit'ral interpretation of a good many Scriptures, such as miracles and Old Testament prophecies, and sich like; and that the church frum now on would be more lib'ral-minded on a good many p'int's."

Mrs. Bright gave her husband an uneasy glance, but held her peace.

Mr. Bright said gravely, "You must have misunderstood Brother Bryce, Clay."

"Maybe I did, maybe I did," acknowledged Elihu, good-naturedly, seeing that Milton Bright was disturbed. "Leastways, my wife says I must have done so. Still, it does appear to me that Bryce ain't nigh so strenuous on a good many things as you and Henson and a few others are."

Milton Bright, who, whatever his own misgivings might be as to his minister's orthodoxy, was too loyal to him to discuss the matter with an outsider, said: "Brother Bryce is young, you must remember, Elihu; and it may be that he now and then in conversation expresses himself in a way that is a little puzzling, but when put to the test he will, I trust, be found perfectly sound in the faith and orthodox in all his views."

"Certainly, certainly!" replied Mr. Clay, rising to go. "So far's I'm consarned, I think the young feller's all right. Moreover, he's all right with his church-members, too—all

'cept 'Randy Hogg and her sister. I hear they've got their backs up considerable ag'inst him; but if I understand the matter correct, their objections to him are personal, not doctrinal, hey, Milt?"

Bright answered: "Their objections have nothing to do with the doctrines Brother Bryce preaches. Besides, in the matter they hold against him he is altogether right and they wrong."

Mr. Clay, consulting his watch, said: "I must be moseyin' on toward the office; it's time I was makin' up the mornin' mail. Miss Marshall," he continued, passing around the table to where she sat, and shaking her hand, "I'm real glad to have met you, and I reckon you'll git along fust-rate with the school. Now, don't count visits with Mrs. Clay, for she's a mighty busy woman, and has a right smart to look after; but be sociable and come over to see us whenever you can. Mrs. Bright," shaking her hand, "you must come, and you too, Milt; and let the childurn run over whenever they're a mind to. We're allus glad to see any of your folks. Good mawnin'!"

"Well, my dear," Nancy Bright smilingly observed when the visitor had gone, "I don't think you need fear the questions that the board of examiners may ask you to-morrow, considering the satisfactory way in which you answered Elihu Clay's catechism—to say nothing of the questions Polly and Susie and Puggie and Alec put to you yesterday."

Mr. Bright, whose face had worn an expression of unwonted concern since Mr. Clay's talk about Mr. Bryce, now shook off his troubled thoughts, and spoke smilingly. "Yes, Miss Marshall, from what I can learn, I believe there isn't much in your history, habits or tastes that those kids of mine didn't investigate. They're a team! A Yankee lawyer isn't in it with them, when it comes to asking questions. Like Mark Twain's man, each one of them seems to

have been born with an interrogation point in his or her mouth. I tell Miss Nancy she's too easy on them, but she has her own notions as to how they should be managed."

"Oh, well," said his wife, easily, "don't worry. Let nature take its course. The children will learn better manners as they grow older."

Katharine Marshall was not long an inmate of the Bright family until she discovered that the expression, "Let nature take its course," was a favorite precept of Mrs. Bright's, and that it formed ample excuse with her for many little irregularities in maternal discipline, and covered many defects in her system of child-training.

After breakfast Polly, Susie, Puggie and Buddy took the young lady in charge, and did the honors of the premises for her benefit. They were accompanied by Aunt Cassie's granddaughter and assistant in the culinary department, whom the erratic fancy of her parents had endowed with the name "Ivory"—although "Ebony" would have been a far more appropriate prenomem. Miss Marshall's trunk was still unpacked; and she knew, too, that it behooved her to spend much of the day in freshening up on geography, physiology, etc., and in delving into history after forgotten dates—in preparation for the teacher's examination on the morrow; but there was no escaping the persistent overtures of the children. She therefore resigned herself into their keeping, and the cavalcade set out on a tour of inspection, preceded by the two dogs and followed by a host of chickens. Alexander soon joined them, and from that time on he took the part of chief cicerone.

CHAPTER XI.

MISS MARSHALL RECEIVES.

Early Sunday morning a note of preparation was sounded throughout the Willow Brook household, and all was hurry and commotion until Mr. Bright and the children were in the surrey, and started for Sunday-school. An hour later Mrs. Bright and Miss Marshall set forth in the buggy, and reached the old red brick meeting-house during the singing of the opening church anthem.

The interior of the building was arranged according to old-fashioned custom—with the pulpit between the two front doors, and the pews facing them—an arrangement which, while doubtless possessing some advantages for minister and prompt attendants, was embarrassing to late comers, and especially disconcerting to one who was not only diffident and sensitive, but a stranger to the community. It was, therefore, a trying ordeal for Katharine Marshall that Sunday morning to walk up the aisle in Mrs. Bright's wake, feeling as she did that the eyes of the entire congregation were fixed upon her. Having reached the shelter of the pew, however, she had leisure while the second hymn was being sung to regain serenity, and even in a sedate way to take some note of her surroundings.

Expecting to see only unknown faces, it was with a thrill of pleasurable surprise that she recognized a piquant brunette beauty and a dapper young gentleman, seated side by side in the choir, as Diana and John Henson, whom she had met at several social functions the winter before while she was spending the Christmas holidays with a former schoolmate in Lexington, and Diana and her brother were also visitors in that city.

Between a stately, white-haired dame and a languid, stylishly dressed younger matron in the pew immediately in front of the Brights' pew were two restless, fretful, white-robed, blue-sashed little boys so absurdly alike as to size, features, curls, dress and naughty behavior that Miss Marshall felt they must be the Fletcher twins. Her thoughts naturally turned to her gallant escort of the Thursday of her arrival. He was partly screened from her view by the tall pulpit behind which he was ensconced beside a handsome, portly man of clerical appearance, who, at the conclusion of the song service and Scripture reading, was introduced to the audience by Mr. Bryce as "Our beloved Brother Elton, who will address us this morning upon the important theme, Kentucky Missions."

Among the first of those who came forward at the close of the service to welcome Miss Marshall were Diana and John Henson. From her first meeting with them Katharine had felt a cordial liking for the bright, warm-hearted girl and her merry, care-free younger brother; and now she heartily echoed their expressions of pleasure at renewing the acquaintance.

That afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Bright, accompanied by little Buddy, went to see a sick neighbor, and Alexander set forth to visit the Clay boys. Mary Louise and Susan had gone home from church that morning with the Bates children. Willow Brook, therefore, was left in charge of Ann Elizabeth, little Margaret and Miss Marshall. The young lady betook herself to her room to write letters. She had written but a few lines when little Margaret ran in exclaiming excitedly: "Miss Marshall, please huvwwy an' come down. Miss Di an' Mistah John Henson an' Mistah Bwoadus are in the pawlah, an' Doctah Mowlan' an' Buv-veh Bwyce are gettin' out uv a buggy at the stiles. I'll he'p you get weady," she continued, obligingly. "Please

put on that wuffley white dwess I seen you hang up in the closet when you took the things out uv your trunk the othah day."

With what speed she could, retarded as she was by the little girl's incessant chatter and well-meant but clumsy efforts as lady's maid, Katharine rearranged her hair into a more becoming coiffure, exchanged her muslin wrapper for the "wuffley white dwess," and hastened downstairs, accompanied by Puggie.

After Ralph Moreland and Shelburn Broadus had been presented, Misses Henson and Marshall seated themselves on the sofa, and Dr. Moreland and Messrs. Broadus and Bryce took chairs facing them.

At some distance from this group Mr. Henson, with little Puggie in close attendance, seated himself beside the bashful and blushing Miss Bright, and endeavored to engage her in conversation. The young man had a resourceful mind and a ready tongue, and had he not been so oppressed by the close proximity and embarrassing attentions of the artless Puggie, he would, no doubt, in time, and with the aid of some stereoscopic views of the World's Fair, which, fortunately for him, were on the little table at his elbow, have succeeded in eliciting from Cissy in reply to his comments on the pictures some more elaborate and satisfactory expression of opinion than a murmured "Yes, sir," or "I believe so," or "Very pretty, sir!" Puggie, who had seen the pictures so often that she was *blase* of their beauties, leaned upon John's shoulder, fondled his hand, and made an exhaustive study of his diamond shirt stud, opal cuff-buttons, gold fob, enameled watch, and his Marechal Neil boutonniere.

Meanwhile, Mr. Broadus opened conversation in the group across the way by addressing to Katharine the stock question he invariably put to newcomers in the neighbor-

hood: "Is this your first visit to this part of Kentucky, Miss Marshall?"

"Yes, sir, my first visit."

"Your home is in Kenton County, is it not?" he continued before any of the others could interpose.

"Yes, sir, I live in Covington."

"Are you a native of that city?" he next inquired, with an air and tone so like those of a reporter interviewing a prospective "Write-up" that the young lady, although not aware of his connection with the *Jupiter*, half expected him to draw forth notebook and pencil to jot down her answers.

Before she could reply, Ralph Moreland came to her rescue. "A strictly non-committal policy is your only safeguard, Miss Marshall, against appearing in next Thursday's *Jupiter*."

She looked somewhat bewildered at this, and Philip Bryce explained, "Mr. Broadus is the editor of our enterprising weekly, the *Filson County Jupiter*, Miss Marshall."

Mr. Broadus, nothing daunted, pursued his investigations by asking the stranger how Filson County compared in her estimation with other sections of the State she had visited.

She answered enthusiastically that from what she had seen of this part of Kentucky, it seemed to her quite as beautiful as Fayette or Woodford or any other of the blue-grass counties.

"My dear Miss Marshall," laughingly ejaculated Miss Henson, "don't you know that this is the very heart of the blue-grass region?"

"Is it, indeed!" exclaimed Katharine.

"And so is Kenton County, is it not, Miss Marshall?" asked Ralph Moreland.

"Why, certainly," was the demure reply. "Did you

ever meet a Kentuckian who didn't claim to live in the blue-grass section?"

"As regards your county, I've no doubt the claim is well founded," said Dr. Moreland, politely.

"And as regards Filson, too," added Diana, determined to uphold the excellence of her native county against all insinuations. "Don't you think so, Mr. Bryce?"

"The celebrated blue-grass country is of much greater extent than a stranger to this State would suppose," returned Philip with diplomatic evasion.

"Our geographies, however, do not so class either Kenton or Filson County," remarked Shelburn Broadus, who was disposed to take everything in its literal sense.

"That, I'm persuaded, is the fault of the geographies, not of the two counties," remarked Miss Marshall, a flicker of a smile curving her lips as she looked at Diana.

"To be sure it is!" warmly assented Diana. "And whatever the geographies may say to the contrary, no other section of the State can boast of more healthful climate than old Filson County can, or more beautiful scenery or finer grass."

"'All flesh is as grass,'" spake John Henson, sauntering across the room. The stereoscopic views as a topic of conversation having at last become exhausted, Cissy had excused herself from the room on some pretext, and John, followed by Puggie, joined the group of five just in time to catch his sister's two concluding words. He was unaware of the topic under discussion, and likewise totally indifferent as to whether his remark was apposite or not, so long as it offered him a chance of joining the conversation.

"But all flesh isn't blue-grass, is it, Mr. Bryce?" asked Miss Henson.

"Why, no," he rejoined in a tone of deliberation as

though the subject were one demanding grave consideration. "Some people, I should think, would come under the head of the less beautiful but as useful orchard grass. Others are like timothy; and still others—those who live in low-lying regions—might be likened to swamp grass."

"There's a considerable sprinkling of the millet, crab and buffalo grasses, too, I should say," commented Moreland.

"While you ladies," added Broadus, directing an ingratiating smile to the occupants of the sofa, "certainly rank as ornamental grasses."

"There's a goose-grass variety," murmured Diana, ungratefully.

"Editors should, I think, be classed as Parnassus grass," suavely declared Miss Marshall, in return for the editor's compliment.

"Some folks might see in tongue grass the prototype of the preacher class, don't you think so, Bryce?" remarked John, audaciously; as he spoke, laying a hand upon the young minister's shoulder, and smiling innocently.

"Perhaps so," assented Philip, imperturbably; "and others, I suspect, might be inclined to class disciples of Blackstone as fox grass," he said, smiling back at John, who, be it understood, was pursuing, in the intervals of his social obligations and his duties as assistant bookkeeper in the flourishing milling business of "Peter Henson and Son," a desultory course of law reading with the view of some day being admitted to the Filson County bar.

"Oh, go to grass!" ejaculated John with undisturbed good nature.

"Perhaps it would be well for us to heed the warning. 'Keep off the grass!'" suggested Diana.

"What's Miss Mawshall, Buvvah Bwyce?" asked Puggie, sidling up to Mr. Bryce, leaning against his knee,

nestling her curly head upon his arm, and looking up into his face with deep interest.

Thinking that the discussion had grown rather too personal, as well as too frivolous to be altogether in accord with good taste, he would have acted upon Diana's hint to change the subject; but he knew too well the child's persistency to hope that she would allow her question to remain altogether ignored. He therefore said suggestively, "There's a dainty and beautiful variety called 'blue-eyed grass,' isn't there, Mr. Broadus?"

"Yes; otherwise known to scientists as 'Sisyrinchium Bermudian,'" replied the editor, didactically.

"And what am I, Buvvah Bwyce?" persisted Puggie, bent on eliciting as much botanical information as possible.

"You, Puggie? Why, you're a dear little grasshopper," Philip answered, giving the child's rosy cheek a playful pinch.

Little Margaret, once started upon this instructive subject, had no notion of being sidetracked until every member of the circle had been duly classified, but fortunately at this moment the barking of the dogs out in the yard heralded a new arrival.

Glancing through the window, and seeing a woman getting out of a phaeton at the front stile, Ralph Moreland excused himself and hurried to her assistance.

As the doctor quitted the room, Mr. Henson, after taking a survey from the window, turned to the others and announced: "Here comes the adorable Miss Stump, looking as though she had a big cargo of philosophy aboard. So, remember, no words of less than four syllables."

All rose as the doctor ushered in the newcomer. John, donning his sweetest smile, was the first to greet her. "Delighted to see you, Miss Ruby. We were just wishing for you."

Miss Ruby Stump was tall, of slender build, had long, well-cared-for hands and shapely, small feet. Her fair skin was the rendezvous of innumerable tiny wrinkles, but her cheeks and lips glowed with so roseate a hue that a stranger would be puzzled as to whether she were a young-looking old maid or an old-looking young maid, until he observed her hair. That settled the matter. At the roots it was snow white, then it gradually darkened, until at about half an inch from the scalp it settled into an even, metallic brown. The beautiful regularity of her white teeth, together with a habit she had of every now and then sucking in her lips and emitting a slight clicking sound, might have led one to suppose them false, had not Miss Stump frequently lamented suffering so much from toothache that she feared she must have her front teeth extracted.

Mr. Bryce pushed forward a comfortable chair for Miss Stump, and as soon as she was seated she said to him: "It's a pleasant surprise to find you here, Brother Bryce. I understood that you never made Sunday afternoon calls, except those of an official nature."

He flushed sensitively, but replied lightly: "Might not this visit come under the head of an official call?"

John added: "Brother Bryce is strictly in the line of his ministerial duties this afternoon, Miss Ruby. Miss Marshall is a prospective parishioner, who should of course be looked after. Besides, he had to come, anyway, to see that Di and Moreland and Broadus conducted themselves with due Sabbatical sobriety."

"We were engaged in a botanical discussion, Miss Ruby, when you came," said Diana, wishing to lead the talk into an impersonal channel.

"Botany is a charming recreation, I'm quite sure," Miss Stump answered; "and I regret that my devotion to higher

forms of study leaves me but little time to devote to these lighter subjects."

"Ah, yes, 'higher forms'! You mean astronomy, don't you, Miss Ruby?" Mr. Henson guilelessly inquired.

"Oh, no, I didn't mean astronomy, Mr. John," replied the lady with gracious condescension, "although that is, of course, a useful and elevating study. I referred to subjects less strictly scientific and more purely literary."

"Miss Stump has actually written a novel, Miss Marshall," Diana exclaimed with artless enthusiasm.

"Miss Stump writes very fine poetry, too, I've heard," added Ralph Moreland. "By the way, Broadus," he continued, a ghost of a smile hovering about his mouth, "you should try to persuade Miss Ruby to favor the *Jupiter* with some of her choice productions."

The editor, who, as the doctor well knew, had for months past skillfully evaded Miss Stump's efforts to get her poetic lucubrations into the columns of his paper, now answered hurriedly, rising as he spoke: "I'm, of course, always delighted to receive any contributions that will add to the interest of the *Jupiter*; and at some future time, Miss Stump, I shall be glad to discuss this matter with you; but I must be going now, as I have an important engagement that demands my immediate return to the village."

When Broadus had gone, Ruby turned to the others and said: "I've just finished a third perusal of Buckle's 'History of Civilization.' Such a delightfully invigorating and learned work, is it not?"

"It is indeed!" exclaimed John Henson, with as much enthusiasm as if the book in question had for years been one of his most intimate friends.

"Do you not, too, agree with me, Doctor?" she went on, smiling benignly upon him.

"Your opinions, my dear lady, upon all literary subjects are highly to be commended," he rejoined in his most suave manner.

The others, perhaps ashamed of their ignorance or their lack of literary perception, held their peace, and Ruby resumed: "What is your opinion of 'Robert Elsmere,' Miss Marshall? Isn't it a powerful piece of fiction?"

Katharine modestly made answer that when she had read the book she had been too young to judge of its merits, and that in any case she was by no means a competent critic of such matters; but that she remembered that when "Robert Elsmere" had first appeared, it had created quite a sensation in the reading world, and that even such high authorities as Gladstone, Edward Everett Hale and Julia Ward Howe had reviewed it.

"Isn't the book rather atheistical in its tendencies?" asked Diana.

"Oh, no," said Miss Ruby with an air of superior wisdom. "To a mere surface reader, the book might seem slightly tinged with atheistic thought, but to one who is accustomed to penetrate to an author's deeper meaning, 'Robert Elsmere' is quite free from atheistical or harmful tendencies. What do you say, Brother Bryce? But perhaps you don't approve of discussing works of fiction upon Sunday."

Mr. Bryce uttered an evasive disclaimer to the effect that fiction, in its broad sense, included the highest and best in literature. There followed an interesting discussion, in which all took part, as to what really constituted fiction.

When the topic had been discussed at some length, Miss Stump, determined to keep the conversation up to its present high standard, and perhaps seeing a tendency on the part of some of the company to lapse into frivolity, said,

"By the way, in my reading yesterday I came across a startling discovery."

"What was your discovery?" Miss Henson politely asked.

"A new theory in regard to Shakespeare. I came across the article in the *Forum*—only a mere reference, but I gleaned therefrom that recent discoveries had led critics to claim that Lord Bacon was the author of those immortal plays which until now have always been accredited to Shakespeare. I was so excited that I couldn't sleep last night. I've always been intensely fond of Shakespeare—have regarded him as the greatest luminary in the literary firmament—and now, to think that at this late day doubts have arisen about him!"

"Pore old Billy!" feelingly murmured the irrepressible John Henson.

Serenely unconscious that "Shakespeare versus Lord Bacon" had for at least a quarter of a century been a hackneyed subject of argument in young ladies' boarding-school literary societies and in young men's debating clubs, Ruby turned to Katharine and said: "As it's so recent a discovery, Miss Marshall, perhaps you may not yet have seen it. But mark my words, all of you, it will soon make a fine stir among scholars."

Katharine, her eyes fixed upon her hands lying in her lap, demurely said that she would post herself upon the subject at once.

"Say! let's get up a party to go to the woods to gather chestnuts," was Henson's hurried and, to Miss Ruby, apparently irrelevant suggestion at this moment.

There is no telling what other *new* (?) discoveries Miss Stump might have extracted from her rich store of *up-to-date* (?) literary knowledge, for the benefit of her listeners, had not Miss Henson, after consulting her watch,

exclaimed: "We must be going, John! We've made an unconscionably long call."

Acting upon his hint, the other callers likewise soon took their departure, and Miss Marshall again betook herself to her letter-writing, until Mr. and Mrs. Bright returned, and it was time to set out for the evening service at church.

CHAPTER XII.

OF A PEDAGOGICAL NATURE.

Upon Monday morning a number of neighboring children called by Willow Brook Farm, and shortly before eight o'clock Miss Marshall, attended by the four oldest Bright children and a few others of the more polite of her future pupils, escorted likewise by a vanguard of frolicsome small boys and a rear guard of shy little girls, made her way to the schoolhouse.

Her two years' experience as teacher had been acquired in one of the well-graded, well-equipped Covington schools. This September morning, therefore, when, after having reached the scene of her future labors, and having enrolled the forty-odd boys and girls who were in attendance, she began trying to classify them, she was appalled at the magnitude of the work she had undertaken. The Ginseng school army was made up of all sorts and conditions of scholastic soldiers, from the raw recruits of the chart infantry to the courageous, self-confident brigade of half-grown lads and lassies who, if one judged by the number and character of the text-book weapons they carried, were ambitious of conquering in that term a classical education.

The new principal found the work expected of her to be of such overwhelming extent and of such confusing variety that she well-nigh despaired of being able to cope with it. Visions of nervous prostration and even of brain softening floated before her mind; and she was only withheld from resigning her position at once by the thought that in relinquishing her former stronghold—Grade F in Covington Grammar School No. 3—she had, so to speak, burned her bridges behind her, and that consequently it

was now Ginseng Seminary or no school at all that year. By the close of the third day, however, she had reduced the chaotic array of multifarious and multitudinous classes to something like system; and, in her more optimistic moments, she even entertained a faint hope that she might be able after a time, by a rigid economy of every moment of the six hours' daily school session, and by utilizing also the long noon intermission and the short forenoon and afternoon recesses, to manage tolerably well.

It is a popular belief that no one can do well and thoroughly two or more things at the same time. To prove the falsity of such a belief one has only to undertake the work in one of our large, ungraded country schools, where, besides the many divisions and subdivisions of the grammar-school course, many of the pupils desire higher mathematics, clamor for Latin, yearn after rhetoric and literature—to say nothing of such light frivolities as bookkeeping, general history, and even elocution and drawing. A very conservative estimate of the tasks expected of a teacher in such a school shows at least thirty-five recitations which must be crowded into each day's work. If the teacher of such a school decline to undertake this herculean labor, and insist instead that the course of instruction shall be limited to the recognized ten branches of the common-school course, she is liable to be looked upon as an incompetent who dares not undertake the higher branches because of her own ignorance of them. She thus loses prestige, not only with her patrons and pupils, but with the community at large.

Whatever its meagerness of resource in other respects, Ginseng Academy was fortunately well equipped with blackboard space; so that after the first fortnight of agonized effort and much expenditure of brain force, Miss Marshall contrived that her pupils in "Higher English"

should diagram their complicated sentences upon the middle division of the long blackboard, while, at their right, the class in advanced arithmetic solved problems in compound interest, cube root, or mensuration; and while the pupils in algebra, who occupied the left-hand section, coquetted with the capricious but fascinating x , y and z , and wandered through the delightful mazes of binomials, radicals, surds and vinculum. While the three divisions at the board were thus engaged, the commanding officer would marshal the troops comprising the primer or reader or primary geography battalion upon the front-bench, to proceed with what speed they could with their recitation, sidetracked, as they frequently were, to afford higher English or advanced arithmetic or algebra a hearing.

During this time of stress and trial, Miss Marshall likewise ascertained that it is possible, during a noon intermission, to set copies, eat lunch, correct exercises, keep an eye on the "kept-in" pupils, supervise the children on the playground, and to hear a recitation in Latin Grammar—all at the same time. It furnished a strong proof of Kate Marshall's sweetness of disposition, stoutness of purpose and enthusiasm for the work, that her pupils did not often in the course of that session encounter a teacher with her temper on the strike, and with every nerve in her body on the warpath.

This description of Ginseng Academy is no overdrawn picture of any one of those ungraded rural schools which, until within recent years, were scattered throughout the land, but which are now gradually giving place to thoroughly systematized graded schools, each with a teaching force adequate to cope with the number and variety of branches to be taught. Hence, the problem that most frequently confronts the public-school teacher of to-day is not as to how she can in her daily six hours' schoolroom

labors perform the functions of primary teacher, grammar-school preceptor, high-school instructor and university professor, but as to how she can prevent her life from being so bounded on the north by monthly reports to superintendent and patrons, on the south by monthly examinations of pupils, east by daily making out of class averages, west by nightly corrections of class exercises, northeast by books on pedagogy, southeast by books on psychology, northwest by "Common School Law," and southwest by teachers' institutes, summer normal school, and "Teachers' Reading Circle," that she has little opportunity to exercise her own individuality or to develop that of her pupils.

Toward the end of November the school enrollment was increased by almost a score of larger boys, who had, until then, been detained from their studies by the exigencies of fall wheat-sowing and corn-gathering; and Ruth Vanarsdale, a quiet, earnest, lovable girl of twenty-three, came to the relief of Miss Marshall by taking charge of the primary and a part of the intermediate grades. Ruth was inexperienced, but, like her principal, she was an enthusiastic, energetic young woman, and in a short while she proved a thoroughly efficient aid to Katharine. Under their united efforts the school reached a degree of prosperity higher than it had attained in any previous term, and both principal and assistant won golden opinions from all who were interested in the progress of education in that community.

Miss Marshall each day grew more pleased with her Filson County environment and her homelike life with the family at Willow Brook Farm. She likewise daily grew in favor with both the old and the young of the community.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LADIES' AID.

At the September meeting of the ladies' aid society an order had been received for thirty-five yards of striped rag carpet. As all recognized Mrs. Nancy Bright's efficiency in this particular branch of industry, to her was assigned the task of coloring, sorting and cutting the material donated by the other members; and at the October meeting, which was to be held at Willow Brook Farm, the ladies were to tack these rags into pound balls, ready for the weaving. Accordingly, during the first week of October, Mrs. Bright, assisted by Charity Bird, who kindly came over to help her, was deep in the mysteries of logwood and diamond dyes. The next week was devoted to sorting and cutting. For this work Cissy as well as Miss Charity was pressed into service, and Miss Marshall also kindly volunteered her services after school hours.

The energetic Mrs. Bright next turned her attention to preparations for entertaining the society. It numbered but twenty-odd members; but to Katharine, who, being city bred, had much to learn concerning the lavish hospitality of these country people, it seemed that the quantities of cakes, pies and transparent puddings prepared were sufficient to furnish a regiment in dyspepsia. One might suppose, too, she thought, that the premises were about to undergo Governmental inspection. Windows were washed, porch floors scrubbed, the furniture in every room was given a fresh coat of varnish, the hearths in sitting-room and parlor were brightened with a dazzling new coat made of a mixture of Venetian red and buttermilk, and every closet and cupboard was redd up; "for," as Cissy explained

to her teacher, "Mrs. Fowler and Miss Randy Hogg and Mrs. Burgess will be prying into every corner and crevice to see if they can't find some dirt."

No less vigorous were the outdoor preparations, under the self-appointed directorship of Uncle Charley. Spurred on by the old negro's caustic tongue, Alec gave the hen-house and yard fence a new coat of white-wash; and Polly and Susan Bright and the negro girl, Ivory, with Puggie's and Buddy's erratic but well-meant assistance, swept the back yard, raked the dead leaves from the front lawn, and cut the grass from the interstices of the rock pavement—Uncle Charley meanwhile frequently declaring, "Nary lick o' wuck would dat rumbustical Alec an' dem bawdacious gals do, ef dis heah ole niggah wuzn't at thah heels the whole endurin' time to keep 'em at it."

By nine o'clock Saturday morning all was in readiness, and Nancy Bright, beaming with hospitality, hurried to the stiles to meet the first arrivals, Mrs. Fowler and Miss Hogg—Mrs. Burgess having remained at home to attend to the boarders.

The other members of the society soon arrived. Mrs. Goodloe, the president, called the meeting to order; the official part of the program was speedily dispatched; the ladies next turned their attention to more practical matters, and soon needles and tongues were equally busy in the little sewing circle.

"Why hain't Zereldy an' Di Henson here?" asked Mrs. Clark, winding up a ball she had just completed. "They don't often miss a meetin'."

"They have company from Louisville—Professor Spence, Captain Evans and Mr. Sylvester," Mrs. Goodloe replied.

"Deary me! Now, whut air they aftah a-visitin' at Hensons at this time?" again asked Sister Clark, as she

spoke peering at Mrs. Goodloe over her steel-rimmed spectacles.

"I shouldn't be surprised if it had something to do with getting the new railroad through," said another sister.

Mrs. Goodloe at this moment was beckoned from the room to consult with Mrs. Bright about some domestic matter, and Mrs. Mason answered, "Oh, no, I don't think they came on any business, but merely for a day's hunting."

"Huntin'? Yo' granny's hind foot!" spoke up Miss Hogg. "Professah Spence may come fuh that—though to my mind he's too old to go a-friskin' 'round the woods with a gun on his shouldah—but Tom Evans an' young Sylvestah hain't a-seekin' no game but whut they kin find in Hensons' parlah. It's Diany they're aftah."

"It'll be a marcy when that flirtatious miss gits married," said Mrs. Fowler, as she energetically bit off the end of her thread. "Of course, 'tain't no business uv mine," she went on with a virtuous air, "but, seein' as she's their only gal, it would seem like Pete an' Zereldy needn't be in sich a sweat about gittin' her off; but they air; an', as fur Zereldy, she'll shorely bust a hame-string if Diany hain't married soon."

"'Twon't be for want of asking, if Di don't marry; she's more beaux than any other girl in the county," remarked Charity Bird.

Mrs. Fowler's only notice of this remark was a toss of her head, and a look which seemed to say that *she* knew better than that.

Charity continued: "What'll Ralph Moreland say, I wonder, about these Louisville beaux? He's heels over head in love with Di, and is fairly eaten up with jealousy, as those dark-complected men always are whenever another beau pays attention to his sweetheart."

"You're quite mistaken in this instance, Sister Charity,"

eagerly averred Ruby Stump. "Dr. Moreland means nothing more by his attentions to Diana than pleasant civility. He's too grave and cultured to be seriously attracted by any feather-brained girl. He wants a wife nearer his own age—some one with dignity, and who possesses tastes congenial to his own."

"Miss Ruby no doubt thinks that she herself would be a more congenial mate for the doctor," whispered Della Mason to Ruth Vanarsdale and Katharine Marshall, who with Della were seated apart from the others, quietly tacking their carpet rags, and taking no part in the conversation of their elders.

"How about Shelburn Broadus, Ruby?" mischievously inquired Della's mother. "Isn't he rather partial to Diana?"

"Far from it," retorted Ruby, flushing warmly. "I know his real aspirations too well to believe that," and she smiled self-consciously.

"Well, it does seem's though we might find somethin' to talk about besides beaux an' courtin' an' marryin'," Randy Hogg said. "As fuh me, thah hain't the man livin' nor dead *I'd* marry. 'Pears to me, they air more trouble to the least puppus uv anything in creation, 'ceptin', mayby, flies an' bedbugs. They air a slippery, no-'count lot, the whole male sect, *I* think; an' I don't keer who knows it."

"Folks that get their living by keeping men boarders ought to have a better opinion of the sex," commented Charity to Ruby.

Miss Hogg's sharp ears heard the remark. She twitched her shoulder contemptuously in Charity's direction, and said to the others, "Boardin' hain't marryin', by a long jump, as anybody with a ounce uv sense would know. But," she went on, with a venomous glance that included Ruby as well as Charity, "some maiden females I could name is allus on the anxious-bench as regards matrimony;

an' it's gittin' to be 'O Lord, anybody!' with 'em, too."

Here Mrs. Goodloe, who had recently returned to the room, averted a possible disaster by requesting Miss Stump to weigh the balls.

While this was being done, Mrs. Lane said: "I was mighty shocked to hear about pore Sarah Jane Keene. I didn't even know she'd been sick till we passed the motion to resolute on her death."

"Nor did I, or I should have tried to get over to see her," said Mrs. Goodloe. "What was her complaint?"

Julia Fowler answered: "Peritonitus or some sich like kite's tale uv a name is whut Moreland called it; but you all know whut he is for givin' high-falutin' names to diseases—'specially them he can't cure. But let him call Sarey Jane's complaint peritonitus or perity fooley, or whut he will, she died uv nothin' more or less than infermation uv the inner intestines uv the bowels. I hepped nuss her; so I reckon I oughtah know. A more depicted pore creetah than she wuz, I nevah seen. She warn't sick a week, but by the time she died she wuz wore to skin an' bone, an' as yallah as a Chinyman."

"Poor, poor thing, how she must have suffered!" was the sympathetic ejaculation of some of the sisters.

"Yes," continued Sister Fowler, "she suffered the most incruciatin' agonies all endurin' her illness. At the last, seein' she wuz bound to die, Dr. Moreland he said all the medicines knowed to Esculapy hisse'f couldn't save her; an' that all that could be did wuz to pallerate her sufferin's with anerines; so he give her a hyppodrumic uv morphine, an' she went off in a stoopah."

Having delivered this display of medical erudition, Julia Fowler went on complacently rocking herself and sewing diligently. Rarely did any one venture to combat Mrs. Fowler's opinions, and, in this instance, no one attempted

a reply. Old Sister Clark, who had lost the latter part of the conversation, sat peacefully nodding in her chair by a window. Mrs. Mason shoved her rocker back out of Mrs. Fowler's range of vision, and tried to stifle a laugh. Ruby Stump, muttering something about the excessive warmth of the room, stepped to the front door, opened it, and stood there a moment with her back to the company. The three young girls, Ruth, Della and Kate, not daring to glance at one another, bent their heads over their sewing, and struggled to keep straight faces.

Mrs. Goodloe hastened to start a fresh topic. "I'm so glad," said she, "to see Tom and Nell and Pearl Slocum attending our church so regularly of late. They may join us yet; and if they do, perhaps Mrs. Slocum will come, too."

"Don't think it!" exclaimed Charity Bird. "They're too deeply dyed in the wool of Baptist doctrine for that."

"Pshaw!" rejoined Mrs. Lane, good-naturedly. "What does Tom Slocum or his sisters know about church doctrines?"

"Mr. Foster says he always has a low opinion of folks that change their politics or their religion," remarked Mrs. Foster. "He thinks it shows a lack of stamina to do so. Not, however, but what I'd be glad, and so would Mr. Foster, to have the Slocums join our church. They'd make real good members."

"It's my belief," spake Randy Hogg, "that it's a sneakin' fondness fuh thet finicky, giddy, worldly-minded preachah uv ourn, instid uv consarn about their souls, whut fetches Pearl an' Nell so frequent to our church uv late. While old Brothah Keslon wuz preachin' fuh us they hardly evah darkened the doors uv our meetin'-house; but every Sunday, rain or shine, they hiked therselves ovah to Durritt to attend the Baptis' Church there; but now Ginseng

Christian Church seems plenty good 'nough fur them."

"But you must remember, Sister Randy," interposed Mrs. Mason, "that while Brother Keslon was preaching for us, the Slocums lived on their farm, and had a number of horses at their command, but that now, having moved into town, it isn't always convenient for them to get a horse to drive."

"Well, whutevah be Nell and Pearl's reasons fur comin' to our church so often nowadays," spake Madame Fowler, "I must say I agree with you, Randy, about our new preachah bein' worldly minded. Why, half the time he don't say brothah an' sistah to his own membahs, but jest calls 'em Mistah or Missis or Miss So-and-so, like any othah fellah would do. An', besides, he spends too much time, frum all I can l'arn, gaddin' 'roun' with the young folks."

Mesdames Goodloe, Mason, Lane and Foster, who held their young minister in warm respect, exchanged glances, and the outspoken Mrs. Mason said remonstratingly: "But Brother Bryce is young himself, Sister Julia, and, of course, he finds the society of other young people congenial; and it is right that he should."

"No mattah if he is young," retorted Mrs. Fowler; "a preachah, be he old or young, hain't no business to be led away into the pastimes uv othah folks. He should be sober-minded an' godly an' meek. But Brothah Bryce, he even visits the gals on Sunday evenin's. Leastways, that is whut I've hearn."

"I presume Mr. Bryce never has paid the bewitching Miss 'Daut' Fowler a Sunday afternoon call. Otherwise, we should now be hearing quite a different opinion of him from her adoring mamma," observed Ruth to Kate and Della, in a tone so low as to be inaudible to those in the other part of the room.

"Wuss still," chimed in Randy in reply to Mrs. Fowler's criticism, and, as she spoke, casting a meaning look toward the corner where Miss Marshall sat, "that Sunday Brothah Elton preached fuh us, last Septembah, that young man wuz so ill-mannered as to leave him all alone the whole Sunday evenin', an' to gallavant off to see some young missy or othah."

Sarah Goodloe, whose patience had been sorely tried that day by Miss Hogg and Mrs. Fowler, did not venture to reply until she had her feelings well under control. She threaded her needle, selected a fresh supply of carpet rags from the basket at her side, and then said mildly: "You're laboring under a misapprehension, Sister Randy. Soon after our early dinner on that Sunday of which you speak, Brother Elton left us to drive over to Durritt to spend the afternoon with Mr. Sallee, an old college mate of his. He left our house before Brother Philip did, and didn't return until after Brother Philip was back again from paying his little call. Brother Bryce is incapable of discourtesy to any one, much less to an honored fellow-minister, and a guest."

Neither Miranda Hogg nor Julia Fowler was minded to let the discussion end here; and Mary Mason and Ann Foster were just as eager to defend their beloved Brother Bryce as were Miss Hogg and Mrs. Fowler to condemn him; but the tension of affairs in the sitting-room was relieved at this juncture by the entrance of Milton Bright. By the time he had made the circuit of the room, and had given each woman a cordial word and a welcoming shake of the hand, dinner was announced.

When the ladies were reassembled in the sitting-room after all had enjoyed the bountiful hospitality of the dining-room, Mrs. Goodloe announced as the result of the morning's work twenty-two and a half pounds of carpet filling ready for the weaving.

"We've wucked so spry that the heft uv our job is done; so let's take a little play-spell befoh resummin' our needles," was Julia Fowler's motion, to which the others made ready assent.

Sisters Goodloe, Foster, Mason, Lane, and one or two others, went for a stroll about the grounds. Misses Bird and Stump returned to the dining-room to help Mrs. Bright with the dishes. Sisters Hogg and Fowler seated themselves in front of the grate where a small fire was smoldering, and each, turning the front breadth of her gown back over her knees, drew out of her pocket a tiny black box and a short stick, or brush; and, first dipping this brush into the box, each began mopping her teeth with it, using the grate as a cuspidor.

"They're dipping snuff," explained Ruth in a low tone, seeing Katharine's astonished look; "several of the older women about here indulge in the practice. Isn't it disgusting?"

"I should say so!" Miss Marshall replied with a shudder. "Infinitely worse than smoking," as she spoke, glancing across to where old Sister Clark, pipe in mouth, was seated by an open window, puffing away in solitary enjoyment.

"Suppose we have a game of croquet," Kate presently proposed to Della and Ruth. The three girls proceeded to the croquet-ground, where they were joined by Cissy and Alec and Polly, and an exciting game followed.

When the three young ladies returned to the house after their game, they found the circle reinforced by Mrs. Bright, and adjourned from sitting-room to parlor with the afternoon task of carpet rags. Mrs. Mason, looking up from her work as the girls entered, said: "Won't you favor us with a song, Miss Marshall? I hear you have a fine voice."

The others seconded this request, and Kate seated her-

self at the piano, and sang what she considered one of her choicest selections. Various exclamations of delight and commendation greeted her performance, and she was urged to sing again.

"An' fuh the land sake," exclaimed Miss Hogg, who had taken no part in the chorus of praise over Miss Marshall's first effort, "give us something tuney, this time! All that tra-la-lahin' an' high screechin' may be fine stuff, but 'tain't whut I call singin'."

The young lady from Covington felt abashed at this criticism, and began to fear that her severe course of training at Cincinnati College of Music had been time and money wasted.

"Don't you know 'Golden Slippahs,' 'Package uv Old Lettahs,' 'When You an' I Wuz Young, Maggie,' or something uv that sort with some tune to it?" Miranda asked.

The girl had to acknowledge her ignorance of these vocal gems; but she did know "Suwanee River" and "Old Man's Dream," and she sang both to the satisfaction of her audience; and at a request from Mrs. Foster she sang "Annie Laurie," which also was so well received by even the critical Miss Hogg that Kate felt that she had in a measure atoned for the "tra-la-lahin'" and the "high screechin'" of her first performance.

"Now, Sister Ruby, put by your sewing and play for us," urged one of the ladies, when Miss Marshall had finished her last song.

"Now for 'Maiden's Prayer,' 'Smith's March' or 'Silvery Waves,'" thought Katharine as Miss Stump obligingly took her seat at the instrument. The girl's astonishment was great when Ruby began one of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words." She played the selection with zest and expression.

"You play delightfully, Miss Stump," Kate exclaimed

enthusiastically at the close of the performance. "You certainly have decided talent."

"Thank you," was Miss Ruby's gratified reply. Then she nonchalantly subjoined: "I doubtless have some musical ability; but with me music is merely a pastime. Reading and study are my serious employments, and writing is my true vocation."

"How's Sadie Jean progressing in her music, Sister Fowler?" inquired Mrs. Foster, presently. "She played real well before she went off to boarding-school; so now, I suppose, she plays like a professional."

"To my mind, she's progressin' backwuds," answered Mrs. Fowler. "She usetah play beautiful, an' it allus made me feel like gittin' up an' dancin', jest to heah her. But last vacation she couldn't play nothin' but long, senseless things called 'Snorters' and 'Haytudes,'* that hadn't no more tune to 'em than the cackle of a goose. An' Daut she wuz allus a-practicin' whut she called her tecknick or some such fool stuff, to limber up her fingahs an' to strengthen her wrists, she said; but I told her, if her fingahs wanted limberin', to set to wuck on some knittin', an' that sweepin' an' churnin' would likely make her wrists strong 'nough fur any puppus; but that when it come to piany playin', I wanted music."

By this time the afternoon was drawing to a close, and the aid society, therefore, adjourned to meet one month later with Sister Mason.

"Be sure to come," said Della to Ruth and Kate. "It's such fun, isn't it? As good as a circus," she added.

"Indeed it is," the other two assented, and both promised to be present.

*Sonatas and études.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SOCIAL VORTEX.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old Time is still a-flying;
 And this same flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow may be dying.—*Herrick.*

Ginseng had the usual amount of gayety and innocent amusement characteristic of the Kentucky village of the prosperous class; and neither the young minister nor his parishioners, with the exception of Madame Fowler and Mademoiselle Hogg, deemed it unfitting that he should make one at these social gatherings. Miranda Hogg, it is true, even went to the length of remonstrating with Peter Henson, Milton Bright and Robert Mason in regard to what she was pleased to stigmatize as "that giddy young man's onseemly worldliness;" but the three church officers treated her objections lightly, and gave it as their opinion that these innocent social diversions were exactly what the young man needed to rouse him, and to make him enter the more heartily, afterward, into the serious duties of his calling.

So valued an addition was Philip to the circle of young people that the other members of the circle so timed and arranged all their social functions that his clerical duties should not conflict with his presence at their little gatherings.

By ordinary reckoning, Ginseng society now numbered five eligible bachelors and seven marriageable maids—not counting the absent Sadie Jean Fowler; but by John Henson's peculiar method of computation, there were nine bachelors and eight maidens. "You see," he one day mod-

estly explained to Tom Slocum and Ralph Moreland, "Slocum and I are each equal to three ordinary gallants, and Miss Ruby counts for at least two ordinary young ladies, seeing that she has discovered the fountain of perpetual youth, and is herself the sweetness and enticement of all her sex done up in one bewitching bundle. So it's no wonder, Moreland, that you and Broadus tremble at the sight of her blooming cheeks, and thrill with ecstasy at the sound of her entrancing voice."

"I'm convinced that the only way to prevent bloodshed between Broadus and myself is for you, John, to marry this fair enslaver," the doctor soberly made answer.

"With all the pleasure in life," assented John, heartily. "'A fair field, and no favor,' is all I need to accomplish this, my heart's desire."

"I pledge you my word that henceforth neither Broadus nor I will stand in your way."

"But even with the doctor and the editor out of the running, Jack, there's the parson still left. Don't you fear him as a rival?" asked Tom Slocum.

"Who? Bryce?" was the reply. "He's too humble-minded to aspire to our fair poetess. He's nothing but a schoolboy. Don't you know that he's going to school to Miss Marshall at present?"

"That being the case," answered Tom, "all I've to say is that if Miss Marshall's as proficient an instructress in Love's little school as her patrons report her as being in Ginseng's larger academy, Bryce'll be well trained in one branch of knowledge, at least, before winter is over. Don't you think so, Moreland?"

"I think his education bids fair to be pretty thorough," admitted the doctor; "and I don't consider Cupid's seat of learning as a 'little school,' either. I think it deserves the more dignified title of university."

"But," objected young Henson, "its course of study isn't elective, as it is in a university, but obligatory, Moreland."

"Besides," added Tom, "there's only one text-book used, and only one branch of learning taught."

"You're out of your reckoning there, Thomas," rejoined Ralph. "The course of instruction may not be altogether elective; but the branches taught are many and varied, and so are the text-books used—although they are, I'll admit, every one of them the work of that all-competent author, Professor Dan Cupid, D. L."

"Well, call this seat of instruction university, college, academy, private school or what you will," said John, "I'm persuaded that under Miss Marshall's tuition the curriculum is both pleasant and profitable. In fact, I shouldn't mind going to school to her myself were it not for my plans in regard to that pearl—I mean that *Ruby* among women, the enchanting Miss Stump."

"You forget, Henson," young Slocum put in, "that the laws of this commonwealth prevent a man's marrying his grandmother. It's strange that you, who aspire to be a lawyer, should have overlooked this important statute of your native State."

"So, after all, friend John, it's not in your power to avert that duel between Broadus and myself," said Moreland, with an air of sad disappointment.

"Away with your laws and your grandmothers, Thomas!" retorted young Henson, with a contemptuous wave of his hand. "Mademoiselle Ruby is only in her twenty-ninth year. She's been at that interesting age for the last decade; and if she'll only stay there nine more years (and there's no earthly reason why she shouldn't), I'll be as old as she, and all your laws and statutes shan't prevent our nuptials."

Thomas Slocum did his best to live up to his reputation

for gallantry by always being in readiness, whenever there was any social function pending in the village, to drive into the country for Ruth Vanarsdale and Della Mason, between whom his affections were still in a wavering, unsettled condition. John Henson proved himself equal to any three ordinary beaux by being always available as an escort for Pearl and Nell Slocum, and likewise for Ruby Stump, whenever it happened that neither Ralph Moreland nor Shelburn Broadus could be inveigled by the diplomacy of the frolicsome Mr. Slocum and his coadjutor, John, into service in behalf of the last-mentioned damsel.

Ralph Moreland, however, generally contrived to escape the snares which Tom and John so cunningly devised, and to escort Diana Henson to the social gatherings of the clan, unless he was forestalled by Shelburn Broadus, who also showed a decided tendency to "worship at the shrine of Diana."

As winter progressed it did seem that Tom and John were correct in regard to Philip Bryce's movements. The young minister and the young teacher were discovering many mutual tastes and sympathies; and his visits to Willow Brook Farm were becoming of far more frequent occurrence than those he paid to other members of his flock.

Milton and Nancy Bright, being wise in their generation, soon ceased to regard these winter evening visits as being altogether of the nature of pastoral calls. Hence, it soon grew to be their custom upon these occasions to exchange a few cordial words with the young man, and then to withdraw to their own sitting-room fireside. Not so with some of the children. It was a tenet of their social creed that the entertainment of any guest (especially of a guest so highly valued as was Mr. Bryce) should not devolve solely upon one member of the household. More-

ever, had not Brother Bryce once pronounced theirs to be the most homelike home in America? "And," they reasoned, "how could this high opinion of his in regard to Willow Brook be maintained, if the younger members of the family were not to do their part toward making him feel at home when he came?"

It was comparatively easy for them to escape the slight surveillance of their easy-going mother. Consequently, the earlier portion of each of Mr. Bryce's evening visits was perforce devoted by him to the children—at least, to the claims of the younger children. To Cissy, Alec and Polly, "study hour" was of such paramount importance that even the sacred rites of hospitality must be sacrificed thereto. But Susan was too young for night study, and little Margaret and Buddy were not yet of school age. Buddy, it is true, was generally too sleepy to care to remain in the parlor, but Susan and Margaret were generally on hand to assist in Mr. Bryce's entertainment. To do her justice, it must be stated that Puggie—dear little girl—did not often now, as upon the first Sunday afternoon of Miss Marshall's appearance, in any way usurp a prominent place in the conversation of her elders; and usually when Mr. Bryce called she was content to sit mutely in her little rocking-chair between him and Miss Katharine; but Susan was of a more vivacious temperament. She had no intention of being seen and not heard, and felt herself quite equal to maintaining her part in any conversation. It was not, therefore, until after the children's half-past-eight-o'clock bedtime that Katharine had by any means an undisputed claim upon Mr. Bryce's attention.

CHAPTER XV.

AN AUTHORITY ON THE RAIN-CROW.

All during February there had been an unusually heavy rainfall, and in consequence, one night toward the end of the month, Slidell's Run, overflowing its banks, turned out of its course, and caused a disastrous washout in Thorpe's Valley, a low-lying, flat region a mile or two back of Willow Brook Farm. The morning after the washout, Philip Bryce and Ralph Moreland, having heard of the disaster, set forth for the flooded district, to see what could be done for the relief of its inhabitants. They called at Willow Brook on their way, to get Mr. Bright to accompany them.

While they were sitting on their horses at the side gate, waiting for Bright to join them, Uncle Charley, who was returning to the house, wet and bedraggled from his quest through the dripping willow bushes, in search of an errant hen and her brood of young chickens, came up.

Philip, who was speculating as to the probability of Miss Marshall's having already started for school, spoke to the old negro kindly but absent-mindedly, but Ralph, who enjoyed a wordy encounter with the half-crazy old darkey, jocularly accosted him: "Well, Mr. Withers, how does your corporeal substance appear to gasuate at this present periodical conjuncture?"

"Thank you, suh; 'ceptin' fuh dis mis'ry in my back, my heaf is middlin' brisk, consid'rin' my time o' life, an' the tur'ble wet corndition ob de atmospheres at present."

"Ah," answered Moreland, "'de atmospheres' do appear to be a trifle damp; but it's a fine morning for young ducks."

"Well, suh, it's more'n it is fuh young chickens. I's

been all mawnin' meanderin' 'roun' frew dem drippin' wilters yandah, tryin' to git dat obstrep'rous ole buff Cochin an' her chickens to go intah de poultry-house. It suttinly do look lak hens is bawn foolish, an' de oldah dey gits, the foolisher dey gits."

"Oh, well," Ralph answered, comfortingly, "the rains are about over, and we'll soon have plenty of sunshine, which will be good for that 'mis'ry in your back,' and for young chickens, too."

"Doan you fool yourse'f 'bout dis rainy spail, Doctah. It's gwinetah last some time yit—'cordin' to dat wailin' ole demon ovah yandah," answered Uncle Charles, referring to a rain-crow dimly visible amid the dripping boughs of a willow-tree, and who from this eyrie was uttering his weird cry.

"You pesky ole vagabone, you!" continued the darkey, apostrophizing the bird. "Why carn't you consarve yo' wailin' till harves' time, when de airth'll be fairly pantin' fuh a drap o' moistur'—instid o' bringin' dis deluge on us now?"

Bryce now shook off his abstraction, and said, "But, Uncle Charley, the rain-crow doesn't cause wet weather, does it?"

"I reckon dey doan hab no rain-crows in dat fuh-off country whut you hails frum, Brothah Bryce; so, ob course, you's not well 'quainted wid theh habits."

Bryce acknowledged that, so far as he knew, there was no such species of bird in Australia.

"Well, when you's knowed de rain-crow ez long ez I has," answered Uncle Charley, "you'll find he do fotch rain. When he cries fuh it, it comes, an' dat's a fact. He's fust cousin to de scritch-owl, de rain-crow is, an' he's meaner dan any ob his kin. He's de corntrariest bird whut evah flew. He's allus been corntrary ebah sence de flood, when

he refuse Marse Noey's invurtation to entah de ark ob safety."

"Wasn't the rain-crow in the ark, Uncle Charles? I thought every bird and beast was represented in that assemblage," said Bryce, much amused at the old negro's vagaries.

"Brother Philip's Scriptural knowledge appears not so extensive as we had thought, eh, Doctor?" laughed Milton Bright, who had drawn near and was leaning on the gate, waiting for Alec to bring his horse from the stable.

Uncle Charles, paying no attention to this last observation, went on in reply to Mr. Bryce: "No, suh, beggin' yo' pardon, you's been slightly misconformed on dis mattah. It wuz 'lis a way; ole Marse Noey an' young Marse Hem an' Sham an' Jafer, dey kotch an' brung to de doah ob de ark a pa'r or a seben ob ebry libbin crittah; but when Marstah an' Missus Noey an' deh sons an' deh daughter-by-laws tries to git de rain-crow intah de ark, he woan budge."

"I must really look into this subject more thoroughly," observed Bryce, with an air of profound interest. "You make me quite ashamed of my lack of knowledge, Uncle Charles."

"Tell us more about this matter, Brother Withers," urged Moreland; "you're a perfect thesaurus of Biblical lore."

The garrulous old fellow, glad to air his wisdom, proceeded: "'T'll be 'bleeged to you, Marsè Noey,' says Mistah Rain-crow, 'ef you'll find a seat inside fuh Missus Rain-crow, kaze she's feared o' lightnin', an' hates to git her Sunday 'parel damp; but I purfuhs a seat outside whah I kin view de elemints.' So he perch hisse'f on de gable end ob de ark, an' keeps up a-screechin' an' a-wailin' to let de Lawd know dat some ob de mount'ins an' hills an' de tall trees wuz still 'bove watah, fuh de pore lost, ondone sin-

nahs to cling to. Yessuh, dat wuz de way ob it; an' Mistah Rain-crow he's jes ez corntrary now-days ez he wuz den," continued the negro, shaking the raindrops from his old felt hat; "an' when we doan need a drap o' watah, he cries fuh it, lak all puhessed; an' in hot summah time, when all creation air a-trabblin' togethah, an' a-beggin' fuh a leetle moist'nin', he woan croak nary a croak."

As the three men rode on, they laughed heartily over the old negro's version of the sixth and seventh chapters of Genesis; and Philip observed, "It's interesting to see how much of what the ignorant, unlettered negroes hold as Bible truth is derived from superstition and folklore."

"The higher critics have much the same idea, I believe, in regard to the origin of many of the Biblical views of the more conservative element in our churches," remarked Ralph. "But I may be misjudging them, however," he continued, "for these adherents of the higher criticism cult are so mythical in their utterances and so abstruse in their reasoning that their real meaning is often too deep to be reached by my little plummet-line."

"As to that," said Bright, "it must sometimes puzzle the elect angels themselves to understand all their doctrines. But so far as my untutored mind can grasp the situation, it seems to me that these 'New Thought' apostles do look upon much of the Bible as little better than fable—its miracles, mere fiction; the Pentateuch, a conglomeration of legendary scraps; and much of what we old fogies believe the inspired narrative of God's dealings with his people, simply uninspired Hebrew drama. What say you, Brother Philip?"

"I hardly think the matter so bad as that. While many Scriptural subjects are now being regarded from something of a new viewpoint, still the new scholarship and our more conservative thinkers are not so far apart, after all.



"Yessuh, dat wuz de way ob it."

O. A. Stepler

In every essential of Christianity the faith of each division of our brotherhood is the same," was the reply.

"Don't deceive yourself, my dear brother," replied Bright, earnestly. "The difference is great and constantly becoming greater; and one can't overestimate the danger threatened our faith by this irreverent handling of the Word by these sages who have become wise above what is written, and who are as arrogant and self-sufficient as though the Almighty had in this latter day accorded them some special revelation. One must steer clear of their speculations, or he will presently find himself floundering among the shoals and breakers of downright infidelity."

Bryce rode on in silence for awhile, and then said: "Still, although every word of the Bible be inspired revelation, instead of some portions being—as many of our advanced scholars maintain—the product of literary evolution, it doesn't follow that the Scriptures contain *all* of God's message to humanity."

"If they don't, where are we to look for the rest of the message?" was Bright's blunt inquiry.

"In nature, in the nobler aspirations of the human heart, in the beautiful and true in literature, art and science."

Bright rejoined: "But if we interpret this message of nature and of the human heart and art and literature and science by any other light than that of God's Bible, we are led into error."

"While I am not, you will understand," said Philip, "advocating any of the special doctrines labeled with the 'Higher Criticism' tag, I must say that many of the views about which the conservative religious world is raising such a hue and cry appear to me as much the same as those held by the great thinkers of all ages."

"That depends upon whom you consider the great thinkers, doesn't it?" asked Moreland.

"Exactly," replied Milton Bright before Bryce could speak. "Many things now vaunted as modern thought were held a generation or two ago by German infidels, and even many generations ago by heathen philosophers among the Greeks and Persians."

"In fact, these Biblical speculations are, as Holmes would say, 'as old as the trilobites.' But why worry about them? The old Book holds good, and always will," remarked Ralph, hoping to end the discussion.

After a pause Philip said: "There's a vast difference between the essentials of Christianity and its ever-varying creeds. Christianity is a relation or an attitude toward God; creeds are man's feeble efforts to explain that relation or attitude."

"I heartily agree with you there. Furthermore, I'm not so narrow as to think any opinion or view is right just because it has always been held so in the past," answered Milton.

"And possibly—although, as I said, I'm far from having a clear understanding of the views advocated by modern critics—both they and the old-fashioned thinkers may be right. The matter under dispute may, after all, be simply a question of looking at the two sides of the same shield, you know," said Moreland.

"No!" stoutly contended Bright. "Your comparison is wrong. It's not a matter of looking at different sides of the same shield. These 'New Thought' disciples and we conservatives can't both be right; since, if there is any truth in what they teach, it means the annihilation of the rock on which our faith rests. If what they claim about the Bible be true, the God we in our ignorance have blindly worshiped doesn't exist."

"I must confess," said Philip, "that I do not consider the matter so grave as that; and, as I just stated, I can not

see that the difference between the old view and the new on Biblical questions is so marked. Opinions, views on all subjects, are constantly in a state of flux and readjustment; and you, Brother Bright, are too liberal-minded to desire that one's viewpoint to-day on Scriptural subjects should be the same as that of the men of half a century ago."

"The viewpoint of the Christian world of to-day on all Scriptural subjects should be that of *nineteen* centuries ago," retorted Bright. "We of this day, instead of surrendering or trying to shape into new forms any of the distinctive doctrines of the Christian religion, should hold fast to them in the exact form in which they were first delivered us by Christ and his apostles."

After another silence, Moreland remarked: "It isn't the acceptance of this or that belief about the Bible that counts; but it is our acceptance of Christ himself."

"Yes," assented Bryce, "the essential thing in the whole matter of the Christian life is the recognition and acceptance of Jesus as our Teacher, our Master, our Ideal and Model."

"And also," added Bright, "the acceptance of him as our Sacrificial Offering, our Sinbearer, our Atonement. By the way, Brother Philip, I wish you'd give us a sermon on the atonement. You have never done so yet, and it is a subject which should often be taught."

As this was of all subjects the one about which the young preacher felt that he differed most widely from the leading members of his church, it was fortunate that the near approach of the three men to their destination spared him the necessity of a reply.

They found the condition of affairs in the flooded district quite deplorable, and their homeward ride was taken up with discussion of ways and means to relieve the sufferers.

During the next week the people of Ginseng were active in their efforts to relieve the condition of the inhabitants of Thorpe's Valley. The young people were not less eager than their elders in this charitable work. Believing devoutly in their musical abilities, they had long thought of giving a concert. Hence, they hailed with joy Mrs. Goodloe's suggestion that they give one for the benefit of the flood sufferers; and the next evening after the suggestion was made, they held a preliminary meeting at Elmarch.

Mrs. Goodloe, who was the leader of nearly every charitable undertaking of the community, and also was a woman of wonderful tact and executive ability, was to be patroness of the enterprise and chaperone to the young people. Neither Shelburn Broadus nor Tom Slocum was noted for musical gifts; but the former, by reason of his being wielder of the editorial thunder of the *Jupiter*, was constituted grand master of ceremonies; and Tom Slocum was too resourceful a member of society to be ignored. "My voice," said he, "is of the still, small order, and my talents in any other direction, *nil*; but I shall be happy to act as general utility man to my more gifted comrades."

John Henson had a voice which he himself rated as "a cross between an alto and a thorough bass." He could also sing Irish songs in a delightfully realistic, if not very musical, brogue; and Jim Dick Fowler possessed a resonant bass voice. Della Mason, who good-naturedly declared her willingness to play upon any instrument from a violin to a jew's-harp, finally decided upon a mandolin solo. Diana Henson had a strong, sympathetic but untrained soprano, which would do nicely in the choruses, she said. Ruth Vanarsdale contributed a fine contralto; Ralph Moreland, a splendid baritone; and Philip Bryce, a rich, highly cultivated tenor which would have delighted any music lover. Elihu Clay had inherited from "The Great Pacificator," or

some other of his illustrious ancestry, a genius for the violin, and Mrs. Elihu was an ideal accompanist. Ruby Stump, however, was the sheet anchor of the coterie as a pianist, while all looked upon Katharine Marshall as vocalist *par excellence*.

With so much talent at their command, and so good a cause upon which to expend it, it is not to be wondered at that every one was enthusiastic over the concert which was to be given as speedily as possible.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN OLD FOLKS' CONCERT.

Probably there is no form of musicale that appeals more strongly to the popular fancy than an old folks' concert, nor is there any form of entertainment which offers more varied possibilities in the way of costume and stage decoration. Therefore, an old folks' concert was decided upon by the musical talent of Ginseng.

John Henson and Della Mason, delighted at the prospect of toning down their glowing locks with a coating of powder, immediately decided to impersonate George and Martha Washington, and they adhered to this decision, notwithstanding some of the others did hint that our revered first President was in all probability not given to singing burlesque Irish songs, and that the mandolin was not in vogue in America in Madam Washington's day. Little, however, cared John or Della for such slight anachronisms as these.

"Tell me not," said John with a tone and accent which he fondly supposed to be of the best Hibernian brand, "that the 'Fayther of his Counthry' had no sthrain of Irish blud in his veins! How ilse could he so cleverly have outwitted the Hissians at the chrossing of the Dilaware? To say nothing of the sthyle in which upon divers occasions he befooled Lord Howe and the Breetish Parliament?"

Della averred that, "anachronism or any other ism to the contrary," she intended making her first appearance before the footlights in the becoming garb and coiffure of the ladies of the First Administration. "And, as for the mandolin," she argued, "history doesn't reveal that Martha Washington was an accomplished performer upon any

instrument except the spinning-wheel; so the mandolin will do as well as anything."

With his customary complaisance, Tom Slocum declared that he would be satisfied with anything Nell and Pearl could rig up for him, whether it was the vestments of a Trappist monk or the outfit of a Western cowboy. Mr. Clay said he had the suit of clothes which his Great-uncle Henry had worn in Congress upon the occasion of his bringing forward the Omnibus Bill of 1850, and that he intended wearing these sacred habiliments the night of the concert. Ralph Moreland was by this reminded that he had somewhere among his widely scattered belongings the uniform his father had worn as captain under "Cerro Gordo Williams" in the Mexican War.

"Just the thing, Dr. Moreland!" exclaimed Diana. "You'll sing 'Warrior Bold' with realistic fervor in that costume."

This dress parade on the part of Mr. Clay and the doctor recalled to Mr. Fowler's remembrance that he, too, had a uniform and the "pair of *applettes*" that had been worn by Zachary Taylor at the battle of Cowpens. Whereupon the irrepressible John Henson murmured in an aside to some of the girls: "If 'Old Rough and Ready' really did figure at Cowpens, it must have been while he was in a previous state of existence; for my little history book says he was born in 1784 and that the battle of Cowpens was fought in 1780."

"What have you decided on, Brother Bryce?" was the solicitous inquiry of some of the ladies.

"Having no heirlooms in the way of ancestral raiment, I shall, I think, make my debut in regulation spook costume—a la sheet and pillow-case," was the nonchalant reply of the young minister.

"Such attire would without doubt be airy and impres-

sive," laughingly remarked Diana, "but what about songs to fit the part?"

"Ah! I hadn't thought of that," acknowledged Bryce. He then added: "How would 'Ever My Spirit Lingers with Thee' do? Doesn't that sound ghostly enough? Or perhaps, with a few slight verbal changes, 'Ah! I Have Sighed to Rest Me,' might be still more in character for a restless apparition to warble."

After a moment's reflection, Mrs. Goodloe solved the question by tendering the loan of her father's wedding suit. "It is," she said, "a handsome costume, and will be," she added, contemplating the well-built figure of her young minister, "a perfect fit and extremely becoming."

With the exception of Della, the ladies were not so outspoken as were the gentlemen upon the important matter of stage attire. Nevertheless, it was to each of them a consuming matter of thought, even to the exclusion, for the time being, of the question, "What shall I sing?" or "What shall I play?" After much deliberation, Ruth, Diana, Nell, Pearl, Ruby and Mrs. Clay each settled upon appropriate attire; but Kate, who, like Mr. Bryce, had no precious heirlooms to depend upon, was wondering what she should do, when the resourceful Mrs. Goodloe tapped her on the arm and whispered: "I've the very thing for you, my dear. It's the dress I wore at an infair in 1862. It can easily be altered to fit you, and you'll look so sweet in it. I'll send it over to you." Accordingly, the next day she sent to Willow Brook a basket in which were a beautiful tortoise-shell comb, a dainty silk fan, a necklace of pearl beads, and a gown of delicate pink, satin-striped berege, made full skirt, low neck, short sleeves, and satin girdle. The basket contained also a yellow-leaved book, "The Silver Chord," a treasury of old operatic gems, Scotch melodies, national airs, and love songs. Later that

same evening Philip Bryce called at Willow Brook. Together he and Kate examined the book of old-time music. From it they selected "Kathleen Mavourneen," and "Then You'll Remember Me," for Philip's solos; "Comin' Thro' the Rye" and "Vale of Chamouni" for Kate's, and two duets for tenor and soprano.

For a time all went well; and nearly every one had words of encouragement for the workers, although Miss Hogg gave it as her opinion that "all this play-actin' foolishness wuz hatched up jes so's them giddy young folks kin git togethah, an' have a good time; an' it's mighty little they keer about heppin them flood suff'ers." She and her sister likewise affirmed that it was by no means "fittin' fur preachahs to take part in sich carryin's-on."

Mrs. Fowler averred: "Jim Dick'll look like a fool cavortin' 'round in that moth-eaten old uniform uv his Uncle Bob's." Nevertheless, it was apparent that she was filled with wifely pride because her meek little spouse had been assigned an important role. But after a time, not content with this honor, she bethought herself that Daut's name upon that program would give it additional luster. Having conceived this idea, she lost no time in making it known. That afternoon she went to Elmarch. Mrs. Goodloe was not at home, but Brother Bryce was; and to him Sister Fowler made known her wishes, expecting that he would warmly advocate Miss Fowler's claims.

With some difficulty commanding his countenance to suitable clerical gravity when he heard the good sister's absurd proposition, he gave some evasive reply to the effect that Miss Fowler's educational pursuits were of paramount importance, and that it would be a great pity that she should be called from her studies at this juncture. Her mother replied that she wanted Daut to come home for a week or two, anyway, as her spring wardrobe needed

replenishing. Mr. Bryce then found himself obliged to intimate in as courteous phrases as he could command that Miss Sadie Jean's assistance at the musicale could be dispensed with.

From that moment the young man's doom as minister of Ginseng Christian Church was fixed, so far as Brother and Sister Fowler had a voice in the matter.

Mrs. Fowler's immediate revenge was to make her husband withdraw from any further participation in the concert. His withdrawal left a great gap in the program, and filled the other members of the club with consternation, until at the next rehearsal Mr. Broadus bethought himself of a Miss Cecelia Miller who lived at Hastings, and who, according to his showing, was a musical wonder. Miss Miller was, he said, quite young, but she was not only the best pianist he had ever heard, but a composer as well, and had already played in public several of her own masterpieces. He urged that she be invited to take part in the concert.

The others were delighted to act upon Mr. Broadus' advice, and commissioned him to write to this modern feminine edition of Orpheus, beseeching her to come to the rescue of the musicale. Miss Miller promptly accepted this invitation. Whereupon, Ruby Stump proposed to resign her position as pianist to her more gifted sister artist, and to herself favor the audience with the recital of an original poem descriptive of the Thorpe Valley disaster.

At this proposition the others exchanged glances of dismay. Philip Bryce rubbed his chin perplexedly, and looked appealingly at Katharine and Diana in the vain hope that their woman's wit might extricate the club from this calamity. Ralph Moreland murmured something sounding like "All's lost save honor," and retired to a dim recess between the wall and piano, and for the next few seconds appeared

to be saying his prayers. John Henson exclaimed delightedly: "Just the thing, Miss Ruby! Recite your poem, and I'll follow with 'The Battle of Sennecharib.' Circumstances have hitherto compelled me to hide my elocutionary talons under a napkin, but here's my opportunity." Tom Slocum modestly intimated that a clog dance executed by himself might prove another pleasing break in the musical program. However, as the others gave no heed to these suggestions, John and Tom held their peace.

Shelburn Broadus, secure in the laurels he had won by the introduction of his musical prodigy from Hastings, did not care a rap what Ruby might do or say at the concert; but his prophetic eye foresaw that if she were allowed to recite her poem, her next move would be to insist upon its publication in the *Jupiter*. He, therefore, turned to her and said suavely, but with determination: "No, no, Miss Ruby! We mustn't lose sight of the fact that this function is to be a musicale; and, therefore, although we all know how melodious is your meter, and how harmonious your verse" (this with an insinuating smile and bow), "we must adhere strictly to the letter of the law, and have nothing on our program that even the most carping critic would consider an innovation."

Ruby looked greatly pleased at the editor's compliment, and consented to forego the poem; and the rest of the club took courage.

The next afternoon Diana and Kate privately questioned Shelburn concerning Miss Miller's musical productions. He said he had heard her play several of them, but that he could recall the name of only one, "The Mermaid's Dance." He added, as he was turning away, "But that" (referring to the above-mentioned composition) "is certainly a hummer."

"It may well be that, don't you think? I had never

thought that mermaids numbered the terpsichorean art among their accomplishments, had you, Katharine?" said Diana as soon as Broadus was out of earshot.

"On the contrary," answered Kate, "judging from their physical make-up, I should have supposed dancing an impossibility for them; but then," she admitted, "I'm very ignorant of the habits and capabilities of the mermaid tribe."

Cecelia Miller dawned upon the Ginseng horizon at the last rehearsal. She was a slender, rather pretty girl, in spite of the fact that Dame Nature in a fit of caprice had endowed her with an uptilted, pert-looking little nose and a rather too large and full-lipped mouth. Cecelia couldn't have been over sixteen, but she had the self-confidence and assertiveness of a woman of forty. Genius is said to be self-conscious. If this be true, Miss Miller was the triple extract of genius.

As she went to the piano that evening of the last rehearsal, her stilted, mincing gait, the tip tilt of her supercilious little nose, and the toss of her sleek brown head seemed to say: "Give way, good people! Behold, the conquering hero comes!"

As she seated herself at the instrument, she turned to the company and explained, condescendingly, "I shall now play a sweet little trifle, 'Schubert's Impromptu,' in B flat, opus 142, No. 3."

Mr. Broadus, gravely taking out his note-book, wrote down title, composer, opus, number, key; while the rest of the club gazed at each other in amazement, and Ruby whispered to Kate, "If she thinks 'Schubert's Impromptu' a trifle, what does she consider difficult?"

Cecelia looked well to her pedals, ran her fingers a preliminary gallop up and down the key-board, then turned, and transfixed the others with an indignant glare as she

exclaimed: "This instrument is shockingly dirty! I can not do myself justice upon it. Will not some one bring me a duster?"

Shelburn Broadus frowned reproachfully at the ladies who felt that they had violated every principle of good breeding by allowing this distinguished guest to seat herself at a dusty piano. Mr. Clay began hunting helplessly around for a duster; while Dr. Moreland and Messrs. Bryce, Slocum and Henson fairly tumbled over each other in their eagerness to fly to the help of the distressed damsel. John reached her first, and, whipping out his handkerchief, he fell afoul of his sister's "Steinway," and rubbed, polished and belabored it until no speck of dust remained upon its mahogany surface.

With a condescending smile and "Thank you!" to the perspiring but beaming John, the appeased goddess of music began.

Such agility, strength and smoothness of execution as her playing displayed! Such clear, tinkling notes, rippling arpeggios, perfect trills and runs as her nimble hands gave forth! As a finger exercise her performance was well-nigh perfect; but there was no more expression in it than in the chirp of a grasshopper. She likewise displayed a sublime indifference to correct time and phrasing, and she occasionally improved (?) upon the original composition by interpolating runs and trills of her own.

Under cover of the concluding chords, Mrs. Clay murmured: "You needn't have any fear, Ruby. I'm not a judge of classic music, but I do know what will please a Filson County audience; and I'm sure your playing will be far more appreciated than that young lady's."

When Miss Miller had finished "the sweet little trifle," Dr. Moreland, bowing with the grace of a Chesterfield, said, "Thank you, Miss Miller, your playing is quite a

revelation to us"—as indeed it was. As soon as rehearsal was over, John again hurried to Miss Miller and begged to escort her to Mrs. Slocum's, where the young lady was to be entertained until after the concert.

"I'm sorry I can't be your escort to-night, Ruth," said young Henson while the family at Rose Lawn and their two guests, Ruth Vanarsdale and Kate Marshall, were seated at the supper table the evening of the concert; "but duty calls me elsewhere, and I must resign you to the care of Di and the doctor or of Miss Kate and the parson."

"Why, Johnny," exclaimed his mother, "I'm surprised that you think of gallivanting off with some other girl when your Cousin Ruth hasn't an escort—and she your guest, too."

"Your son is not himself to-night, Aunt Zereldy; he's the revered George Washington, and his helpmeet, Madam Martha—*nee* Della Mason—awaits his coming," Ruth laughingly explained.

"You're making a slight mistake about that, my dear Ruth," said John. "My honored spouse, Dame Martha, will reach the glittering halls of music to-night under the care of her Cabinet Minister, Thomas Troutman Slocum; while her liege lord is to convey thither that winsome lassie, Cecelia Miller."

"But I thought Shelburn Broadus claimed Miss Miller by right of discovery," exclaimed Diana.

"*'Palnam qui meruit ferat'*," quoted John, smiling reminiscently.

"And, in this instance, *'he who merits'* means yourself, not Mr. Broadus, I presume," remarked Ruth.

"Your perspicacity and your knowledge of Latin are both commendable, Miss Vanarsdale," answered young Henson.

"What do you mean, John; and what has become of Mr. Broadus?" asked Mrs. Henson, to whom both the Latin quotation and Ruth's interpretation thereof were utterly meaningless.

"It's this way, mither dear," answered John: "As I was passing by Mr. Lane's this morning, Miss Ruby called me in to consult me in regard to some change she wanted made in the program. I told her Broadus was musical director, and that I'd send him around to see her. She fairly beamed at this; and about half an hour later, as I was sauntering by Broadus' office, he came out and turned in the direction of the Slocum residence. My masculine intuition immediately warned me that he was on his way to engage the fair Cecelia's company. I, therefore, hastened up to him, and told him Miss Ruby wished to see him on important changes in the program, and I urged him to go to her at once. I knew that, once in that parlor, Ruby'd never let him out alive, except as her promised escort. But to make assurance doubly sure, as soon as he had faced about and was headed in the direction of Lane's, I hurried on to Slocum's; and—and—and Miss Miller is mine—at least, for to-night."

"For ways that are dark and tricks that are *not* vain, commend me to John Henson," laughingly commented his father. "Your motto is, 'All's fair in love or war,' isn't it, my son?"

"My motto," returned John, "is, 'The greatest good to the greatest number.' By my little stroke of diplomacy Miss Miller is made positively happy; myself, comparatively happier; Miss Ruby, superlatively happiest; and—and if Shelburn Broadus ain't happy, he ought to be."

"Come," said Mrs. Henson, "we can't sit here all night, listening to this boy's foolishness. It's time you girls were beginning to dress."

"That's true," agreed her husband. "And hark you, lassies, it won't take Mrs. Henson and me long to slip into our regalia; so don your war-paint and feathers quickly, and be off, so that we can lock up after you, and get to the hall in time to secure good seats."

By the time the girls were dressed, Dr. Moreland and Mr. Bryce were reported as awaiting them in the parlor.

Diana looked superbly beautiful that evening in a rich, changeable satin whose sheeny folds displayed the varying tints of a gorgeous sunset. This upper robe was made with long train, and was open from waist to hem, showing a breadth of embroidered petticoat. Her flowing sleeves and gauzy undersleeves revealed glimpses of rounded arms; and her dusky hair, worn over a roll high off her forehead, was slightly frosted with powder which brought out vividly the exquisite tints of her brunette skin and accentuated the brilliancy of her dark eyes.

Ruth Vanarsdale, the demure little Puritan maid, was transformed into a dimpling, saucy coquette by her Dolly Varden costume. Her dark hair was elaborately curled and puffed, her hazel eyes glowed with unwonted brilliancy, and her cheeks were the tint of the wild rose.

No costume Kate Marshall had ever worn became her as did the quaint pink berege; and underneath her excitement and consciousness of looking her best was, deep down in her heart, an undercurrent of shy, sweet happiness. Her world was fast narrowing down to the measure of one man, Philip Bryce, who was to take her to the concert, and whose eyes, as soon as she entered his presence that evening, spoke eloquently of his love.

"Great is Diana of the Ephesians," ejaculated Peter Henson, as his daughter, followed by Ruth and Kate, came into the parlor. "Why, Di, you look like the Aurora Borealis. Isn't that the dress your Grandmother Henson wore

to the Lafayette affair? And Ruth, my shy little Ruth, you look like a flower garden. And you, Miss Katharine, why—why, you're a rose-tinted dream of paradise. But what ails you two gallants," he added, turning to Bryce and Moreland, who stood by, lost in admiration of the three girls, "that you leave me to make all the pretty speeches? What is your opinion of that trio of beauty, young gentlemen?"

"My opinion is," Mrs. Henson interposed before either of the young men could speak, "that it's time for us to be going, if we are to reach the hall in good time."

The concert was a glorious success. But why waste space in description of it? Hath it not been duly chronicled in the *Filson County Jupiter* of March 18 of that year, copies of which are still on file and clippings preserved in many old scrap-books?

Miss Miller chose for her first selection nothing less than Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata;" but, as Diana afterwards observed to Ruth and Kate, "it might just as well have been a 'Sunlight Mazurka' or a 'Midnight Cyclone,' for all the pleasure the audience derived from the performance."

The next piano solo was Miss Ruby's. She played Mendelssohn's "Hunting Song" with a perfection of touch and a realistic conception which even those of her audience who had long recognized her great talent, hardly expected. She was greeted with applause so prolonged and so hearty that she had to play again—giving as her encore Mertz' arrangement of "Robin Adair," and playing it exquisitely and to the manifest delight of the audience.

Miss Miller, far from attributing to any defect in her own abilities the marked contrast between the tepid interest shown by the audience in her performance and the enthusiasm manifested in Miss Ruby's, evidently thought this con-

trast altogether due to lack of artistic perception; for she said to Della and Pearl, as Ruby was quitting the stage after the encore: "These people can't appreciate classic music, I see. The next time I play, I shall give them a popular air, instead of the selection printed on the program."

"Pray do so," urged the two girls.

Beckoning Shelburn Broadus, whose duty it was to announce the different numbers of the program, Cecelia held a short, whispered colloquy with him. He then crossed out the next selection on the program, opposite the young lady's name, and in its stead hastily jotted down the initials "O. B. J."

Soon after Ruby Stump had played "Robin Adair," she discovered that she had forgotten to bring the music of her next selection. Her boarding-house was but a short distance from the hall, and she therefore decided to return for the missing piece of music, as she feared no one else would be able to find it. At her request, Mr. Broadus accompanied her in search of the lost music. As he was leaving the hall he handed his program to John Henson, requesting that young man to make the announcements of the different performances during his (Broadus') absence.

John in his role of stage manager acquitted himself admirably until the time came to announce Miss Miller's second solo. He then found himself in a quandary, as he had no idea what the letters "O. B. J.," which Broadus had scrawled on the program, stood for. Miss Miller, anticipating John's announcement, was already being escorted to the piano, by Mr. Bryce. Henson arrested the couple half way between the wings and the piano on the front of the stage, and, pointing to the initials on the program in his hand, made mute inquiry of Miss Miller as to their meaning. She, misunderstanding his difficulty, merely nodded and whispered, "Yes, certainly," and proceeded on her way

to the piano. John, rushing back to the wings, appealed to the group there assembled. "Say!" he frantically questioned, "what in the name of all creation does 'O. B. J.' stand for?"

Tom Slocum was the only one of the group who could think of any interpretation of the mystic letters; but his suggestion that they might signify "Oh, be joyful," was received with scorn, as none of the others had ever heard of a musical composition bearing that title. Pearl and Della, however, recollected that Miss Miller had said she intended playing a popular air, this time; and with this hint to guide him, young Henson returned to his post. The colloquy in the wings had lasted only a brief moment, and before either the young lady at the piano or her audience had become much embarrassed by the delay, John stepped forward and announced, "The gifted pianist, Miss Cecelia Miller, will now favor us with a classic arrangement of a beautiful air with which all are familiar."

By peering through the curtains at the sides of the stage, when Miss Miller began playing, some of the members of the club caught a glimpse of the piece she was rendering. It was Gimbel's beautiful and difficult transcription of Foster's popular melody, "Old Black Joe." The audience, however, sat throughout the rendition in puzzled silence, and at its conclusion one and all decided that Mr. Henson must have been mistaken in announcing, "A familiar air." Even the girls behind the scenes, who had read the title of the music, could but wonder, while Cecelia was playing, what she had done to "old black Joe." Now and then, it is true, they could catch amid the pellmell rush of her performance a faint, fleeting glimpse of him; but, for the most part, he was entirely lost in a confused blur of trills and chromatics, slurs and interpolations.

Ruby returned shortly before the time for her to make

her next appearance on the stage. Her search for the missing sheet of music had proved fruitless, and at Mr. Broadus' urging she decided to play something with which she was so familiar that she could dispense with the printed copy of it. When her name was called, she, unaware of what had been Miss Miller's last selection, played "Gimbel's Arrangement of 'Old Black Joe.'"

While giving exquisitely every turn and trill and embellishment which Gimbel's florid fancy had put into the transcription, she brought out the original melody so perfectly that one could actually see bent, gray-haired "old black Joe," and hear his plaintive lament, "Gone are the days," etc. There was no puzzling the audience this time. All recognized the dear old air, and again and again Miss Ruby was rapturously encored.

With the exception of Miss Miller's failure to transport her audience with surprise and ecstatic delight over the brilliancy of her performance, the concert was in every way a complete success, and netted a considerable sum for the inhabitants of the flooded district.

CHAPTER XVII.

A LITERARY SYMPOSIUM.

One Friday afternoon a few weeks after the concert Diana Henson came over to Willow Brook Farm, and carried off Kate Marshall to be her guest until Monday. On Saturday, Philip Bryce and Ralph Moreland were also invited to Rose Lawn for the day.

That afternoon the young people congregated in the library. After a time John, who for the last half-hour had been reclining on a couch in an alcove at one side of the room, tossed the book he had been reading on a table, and came forward. Diana, seated in a willow rocker in the center of the room, with some fleecy white crochet work in her lap, was winding a skein of zephyr that Ralph Moreland was holding on his outstretched hands. To their left stood Philip leaning on the piano, conversing in low tones with Kate, who was seated on the piano stool. Presently John, who had taken his stand in front of the grate and facing the other occupants of the room, startled them by the abrupt announcement, "I think I'll write a book."

The momentary silence which followed this startling declaration was broken by Philip Bryce, who asked with a show of great interest: "What is to be the nature of this masterpiece, John—philosophical, psychological, historical, legal or romantic?"

"A novel constructed according to latest recipes—a measure of philosophy, a modicum of history, a flavor of psychology, romance and sentiment galore. Holmes says every one has in him the elements of at least one novel," was the answer.

"If I recollect correctly, Holmes also says that in order

to write a good novel, one must first live it," commented Philip.

"During the last fortnight I've lived two or three novels in my experience with the adorable Cecelia," said John.

"Shall you take Miss Miller as your heroine, Mr. John?" was Kate's natural inquiry.

"Well, no. My heroine shall be a composite affair like those big department stores where one can find anything from a sealskin coat to a monkey-wrench. She'll be a compound of all the graces of womankind of all climes and periods."

"In one chapter she will, I presume, whistle, talk slang, smoke cigarettes, ride a bicycle; in another, she'll advocate female suffrage, and disport herself, generally, after the manner of the emancipated new woman; and in still other portions of the book she'll develop as great aptitude for sprained ankles, lackadaisical airs, and fainting in her lover's arms, as the most inane damsel in a beginning-of-the-century romance," said Diana, severely.

"Whatever her airs and graces, there's one thing she shall not do. That's *weep*. If her feelings ever get the better of her in public (which I hope they won't), she may cry, sob, scream, kick, howl, or do anything but weep. That I shall never permit her to do under any circumstances," declared Mr. Henson.

Moreland now spoke. "I trust, John, that you will not disclose her at any time to her readers with her perfumed tresses hanging in wavy masses half-way down to the floor. No woman is fit for a heroine unless she can keep her hair in order. Even Eve might have made use of a convenient thorn to confine her flowing locks; and in this day of ornamental hairpins and side-combs it does seem that any woman might keep her hair in coil, but in fiction, I notice, the heroine's hair, upon the slightest provocation, tumbles

all about her. Then, if she must use perfumery, why not confine it to her handkerchief? Girls in real life don't perfume their heads, do they, Miss Diana? It's bad for the hair—dries up its natural oils. Moreover, it is suggestive of restoratives, invigorators, and such unguents."

"Bay rum is the only perfume my heroine shall use upon her hair," declared the future novelist. "That's good for the scalp. *'As Alfonso draws Valetta's half-reluctant, half-yielding, wholly bewitching form into a closer embrace, and presses warm kisses on her dewy lips, his nostrils are caressed by the elusive, healthful fragrance of bay rum, emanating from her silken tresses!'*" He drew an envelope from his pocket, as he spoke, and scribbled on it, then read aloud: "*Item—Bay rum for heroine's hair.'*"

"Your hero is to be an epitome of every masculine perfection, I presume," remarked Mr. Bryce, tentatively.

"Without doubt," was the ready reply.

"If that be the case," said Moreland, "perhaps it is unnecessary that he be warned against one pernicious habit of the ordinary hero of fiction; namely, chewing his 'long, silky mustache.' If your heroine is a lady of sense, she won't like him to do that."

"Pshaw, Moreland, only old fogies and ex-Confederate majors and colonels wear mustaches nowadays. The rest of the world is smooth-shaven," retorted John.

"I hope, Mr. John, that you will occasionally permit your hero to take a seat," was Miss Marshall's remark.

"Take a seat?" John repeated inquiringly.

"Yes," answered Kate, "'take a seat' like a self-respecting mortal should do, instead of 'throwing himself into a *fauteuil*' or 'flinging his manly form' upon the turf, as novel heroes are usually reported as doing."

"And, if he must use expletives, at least make him eschew that hackneyed 'By Jove!' and try instead, 'By Uncle

Sam! 'By Plymouth Rock!' 'By Grover Cleveland!' or some other exclamation that is modern and consistent with the spirit of a loyal American," suggested Ralph.

"What a pack of silly ducks you people are!" John disgustedly exclaimed.

"My brother is nothing if not original," observed Diana. "Now, to the conventional mind a collection of ducks constitutes a flock, not a pack."

"John's peculiar use of the word 'pack' may be due to his musical ear, which causes him to confuse the words 'pack' and 'quack'," suggested Philip.

"At any rate, you folks do quack a pack of nonsense," rejoined Mr. Henson.

"That shows our superiority as conversationalists," blandly asserted Mr. Bryce. "Any one can talk sense, but it takes a highly accomplished person to talk nonsense sensibly."

"Another pointer for your novel, John, is this," said Ralph. "No matter how addicted your lovers may be to the 'meet-me-by-moonlight' act, don't allow them to take moonlit walks every evening for four consecutive weeks, as I once read of a pair of lovers doing."

"Your criticisms, good people, are like apples of Sodom in pictures of Gomorrah," said the would-be author. "But though on my corns ye envious critics tread, a wreath of bay will soon adorn my head. With my customary promptness I'll set to work this very evening, and before the next glad New Year is ushered in, your spirit of scoffing will be exchanged for the garment of praise; for my book will be out."

"If so, the publishers will bestir themselves considerably beyond anything I've ever known them to do," remarked Ralph Moreland.

"Why, yes! they'll be anxious to get the story upon the

market in time for the holiday trade," artlessly explained young Henson.

"What castles fair his fancy reared,
Ere 'rejection slips' his hopes had seared!"

improvised the preacher.

"You and Moreland seem to have made an exhaustive study of the tricks and manners of publishers. I believe you've both, at some time or another, been badly bitten with the scribbling mania," declared John.

"Well, I could a tale unfold," laughingly confessed the doctor.

"And I, a poem or two reveal (that is, if I hadn't destroyed them)," added the preacher.

"Kate, too, looks guilty," said Miss Henson.

"So it seems that every one of this quintette has, at some period or other, been afflicted with the '*cacoethes scribendi*,'" said Moreland, with an air of conviction.

"Not I!" dissented Diana. "One literary light is all the House of Henson can afford. John absorbs all the talent of the family."

"Honest confession is good for the liver! Let's resolve ourselves into an experience meeting. Who'll be the first to speak?" said John.

"Beauty before age! Miss Marshall first!" the doctor made haste to say. "Now, my dear young lady," he continued, "don't look so frightened; you're among friends and fellow-sinners, you know."

"But none of you have been guilty of such atrocious folly as I have," she replied.

"Your humility is a very hopeful sign. Proceed, please," urged John.

Kate proceeded: "The head and front of my offending was the title of my first, last and only literary effort, '*Stolen Waters are Sweet!*' I had heard the quotation somewhere,

and considered it both classical and catchy. My sense of humor being in a very undeveloped stage, I failed to perceive that, however inapplicable to my plot, the title was nevertheless appropriate as descriptive of my literary methods, which, if not sweet, were certainly stolen. There wasn't an original thought in the whole story."

"There was nothing original in her, except original sin," quoted Miss Henson, musingly.

"Worse still," continued Kate, "it was a secret sin, for without a word to any one I launched my frail bark upon its first cruise."

"If originality was lacking in your story, it undoubtedly manifested itself in that act, for surely yours is the first case on record of a young writer's sending forth a maiden effort without first displaying its beauties to an admiring family and a score of confidential friends," was Moreland's verdict.

"What success had you with your manuscript?" asked Philip.

She replied: "It traveled east, west, north, south. Story papers, agricultural journals, scientific magazines, semi-domestic, semi-artistic periodicals and pedagogical journals were each in turn allowed a sip at my 'Stolen Waters.' If I am ever tempted to write another story, it shall be entitled 'In Quest of a Publisher.'"

"Good!" ejaculated Ralph. "That reminds me of my—"

"Miss Marshall is occupying the confessional at present, Moreland. Proceed, Miss Katharine," urged Mr. Henson.

"Was your story at last accepted?" asked Diana.

"Oh, no. Upon returning from its twentieth trip, it expired. I cremated the remains. I'm deeply penitent, and promise never to be guilty of another story."

"Sir Philip Sidney Bryce, it's now your turn," said John. "Did you try to emulate your illustrious namesake,

in the production of poems or essays; or did you err in the direction of political papers?"

"Mine was a sin against poesy," confessed Philip. "It was six years ago, in my first year in college. I was homesick; and, seeing how little you Americans knew of the glories of my native land, I selected Australia as the theme of my song. I wrote an epic the like of which has never been since the days of Pindar."

"But Pindar was a lyric, not an epic, poet," objected Moreland.

"True!" acknowledged Bryce. "I was thinking of Homer. My poem combined the heroic stateliness of the Homeric epic with the grace of the Pindaric lyric."

"How fared your poem in its quest for a publisher?" inquired Miss Henson.

"What snatched me back just when I was on the very threshold of a brilliant career was a 'specific criticism,'" he answered.

"A 'specific criticism'?" asked Diana.

He explained: "In the printed formula accompanying the various home-comings of my poem, the editor, after saying that although the article was not adapted to the needs of his periodical, its rejection did not necessarily imply lack of merit, *et cetera*, would beg that in view of the large number of manuscripts submitted to him, he might be excused from sending '*specific criticism*.' 'What manner of thing was a specific criticism?' I began asking myself, after receiving about a dozen rejection slips. I had heard of Swift's Specific. That was a blood purifier. Perhaps this specific criticism was a literary lotion which, being applied to manuscripts, removed defects of complexion, such as imperfect syntax, bad meter, and orthographical acne. Or it might be a tonic to remedy some weakness of the internal economy of a poem. I therefore

wrote various publishers, asking for a trial bottle of this specific. Result: either complete silence or another of those hated slips, with deep lines underscoring the words, '*We beg to be excused from sending specific criticism.*' Finally, however, perseverance was rewarded."

"Your poem was accepted?" asked Kate.

"No, but something equally wonderful happened. A certain editor did that which is, I believe, without parallel in the annals of journalism. He sent a specific criticism."

Moreland, hastily producing note-book and pencil, eagerly demanded, "Name of editor, please."

"I shall withhold his name lest his den be presently inundated with manuscripts," firmly answered Philip.

"But the criticism?" Katharine inquired.

Bryce answered: "Only this: '*Joshua, twenty-second chapter, twenty-seventh verse.*'"

"Please quote the passage, Mr. Bryce," they all urged.

He did so: "'*Do the service of the Lord with a burnt offering.*' It was," he admitted, "a hard saying, but worthy of acceptance. It wrought a complete cure. Since then I have eschewed poetry writing."

John, who a few moments before this had resumed his position on the couch in the alcove, at this juncture murmured enigmatically: "'*Antelope, horoscope, blessed hope, ope, scope.*'"

Ralph and Diana were talking apart, and did not hear this apparently meaningless murmur. Kate, although she tried to appear engrossed in a search for a sheet of music, not only heard what John said, but she likewise noted the startled look in Philip's eyes and the dark flush on his face as he, after giving her an apprehensive glance, turned threateningly toward the alcove with an expression of countenance and a gesture of his clenched hands that boded no good to the occupant of the couch.

John, undaunted by the minister's look and attitude, went on musingly: "*Time*:—Only three days since. *Setting of drama*:—The lawn at Elmarch. *Scene*:—A young man with straw hat shading his eyes, pencil in hand, writing-tablet on knee, lolling under a stately elm, inditing 'A sonnet to his mistress' eyebrow;' another youth who, having come to Elmarch on an errand to his aunt, steals up, and, glancing over the poet's shoulder, is an unseen witness to his fruitless endeavor to find a rhyme for *heliotrope*."

Philip, looking as if he had a whole torture-chamber of verbal branding-irons which he longed to apply to the mendacious John, said nothing; but, after gazing at his tormentor a moment, turned his eyes again toward Miss Marshall, who, although her face was deeply flushed, appeared more than ever intent on finding that missing piece of music.

Miss Henson, who had missed the late byplay, now recollecting her duties as hostess, arose, and suggested that before they settled down to listening to Dr. Moreland's literary experiences, they should refresh themselves with some music.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"RANTING 'ROUND IN PLEASURE'S RING."

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
 You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
 Or like the snowfalls in the river,
 A moment white—then gone forever.

—Robert Burns.

Philip Bryce, at this time, was far from realizing that, in taking upon himself the duties and obligations of a minister of the gospel, he should relinquish many pursuits and predilections which, while of themselves entirely innocent, were at the same time incompatible with the nature of his position.

As spring approached, others besides the hotel sisters and the Fowlers, while they freely admitted that he apparently left undone none of his clerical duties, and that his preaching attracted large audiences, began to have misgivings as to the propriety of his following quite so freely the bent of his social inclinations. Moreover, a few of the more thoughtful were beginning also to have grave doubts as to the soundness of some of his religious views, and to shake their heads over what they began to fear was the trend of some of his teachings. Of this last, however, he was entirely unaware, but to an extent he did suspect that some of the graver members of his church did not wholly approve of his proneness to social pleasures. During his five years' college course he had been in large measure deprived of social relaxations; therefore, it was but natural that he should now greatly enjoy taking part in the innocent gayeties of the pleasant little village. But a life is beautiful and symmetrical to just the extent that it is in accord with its duties and obligations; and the young minister's constant

participation in these pastimes was in a measure unfitting him for the more sacred duties of his calling, and was to some extent detrimental to his spiritual influence—not because these pleasures were of themselves harmful, even for a young clergyman to indulge in, but because this particular clergyman, even while participating in them, suspected that in so doing he was running counter to the opinions of some of his warmest friends among the older members of his congregation.

The Townsends, who lived in a grand old mansion in the suburbs of Durrity, issued invitations to a big social function for one Friday night in April. Nearly all of the invited guests were from Louisville or Durrity, and, of the Ginseng social circle, only Diana and John Henson, Kate Marshall, Ralph Moreland and Philip Bryce were favored with invitations.

Philip at first hesitated, but finally made up his mind to attend. He then wrote Miss Marshall, asking that he might be her escort for the occasion; but she had made a previous engagement with John Henson, and Harry Sylvester, a young society favorite of Louisville, forestalled Ralph in engaging Diana's company. The two disappointed swains now cared nothing for the Townsends' party, but as they had already accepted their invitations, they decided to attend.

As the Rose Lawn carriage containing Kate and Diana, John and Sylvester was driving to the Townsends the night of the party, John casually remarked, "There's to be dancing to-night."

"Oh, surely not!" Kate hurriedly rejoined. "This is to be a formal reception, you know. The cards made no mention of dancing."

"Nevertheless, dancing is to be the order of the evening," John declared.

You should have told us sooner, John," said his sister, with some vexation.

"You certainly should have done so, Mr. Henson," said Kate, gravely. "Why didn't you?"

"Simply because I wanted you to come; and I knew that if you learned it was to be a ball, you two girls would have conscientious scruples, or some other ailment, and decline to grace the assembly with your presence."

Kate was too troubled and perplexed to make rejoinder, but Diana exclaimed: "What a predicament for Mr. Bryce to be in, if he is here to-night. I wonder if he accepted his invitation."

"No, I'm pretty sure he did not," answered John.

After a moment Diana said gayly: "Well, at any rate, now that I have come, I mean to break over for once, and dance. I've no fancy for the role of wall-flower. What say you, Kate?"

"I shall assuredly not dance," was the emphatic reply.

"But why not, Miss Marshall?" expostulated Mr. Sylvester. "You don't rate the terpsichorean art among the high crimes and misdemeanors, do you?"

"It's not so much how I estimate it as it is how Mr. and Mrs. Bright regard it," answered the young lady, telling only half the truth; since she was thinking more of Mr. Bryce's opinion than of what the Brights would think.

Sylvester was silenced, but Henson answered reassuringly: "Don't worry; I'll straighten the matter up with the Brights. So, 'On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined.' You're going to have the time of your life to-night. See if you don't."

Nevertheless, Katharine entered the house fully determined that she would take no part in the dancing festivities.

A few minutes later, she and Diana, having removed

their wraps and touched up their toilettes, descended from the dressing-room. Just as they reached the foot of the stairway where John and Mr. Sylvester awaited them, Kate remembered that she had left upon the dressing-table upstairs her rings, which she had slipped from her hands before drawing on her gloves. With a word of explanation, she asked the others to wait in the hall, and she then sped upstairs again. No one was in the dressing-room, and, gathering up her rings, she passed on through an open door into the dimly lit adjoining apartment, improvised into a cloakroom for the evening, to place the rings in the pocket of her ulster.

While she was trying to disentangle the ulster from the multifarious assortment of cloaks, jackets, coats, opera capes, fascinators, clouds and hoods upon the bed, a bevy of girls entered the dressing-room. Thinking they had that part of the house to themselves, they chattered unrestrainedly while waiting for the next dance and repairing damages done to complexions, coiffures and gowns by the last.

Kate, from where she stood, was unperceived by the girls, but she could see them plainly. They were strangers to her. She went on searching for her ulster, giving no heed to their talk, until one of them, who, powder-puff in hand, was standing before the mirror, exclaimed: "I wonder if that handsome young Ginseng clergyman that Clare Townsend raves about has come yet. I know he's expected, for he accepted the invitation."

"The idea of a preacher at a ball!" ejaculated a second girl.

"Oh, but the joke is that he didn't suspect it's being a ball. Clare is too cute for that," rejoined the first speaker. "Do you know, she actually had two sets of invitation cards printed. Those she sent to Louisville and Durrity people

said '*Dancing*,' you recollect; but the four or five cards sent her Ginseng friends made no mention of dancing. And, would you believe it, all this maneuvering was for the sole purpose of fooling this clergyman—Burrson or Bryson, no, Bryce—into coming. She even went to the length of writing Harry Sylvester, who she knew would try to engage Di Henson's company, asking him not to hint to Di about the dancing to-night. Harry, who is dead gone on Miss Henson, gladly obeyed the request, lest Di, who is a strict church-member, should decline coming."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed another girl. "Clare must be far gone on this ministerial Adonis to go to such lengths as that. What's more, she'll have her trouble for nothing, for Miss Marshall's here. I saw her getting out of the Henson carriage half an hour ago while I was promenading with Jack Harcourt."

"Miss Marshall? And who might she be?" asked another girl.

"She's the young lady who is teaching at Ginseng, and who, if reports be true, has captured this Reverend Bryce."

"Pshaw!" scornfully exclaimed the girl at the mirror. "As if the handsome Miss Townsend, who belongs to one of the most exclusive cliques of society, would fear this chit of a country schoolteacher. She's something in spectacles, I suppose, with uncrimped hair, prim, schoolmarmy ways, and with no style or go about her."

"Not so insignificant, my dear, as you might think," the other answered. "I heard her sing at a concert at Ginseng not long ago, and she has a beautiful face and a lovely voice."

The girl at the mirror rejoined: "Well, admitting her pretty face and voice, and even admitting that in the scarcity of village attractions she has found favor in this preacher's eyes, Miss Townsend will soon put a spoke in

her wheel, so far as this clerical prize is concerned. I really feel sorry for the poor thing, she'll be so utterly out of the fun to-night; for, of course, she won't dance or play cards or anything of that sort, if she's entertaining hopes of a ministerial career."

"As to that," chimed in another speaker, "I don't suppose she knows a two-step from a cotillion or the trey of spades from the jack of diamonds."

"But neither does this preacher dance or play cards, I presume," said a third. "So it seems to me that Clare's clever little scheme is by way of putting a spoke in her own wheel, instead of in that of her rival. As neither preacher nor schoolmarm can take part in the dance or the card games, they'll be thrown all the more into each other's company. That is, if he doesn't leave the house as soon as he discovers what kind of entertainment it's to be; and if he's much of a man, he'll do so, in spite of the fascinating Clare."

"Clare will attend to that. She'll keep him here, and, furthermore, she won't allow the village teacher to monopolize him, either. She'll turn her privileges as hostess to good account, and while most of her guests are 'tripping the light fantastic,' she'll be promenading with the parson in some dim corridor or making eyes at him in some sequestered nook. I know Clare and her tricks."

"Well," chimed in another girl, "if this Mister Preacher-man is so adorably fascinating as to be worth all this scheming on the part of our hostess, I shan't mind taking a stroll or sitting out a dance or two with him myself. Clare sha'n't keep him in her pocket all evening, I promise you."

At this moment the band of musicians in the ballroom struck up the inspiring air of a popular waltz, and the girls hurried downstairs, leaving Miss Marshall still in the

seclusion of the cloakroom, with her feelings much nettled and her pride more piqued than she should have allowed it to be over the senseless chatter of the feather-headed society darlings. As soon as the coast was clear she came into the dressing-room, and, after a short session of prinking at the toilet table, she, too, descended to the hall.

"What in the world kept you so long?" was John's impatient salutation as she joined him in the hall. "Di and Harry have been in the ballroom this half-hour. I was about to raise the alarm, and have search instituted for you."

She made no answer, and he, looking keenly at her, said: "Look here, my dear girl, you surely don't mean to punish me, and yourself too, by moping in a corner all evening, do you?"

Her head tossed defiantly, her eyes shone brilliantly, and her cheeks glowed as she answered: "Indeed, I do not. I mean to dance every number—that is, if I'm so fortunate as to secure partners."

"I'll see to that," he delightedly assured her. "The very idea of your having any scarcity of partners! Why, don't you know," he said in his blunt, boyish way, as he offered her his arm to the parlors, "you're far and away the prettiest girl here? And you're going to have a sumptuous time, too. Come on, don't let's waste any more precious moments."

Bryce and Moreland had reached the house a short time before the arrival of the party from Rose Lawn. Philip got out of the buggy, under the *porte cochere*, and Ralph drove on into Durrity to execute a commission at the drug-store there, intending to return in half an hour. Bryce went into the house and made his way upstairs to the men's dressing-room. In his progress toward the stairway at the end of the long hall extending the entire length of the

lower floor, he saw and heard enough of what was passing in the different rooms opening into the hall to greatly surprise and disturb him. He resolved to leave the house immediately after Moreland should return with their buggy. While he was still upstairs, John Henson and Harry Sylvester entered the dressing-room. Philip drew John aside and told him of his intention. John agreed as to the advisability of Bryce's quitting the place, and he said that he would have warned Philip beforehand of the character of the entertainment, had it not been that he thought Philip had declined the invitation.

"But, Henson," said Bryce, "this is no proper place for your sister or Miss Marshall, or for you, either, for that matter."

"Oh, come now!" John returned. "That's going a little too far. I admit the force of your scruples so far as they relate to your remaining here; but as for Diana and Miss Kate and myself, a dancing party isn't so very objectionable an amusement."

"But dancing is by no means the worst of this affair," answered Philip, speaking in a low tone so as not to be heard by the other men in the room. "If that were all, I shouldn't perhaps be justified in advising you as regards your sister and Miss Marshall; but drinking, card-playing and gambling are going on here, and I know your father and mother will be greatly troubled if you allow the two young ladies under your charge to remain."

Just then Moreland entered. He, too, had learned enough about what was going on in the house to cause him to readily join Philip in trying to persuade John to go. Finally, he and John went down to consult the two girls, while Bryce waited upstairs. Presently Moreland returned, saying that Diana and John had decided to stay, and that Kate had not yet made her appearance in the parlors.

Philip was in a quandary. He owed it to his position and to his congregation to leave at once; and he thought he owed it to the girl he loved to try to persuade her to go. He lingered upstairs in the dressing-room until the cessation of the music below advised him that the dancing, too, had ceased for awhile, and then went down to the parlors in search of Kate. She and John were standing near one of the doors leading into the hall from the parlors, talking to a man to whom she had just engaged herself for the next set. Philip walked up to them, and asked Kate to promenade with him. After a momentary hesitation, she consented to his request.

With his hand at her elbow, he piloted her through the crowded hall, on out through the veranda to the grounds. When they had reached a spot where they would be secure from interruption, he said, "I'm sorry to see you here to-night, Miss Katharine."

The remembrance of the conversation she had overheard between the Louisville girls made her eyes snap angrily as she retorted, "You are pleased to be extremely complimentary, Mr. Bryce."

"Pray don't misunderstand me," he pleaded earnestly. "I meant no discourtesy—surely you will believe that. I was prompted in what I said solely by the deep interest I feel in you."

"Thank you," she returned, "and permit me to say that the deep interest I take in you causes me to regret *your* presence here to-night. What will your board of church officers think when they learn that their minister has graced a ball with his presence?"

He explained, what she already knew, that he had been misled as to the nature of the entertainment. He also told her that he intended leaving immediately, and that he had only delayed going in order that he might first have a word

with her. "And now," he continued, "I beg that you permit me to take you home at once."

"Really, Mr. Bryce," she said in surprise, "aside from what my escort would think of my doing as you have asked, I see no reason why I should hurry off in that way. I don't consider my dancing a very grave misdemeanor."

"This isn't the time nor place to argue whether dancing be wrong or right," he said in a more peremptory tone than the occasion warranted. "But aside from that subject, I'm convinced of that of which you are, of course, yet unaware; namely, that very soon this will be no fit place for you or any other lady."

"I insist upon your explaining that extraordinary statement, Mr. Bryce," she said with pardonable heat.

"Card-playing, gambling and wine-drinking are going on even now in some of the rooms; and, unless I'm much out of my reckoning, this gathering will become presently a very riotous affair. Dr. Moreland thinks exactly as I do about it, and he, too, feels a degree of responsibility about you and Miss Diana and John. We've seen John, and have tried to persuade him to our way of thinking, but we have failed to convince him."

"What does Diana say? Have you spoken to her?" Kate asked.

"Moreland talked with her before you came downstairs; but she, as is natural, I suppose, is more influenced by her brother and Mr. Sylvester than by anything Moreland and I can say. Hence, she elects to remain. That, however, needn't deter you from leaving. Ralph will relinquish his place in our buggy to you. He says he can go to a hotel or stay the night with some of his Durritt friends. So, if you will allow me to do so, I shall be glad to take you home. Will you go?"

She thanked him, but declined. "As Diana has decided

to stay until the entertainment is over," she said, "I must do so, too. It would be much more unseemly for me to leave her here than for me to remain with her—to say nothing of my offending Mr. Henson, as I undoubtedly should do were I to go with you now."

"As to that, I am sure I can make it all right with him," urged Philip.

Katharine thought Philip to some extent mistaken as to what the entertainment was likely to become, and furthermore she felt that in any case she would hardly be justified in leaving unless Diana could be persuaded to accompany her. But her manner of arguing this point with the young man was not as courteous and gentle as it might have been. She would doubtless have listened more kindly to his persuasions had it not been that the talk she had overheard in the dressing-room made her hard and defiant, and bent on showing those supercilious Louisville girls that she, if she chose, could be as much of a society belle as any of themselves.

Bryce was at last convinced that it was best for her to remain if Diana did; but he was greatly annoyed over the whole matter, and much hurt by her manner—so different from her usual gentle courtesy. After a brief silence he said: "At any rate, I must go now; but, first, I want to ask another favor of you. May I?"

"What is it?"

"That you do not dance any more round dances," was his prompt reply.

She recalled what one of the Louisville girls had said about her not knowing a two-step from a cotillion, and the recollection of that unkind remark now rendered her impervious to Mr. Bryce's persuasions. "Dancing is dancing, whether it be round or square, oblong or cater-cornered," she said flippantly.

"But—but if I ask you for *my* sake to decline round dances, what then?" he rejoined pleadingly.

"But why such a request?" she persisted.

"Because I—I—simply can't abide the thought of your gliding around a ballroom in the arms of any of—of these young men," was his confused, stammering, but most heartfelt answer.

She again thought of what the girls in the dressing-room had said, and the thought hardened her heart against the young man's pleadings. "I decline to be dictated to by you or any one else, Mr. Bryce, as to whom I dance with or as to what I shall or shall not do," she declared with a defiant toss of her head.

Excited and exasperated though she was, she knew very well that there was nothing of dictation in what he had said. She regretted her words as soon as they were uttered, but it was too late to modify or retract her cutting speech. He was now, she saw, in no mood to listen to her.

"Ah!" he replied, as soon as he could command his voice sufficiently to speak in a tone of cold politeness, "I see that I have made a mistake. Shall I take you back to the ballroom, Miss Marshall? I crave your pardon for detaining you so long from the em—from your eager partners."

Ignoring his arm, she fled past him up the walk, through the veranda and into the hall, where Tom Evans, with whom she had engaged for the next set, was anxiously looking for her. As she entered the parlors on his arm, she saw in the large mirror over the mantel opposite the door the reflection of a stately young woman in pale blue silk evening costume—head erect, eyes flashing, cheeks glowing—whom, for the moment, she failed to recognize as herself.

Ralph Moreland did not leave when Philip Bryce did. He, however, never came near Diana or Kate the whole

evening. During the greater part of the time he stood in a doorway or some window recess, with folded arms and stern brow, and with fierce eyes bent on Diana and Harry Sylvester.

If Miss Henson noticed Ralph's behavior, she gave no sign. She had never appeared in more radiant spirits than now, as she danced and flirted with Mr. Sylvester or with others of her admirers who sought her smiles. John noticed and was annoyed by the doctor's manner, so little in keeping with the scene around him. "Why," he commented to Miss Marshall, "doesn't Moreland leave the house or else join the other non-dancing guests in some other room, instead of making such a guy of himself, by glowering at the dancers as though he'd like to massacre the whole lot of us?" John, however, knew full well what ailed the doctor.

"He's jealous, I suppose, because Di came with Mr. Sylvester," returned Kate, feeling that some answer was expected of her.

"Is that jealousy? It looks more like an attack of the rabies," retorted Henson.

The supper furnished by a caterer from Louisville was a sumptuous repast, providing not only the most epicurean of edibles, but also wines in abundance; and as the feast progressed it was evident that not only many of the young men, but also quite a number of the young women, were taking more champagne than was good for them.

After supper the fun, even in the parlors, became fast and furious, and so much like a drunken revel that Kate had to acknowledge to herself that Mr. Bryce's prediction was being fulfilled. Diana and John were not slow in arriving at the same conclusion; and soon after midnight the quartet from Rose Lawn departed.

"Well, Katharine," said Diana with assumed gayety, as they were driving homeward. "sensible and staid as you are,

your head would be turned, were I to tell you half the compliments I heard on you to-night. You were the belle of the ball."

"There were two belles," gallantly spake Sylvester; "for, great as Miss Marshall's attractions undoubtedly are, Miss Henson is second to no one."

"Yes," graciously assented John, "I'm 'primmed up with majestic pride,' worse than that little 'Marjorie Fleming' was, having in charge two such charming girls as Miss Marshall and Miss Henson."

"Why so silent?" he presently inquired of Kate, who had spoken very little thus far on the homeward drive. "Are you asleep, and living over again in your dreams your wonderful triumphs at this never-to-be-forgotten ball?"

"I'm more concerned about what I'm to say to Mr. and Mrs. Bright to-morrow than about any fancied triumphs of the ball," she made answer.

"'Catching is before killing,'" airily replied young Henson; "and if you'll lay low, it's ten to one the Brights will never hear of this escapade—not, however, that they'd take on at any terrible rate if they did hear of it. They're too kind-hearted and easy-going for that. Besides, they're not your guardians."

"Oh, they are certain to find it out," said Diana, "and, if I were you, Kate, I'd tell them at once. That's the way I'm going to do with dad and mother; and they are as opposed to church-members dancing as Mr. and Mrs. Bright are. So, cheer up, old sobersides. The Brights are, as John says, too kind to say anything very scathing."

"This air a hard, hard world, and few of us gits out of it alive!" ejaculated John, the irrepressible, in a lugubrious tone. "What a fuss about a little innocent amusement! You two girls talk as if you had been guilty of a capital offense."

CHAPTER XIX.

FLEETFOOT TO THE RESCUE.

The road from Durrity to Ginseng led past Robert Mason's house; and as Philip Bryce was driving home that Friday night from Townsends', he, noticing that the parlor, hall and sitting-room of the Mason homestead were still lighted, thought it well to stop and have a word with this one of his church officers. Della Mason was entertaining a caller in the parlor, and her father, who answered Philip's ring, led him into the sitting-room, where sat Mrs. Mason.

The young man was greatly comforted when Mr. and Mrs. Mason, after he had told them where he had been and why he had left so early, exonerated him from all blame. He also told them he intended seeing as many of the church-members as he could, next day, to explain his conduct to them. Mason, however, reminded him of the officers' meeting next afternoon, and said that would be the best opportunity for making the explanation.

Peter Henson, as well as Robert Mason, was most cordial in his greeting of Philip when at two o'clock Saturday afternoon he entered the room where the board held its meetings; but he saw from the grieved look on the faces of Milton Bright, Jacob Foster and old Dr. Clark that they had already heard about the affair of the previous night. Accordingly, without waiting for other business to be brought before the board, he began his explanation, which was heard without interruption. When it was finished, Milton Bright, with a smile in his kindly eyes and a look of relief on his face, was about to speak, but was forestalled by Jacob Foster, who, still looking stern and uncom-

promising, said, "In the first place, Brother Bryce, if you will excuse my plain speaking, you shouldn't have accepted an invitation to any kind of a to-do at so worldly a house as Jasper Townsend's."

At this, both Bright and Henson looked apprehensively at Philip, but wisely held their peace until Foster should have finished.

Foster continued: "And you shouldn't have stopped one moment in that house after you discovered what was going on there. Every minute you stayed compromised your position and the church the more, and made the matter harder to set right to outsiders."

The young preacher flushed painfully, but was silent, and Mason exclaimed quickly: "You forget, Brother Foster, that Moreland had gone on into Durrity with Brother Bryce's buggy. You wouldn't have had Brother Philip to foot it all the way from Townsends' to Ginseng—six miles and more—at that time of night, would you?"

Foster, although narrow and prejudiced, was a sincere, conscientious man; moreover, he was fond of Philip Bryce. He, therefore, brightened considerably at this representation of the matter, and in a more cordial tone exclaimed: "I had overlooked that point. But," he continued after a moment—his worried look returning as he spoke—"if I haven't misunderstood you, Brother Bryce, you said you didn't leave immediately after Dr. Moreland came back from Durrity."

Feeling some delicacy in saying anything which would seem to exonerate himself at the expense of others, Bryce hardly knew what answer to make; but Mr. Henson instantly came to his relief by saying: "I see you don't yet quite understand this matter, Brother Foster. When you do, I know so sensible and just a man as yourself will admit that this young man" (as he spoke, he laid a hand

affectionately on Bryce's shoulder) "has acted with the utmost generosity and consideration. The fact is, Foster, the real culprits in this affair—as I learned this morning from their own lips—are my son and daughter. They say that Brother Bryce waited at the party last night only until he could hunt them up, in order to try to persuade them to leave. They are, as I told them plainly, greatly to blame for not heeding his advice; but as for Brother Bryce, now that you understand the situation, you will agree with the rest of us that he should not be censured. As for me," he added, smiling genially upon the young man, "I thank him sincerely for his kind intervention in behalf of my two thoughtless children."

Peter Henson probably had more influence over Jacob Foster than had any other human being. Furthermore, Foster's hearty liking for his minister made him the more ready in this instance to overlook anything indiscreet in that minister's conduct.

When the other business of the afternoon had been transacted, the meeting adjourned. While Bright, Henson and Bryce still lingered in the room after the other men had gone, Henson gently intimated that for the future it might be advisable for Bryce to abstain from participating in too many social affairs. "I don't," said the elder, "mean such functions as the one at Jasper Townsend's last night, for I know that in any case you are not inclined to patronize that kind of entertainment; but I refer to the little gatherings of the young folks here in the village, which are of themselves perfectly innocent."

"And harmless even for you, Brother Philip, now and then," interpolated Milton Bright; "only your doing so too frequently is liable to be misunderstood by some of your brethren or sisters, who appear to have forgotten that they were once young themselves, and who also are liable to

overlook the fact that you are young, and for that reason enjoy the innocent recreations of other young people."

"You mean that these little diversions are to be classed among things 'lawful, but not expedient,' for me to engage in too frequently," said Philip.

"Yes, that's our meaning," answered Henson; "and I hope you won't feel hurt by our suggesting this to you."

"Indeed," said Philip, gratefully, "I'm sure that what you say is prompted by the kindest motives. Moreover, your advice is good, and I shall try to shape my future doings in accordance with it."

On his way home from the board meeting Robert Mason met Samuel Lane and Jim Dick Fowler, and stopped to have a talk with them. He soon learned that they had heard nothing about Bryce's recent adventure; and, mentally congratulating himself upon his being able to give his version of the affair before their judgment had been biased by any unfavorable comments from others, he related the whole circumstance. Knowing there was no surer way to enlist the co-operation of his two listeners than to tell them that Jacob Foster had not been altogether favorable in his judgment, he added at the conclusion of his account, and before either of the other men had had time to express an opinion, that Foster had not at first been disposed to deal leniently with Bryce. His words had the desired effect. That Jacob Foster should object to or oppose any proceeding was usually sufficient reason why Samuel Lane should favor it. Hence, he now at once declared that Bryce was, in his opinion, entirely without blame in the matter. Jim Dick Fowler, who was Sam Lane's cousin, and who generally had his mind on any and every subject made up for him either by his wife or by this favorite kinsman, acquiesced heartily in Lane's opinion.

"Well," said Mason, as he was preparing to drive on,

"I'm glad you two see this matter in the same light as Henson, Bright, Clark and myself do—and, in fact, as Foster himself is now disposed to do since Henson reasoned with him in regard to it."

The next week was an exceedingly uncomfortable one for Katharine Marshall. Milton and Nancy Bright, it is true, said little to her about the Townsend affair, and that little was very kindly spoken; but their children, who, of course, knew all about Katharine's escapade (since nothing she ever said or did seemed to escape them), were not so reticent as their parents.

"Uncle Chawley says you's been awful wicked, Miss Tate, an' if you don't look out the Ole Bad Man'll det you. Will he?" asked little Buddy with keen interest in the doom threatening the young lady before whom he stood with his sturdy young legs planted wide apart, and his hands thrust into the newly acquired pockets of his trousers.

"Ole Bad Man will det you, Buddy, if you don't shut up. My Miss Kitty girl ain't nevah wicked," said dear little Margaret, climbing into Miss Marshall's lap and snuggling her curly head against the young lady's arm.

Cissy and Polly were not so much concerned about the sinfulness of dancing as their youngest brother was, but they displayed an active and annoying curiosity as to what had transpired at the ball. "Did you have a good time?" "Did you waltz much?" "Who were your partners?" were some of their many queries to their teacher.

Alec, like Puggie, was at all times and under all circumstances a stanch partisan of Miss Marshall. He strove with Susan in wordy warfare on the subject of Katharine's supposed transgression, declaring, with the accumulated wisdom of his twelve years, "There ain't a speck of harm in dancin'—no more'n there is in runnin' or jumpin';" Susan

maintaining stoutly that Miss Marshall had committed a grave offense, and that the church ought either to turn her out or baptize her over again like the colored Baptists did their backsliders. This last fancy so tickled the children that they proceeded forthwith to act out the ceremony; Puggie taking the role of the penitent Sister Katharine Marshall, candidate for rebaptism; Alexander enacting the preacher and administering the rite in the baptismal pool, which in this instance was the dry bed of the ravine in the back yard; while the congregation, consisting of Polly, Susan and Bobby Bright, and the little negro girl, Ivory, stood on the bank, singing as a baptismal chant, "When He cometh, when He cometh, to make up His jewels," that being the only hymn with which little Robert was familiar.

Uncle Charley, who had adopted Miss Marshall as a member of the family, and who consequently felt a weight of responsibility respecting her conduct, for several days never met her anywhere about the place without shaking his nappy head, drawing down the corners of his mouth, and groaning over the young lady's shortcomings. One afternoon he met her at the gate, on her return from school. He doffed his old straw hat, laid a detaining hand on the gate, and thus spoke his mind: "Miss Kate, you's a well-favohed young damson, but de Lawd nevah give you dem ah bright eyes an' purty cheeks fuh to be a snare an' a delushin. Yo' little foots warn't meant to prance 'roun' in de gitty dance, an' to lead young men frum de straight an' norro way, as I heahs you has been a-doin' of."

"Why, Uncle Charles, there's no very great harm in dancing, is there?"

He shook his head more in sorrow than in anger over what the misguided young lady had just said, and exclaimed: "I didn't nevah 'spect to heah you 'spress yo'se'f lak dat, Miss Kate—an' you begaged to a preachah, too—"

leastways, ef you hain't zactly begaged, things seems lak they's movin' 'long datah way. Whut will Brothah Bryce say when he heahs uv you dancin'?" It was fortunate that no word of "Brothah Bryce's" participation in the worldly function of that Friday night had penetrated to the children or to the colored members of the household at Willow Brook.

Katharine was silenced by the old fellow's last question; he, therefore, thinking further to impress her by the force of his reasoning, continued: "Miss Kate, chile, dem whut has de spiritual rule ovah you says chu'ch-membahs shan't dance; an' 'tain't becomin' fuh you to be buckin' ag'in the regular'ties in disah way. You oughtah obey lak a good lamb uv de fole. 'Sides dat, hain't we speshly warned ag'in walkin' wid de world? An' heah you's been not jes' *a-walkin'*, but *a-dancin'* wid de world. But, honey, I hopes you'll see de arrows uv yo' way, an' reform." With that, the old fellow opened the gate and allowed the girl to pass through, while he went on down the pike, singing in his cracked, quavering old voice, "In de great gittin'-up mawnin'."

Not being an accomplished horsewoman, Miss Marshall seldom ventured to take a horseback ride, but Saturday afternoon, longing to be alone, yet oppressed by the close atmosphere of her room, she determined to ride to Ginseng for the mail. She declined the proffered companionship of Susan and Puggie, each of whom wanted to ride behind her. She wanted to be alone to commune with nature; but she soon found that communing with nature and trying at the same time to ride Fleetfoot was by no means an easy task. The horse appeared to be aware of her lack of equestrian skill and to resent it; and no matter how docile he was with more capable riders, with her on his back he was ready to play all sorts of antics. But this particular

afternoon he seemed unusually sedate, and the girl anticipated a pleasant ride. Alec helped her to mount. Before handing her the denim sack that served as a mail-bag, he shook it before Fleetfoot's nose, and said, "Come, sir, don't you cut any of your didoes with Miss Kate; but behave yourself like a gentleman, and bring back the mail."

For the first half of the ride Fleetfoot did behave like a gentleman, and Kate felt greatly cheered by the exercise and the sweet sounds and scents of early springtime. All went well until on the homeward way they reached the bridge. Kate wanted to cross the bridge, but Fleetfoot insisted upon a different course. He wanted to follow a steep bridle-path at the left of the bridge, which, winding in and out among the rocks and bushes on the edge of the creek, finally terminated under the bridge in a pool which in dry weather was much used as a watering-place for stock. But at this time the creek was swollen by recent rains, and the pool was at least seven feet deep. Katharine reasoned with, coaxed, threatened her steed, and tugged at the bridle, fearing the while that the saddle would turn. But Fleetfoot showed his teeth, shook his mane, twisted and plunged about, and finally started in a lope down the steep bank. The bridle was short; Fleetfoot, headstrong, fat and clumsy, and the girl was at her wits' end. What did he want? she anxiously thought. He did not want a drink, but, even if he did, she feared she could not hold on to the short bridle while his head was bent, without being in danger of tumbling over his head. Moreover, the creek at this point was too deep for them to cross in safety.

"Whoa, there! Hold on! Hold on!" a voice halloed. If the injunction "Hold on!" was meant for her, Kate was obeying it to the best of her ability. Fleetfoot, as soon as he heard the voice, stopped and stood as demurely as if he were the best intentioned creature in the world; and

Philip Bryce rode rapidly down to where the girl sat trembling and unnerved, with one hand clutching the pommel of her saddle, the other buried in Fleetfoot's mane. The man seized the bridle, and, thinking that the horse wanted a drink, he led him down to the water's edge.

"You and your steed seem to be having a difference of opinion," remarked Philip. "What caprice induced him to come down here? He isn't thirsty; he won't drink a drop. Perhaps he desired a full-length view of himself," the man said, as the horse stood with head bent, his gaze fixed on the stream.

"Probably he merely wanted a little fun at my expense. He seems to have a grotesque sense of humor," said the girl, blithely.

"Fleetfoot's position in horseland is doubtless that of clown or joker," Philip laughingly said; "but he deserves hanging for frightening you," he added solicitously, with an admiring glance at her blushing face.

Still holding the girl's bridle, Mr. Bryce led the way up the bank, on to the bridge; and side by side they rode toward Willow Brook. When they reached the stile he asked that they might prolong their ride, if she were not too tired. She said she was not at all tired; so he hung the mail-bag on the hitching-post, and they went on up the pike.

After a short silence he said: "Miss Katharine, I want to apologize for the brusque, unwarrantable way in which I spoke to you that night at Townsends'. My request about your not waltzing was most ungraciously worded. Will you forgive me?" He was riding close to her, and as he spoke he bent his head and tried to look into her averted face.

"I behaved badly myself," she said in a low tone. "Your words were well meant, and my impatient, haughty way of

answering was very rude. Perhaps it is I, not you, who should ask forgiveness."

"I have nothing to forgive. My queen can do no wrong," rejoined the infatuated young man, bending still nearer and speaking in a tone of deep tenderness. "You have—" he began; but his speech was never finished; for at that moment Susan and Margaret, with loud cackles of laughter, jumped out from the bushes on the roadside. They, having seen Philip and Kate ride slowly by the house, had taken a short-cut across the cornfield and woodland pasture to intercept them.

"Those two children are omnipresent," the young man muttered impatiently. "They are forever making their appearance just when I most wish to have a word alone with you. My dear little girls," he added suavely, addressing the children, "I'm giving Miss Marshall a lesson in horseback riding, and we really haven't time just now to stop to talk with you. Perhaps it would be better if you were to run on to the house now. I'll bring Miss Kate back before long."

"But it's supper-time, and ma told us to call you," said Susie.

"Let me wide, too," pleaded Puggie; "my feet is muddy an' cold, an' I'm all out uv breaif, runnin' so hard—an' I tored my apown, climbin' frough the gap," and her lip began to quiver.

"It would be a great pity to have the little darlings overtire themselves or to catch cold, I suppose," Mr. Bryce said grudgingly, in a tone so low as to be heard only by Katharine. Stooping down, he lifted Puggie to a seat in front of him, while Kate rode over to the fence, and allowed Susan to clamber up behind her.

CHAPTER XX.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

When springtime loveliness and light
 Fall round me dark and cold,
 I'll bear indeed life's heaviest curse,
 A heart that has grown old.

— Arthur Hugh Clough.

Even to those in whom the pulse of young desire is stilled, and for whom the rosy light of first love has forever waned, Maytime beauty has power to thrill the heart with recollections of a bygone ecstasy. It is no wonder, then, that Philip Bryce, aged twenty-six, warm-blooded, hopeful, and dominated by the restless fervor of a first deep love, found it impossible upon a certain Monday afternoon to fix his thoughts upon the prosaic task of sermon-writing, while the birds in treetop and hedgerow were singing a wedding chorus, the fruit trees were carrying great bridal bouquets of white blossoms, and Spring, clad in her flower-embroidered nuptial gown, was hastening to meet approaching Summer.

As the tall grandfather's clock out in the hall clanged out three ponderous strokes, the young man's wandering glance fell upon a book lying upon his study-table. It was one he had borrowed several weeks before of Miss Marshall. The book furnished an excuse for quitting work. He had, he reflected, a whole week before him in which to prepare that sermon. It could, therefore, wait, but his desire to see the girl he loved could not.

Thrusting aside writing materials, concordance, reference-books, and unfinished sermon; exchanging slippers and study jacket for outdoor apparel, and putting the borrowed volume in his pocket, he was soon in his buggy,

driving swiftly toward the schoolhouse. On the way he met groups of sportive children homeward bound—laden with satchels and lunch-baskets, and as joyous as birds set free.

When he reached the schoolhouse, Katharine stood under the locust-trees at the little schoolyard gate, resting from her day's work, and drinking in the refreshing beauty of the afternoon. Her white sunbonnet was swung from her arm. The light of dreams was in her blue eyes; the smile of youth and happiness hovered about her lips. The fresh green and white of her cambric dress, the delicate pink of her rounded cheek and the shine and sheen of her golden brown hair carried out the symphony of color in which the whole earth was clothed.

Her face lit up with a smile of welcome as Philip sprang from the buggy, and, grasping her hand, asked her to drive with him; but a strange, unreasoning fit of shyness made her hesitate and murmur some halting excuse about having work to do at home.

"Work, indeed," he scornfully ejaculated, "after having been mewed up for eight long hours in the schoolroom—on such a day as this, too! Come, this is no time for work, but for play and spring freedom and pleasure. Let this sunshine, this tender bloom of field and woods, plead for me."

In truth she needed little urging, and they were soon driving far out into the country—their hearts in unison with the gladness of the Maytime. They did not talk much at first, but theirs was the silence of perfect sympathy and abounding content; nor were words needed to interpret nature's sweet message; for the birds sang a love song, the soft wind whispered it, and the tender light in the young man's eyes was eloquent of the same theme.

When they reached the crossroads, she suggested a

return, as the sun was getting low. They faced about, and, with lines drooping loosely over the dashboard, they drove slowly homeward. His eyes, glowing with "tender fire," were fastened upon her averted face. Words of love trembled upon his lips, and in another moment they would have found utterance; but she, glancing at him from under her drooping eyelids, was seized at once by perverse, maiden shyness, and spoke quickly in order to avert the avowal which she longed, yet dreaded, to hear. Availing herself of the first topic that occurred to her, she began speaking of some Australian photographic views he had sent her a few weeks before. She praised the photographs, hoping thus to lead him to talk of his native land, which had ever in times past proved a fruitful topic of conversation with him.

"Ah! I knew you would like the views," he answered. "They are, as you say, beautiful, and they do not in the least overrate the picturesque charm and the scenic grandeur of what they portray. It is a glorious country, that magical Australian land," he continued. "I love every foot of it, and for many reasons I feel it best for my future that I have, in a measure, pledged myself to return, to make that country the field of my life-work. But"—and he turned towards her and his face was eloquent and impassioned—"much as the work there appeals to me, and intense as is my longing to see once more my loved ones in the dear old home, yet, when I return there, I shall leave my heart behind me in Kentucky, unless you, my—"

"Hello!" shouted a voice behind them. Looking back, they saw John Henson galloping toward them. Mr. Bryce, aroused abruptly by the disturbing influence, hastily withdrew the hand he had extended to grasp Katharine's, and straightened up, looking the while extremely disconcerted.

"The top of the afternoon to you!" John exclaimed as

he came alongside the couple. "I thought I recognized that horse and buggy when you turned at the crossroads. I've been over to the station, looking up some delinquent flour barrels. So glad I overtook you; it's lonesome riding by myself. But say, Bryce, I thought Carbine was named after the fastest race-horse in Australia. I must say, though, that his speed this afternoon belies the promise of his high-sounding name; unless," he added guilefully, "some accident has happened the harness or Carbine has lost a shoe."

Mr. Bryce ungraciously murmured something to the effect that no accident had befallen vehicle, harness or horse. He then gave Carbine a tap of the whip, that started him forward in a rapid trot. The outrider put spurs to his own steed, and for the rest of the way stuck to the couple in the buggy in spite of Mr. Bryce's efforts to shake him off. When it suited his purpose John could be as impervious to hints as even the younger Bright children, and he minded poor Mr. Bryce's vexed looks and short replies and Miss Katharine's blushing embarrassment no more than did the birds twittering in the trees along the roadside. In fact, the more disconcerted Philip seemed, the more did the frolicsome John appear to enjoy himself.

Miss Marshall, recovering from her momentary confusion, smiled to herself with humorous appreciation at the thought of how circumstances, as embodied a few afternoons before in Susan and Puggie Bright, and this afternoon in John Henson, had twice cut off her lover's approach to the all-important question he desired to ask her. Presently she was laughing and chatting gayly with young Henson, as though, so thought Philip, gloomily, she felt greatly relieved and pleased that he had joined them when he did.

If this effort on her part was intended to put Philip at

his ease, it failed of its object. Her self-possession and her seemingly sincere enjoyment of Mr. Henson's society only made Mr. Bryce the more silent and preoccupied during the remainder of the drive.

When they drew up at the stile at Willow Brook, and Kate had been assisted from the buggy, she, after thanking Mr. Bryce for her pleasant drive, bade him and John adieu, and then turned toward the house. She had crossed the porch, and was entering the open door, when, looking back, she saw Philip running up the walk. She waited in the doorway until he came to her.

"I forgot to return your 'Ben Hur'," he said. Taking the book from his pocket as he spoke, he laid it on a small table just within the parlor. Then, flushing warmly, and examining critically the toe of his shoe the while, he said hurriedly, "If agreeable to you, I should like to call to-morrow evening; for—for I have something important to say to you, and," he went on defiantly, now lifting his eyes and looking her squarely in the face, "if you will permit me, I mean to say it, too, if the whole Bright family and John Henson as well are assembled to hear it."

Blushing and smiling confusedly, she gave the desired permission, and he then returned to the stile-block, where awaiting him were his patient Carbine and his solicitous friend who evidently did not mean to forsake his minister until well out of harm's way.

The clatter of dishes and the odor of coffee issuing from the dining-room indicated to Miss Marshall that the family were at supper, but she lingered in the parlor, indulging in happy fancies. At length she picked up the book Philip had left. She intended taking it to her room before joining the rest of the family in the dining-room; but as she stood abstractedly turning the leaves of the book, a piece of paper fluttered to the floor. She picked it

up. The writing on it was Philip's. It showed the beginning of a poem entitled "Lines to Katharine." Mr. Bryce must have been culling sweets from the Elmarch flower-beds, for "Bonny Katharine" was likened to a rich, red rose, a graceful harebell, a tall, pale lily. The poetical effusion ended abruptly with the first line of a third stanza in which the beloved one was compared to the fragrant heliotrope.

Poor lover! He had gone no further in his poetic attempt, because he could find no suitable rhyme for the word "heliotrope," although he had toiled faithfully down the alphabet, as was attested by the words *antelope*, *horoscope*, *hope*, *'ope*, *scope*, *trope*, written in a straggling column in one corner of the page. The erasures and changes throughout the poem showed great disquietude of soul.

This, then, she thought, was the "sonnet" to which John had referred that afternoon, a month ago, at Rose Lawn. This explained his occult mutterings about a rhyme for heliotrope, and this also now made clear to the girl's understanding why Mr. Bryce had been so disturbed at John's mysterious references to some recent scene at Elmarch.

Besides the unfinished poem, the sheet of paper contained other interesting items. The word "heliotrope" having proved too much for his poetic muse, the usually dignified young preacher had next had recourse to the soothsayer's art; for under the floral tribute was this:

**"~~Katharine~~ Logan Marshall—Indifference
Philip Sidney Bryce—Love"**

This oracle had likewise proved unkind, since, although, without doubt, it gave a correct diagnosis of the young man's symptoms, it was not so obliging in its revelation concerning the condition of the young lady's heart—unless,

indeed, "Indifference" was but a euphemism for a far warmer feeling.

Kate was very young, and this sheet of paper was her first love letter—if letter it could be called. Perhaps that was why its perusal brought a happy, brooding smile to her lips and a tender mist of tears to her eyes. Or was it that she now viewed this foolish little scrap of paper with such tender lenience because it reminded her of a like piece of folly on her part? Had not she, too, more than once "tried fortunes" under cover of her desk at school during the noontide recess, while the children thought her busy over the correcting of exercises or the unraveling of some mathematical tangle? Like "Emma Peecher's" pupils, were not her writing-class pupils half a year ahead in the skill with which they made P's and B's, because so many of their copies began with one or the other of these capitals? Did not her hymnal even bear upon its fly-leaf a scroll-like device with the magical initials, P. S. B., wrought in forget-me-nots—the work of her pencil only last Sunday, while she sat in the church choir, the picture of decorous devotion?

Her first impulse was to hide the paper among her treasures. But no, was her afterthought, Philip was coming next evening, and in the meanwhile he might remember leaving the paper in the book. He had, of course, scribbled off that nonsense in an idle moment, intending to destroy it. Not for worlds would he have had her see it—especially now that he had learned that John Henson had been a witness to his folly in writing it. So she replaced the paper, and returned the "Ben Hur" to the table, so that Mr. Bryce when he called the next evening, seeing the book still lying where he had placed it, might think the paper enclosed in it had not been discovered. Having returned the paper to its hiding-place, she resolved that when next

in her lover's presence no tone, glance or quiver of an eyelash should betray her knowledge of what she had found.

That night passed for the young girl in a waking dream of happiness. The rays of the moon filled her room with soft light. The scented breath of dewy night came in through the open window. The occasional twitter of a sleepless bird, and even the continuous, discordant croaking of the frogs in the frog-haunted ravine, and the weird scream of the peafowls roosting in the orchard, seemed an integrant part of a larger harmony that filled her being, enraptured her spirit, and intoxicated her senses as she lay with bared arms flung over her head, indulging in blissful visions.

Philip, too, as he in his big, airy room at Elmarch lay happily awake, saw visions and dreamed dreams of future bliss, when he and his fair young wife should have returned to his native land. He pictured her in his own beautiful old home at Undulata—welcomed, made much of, and tenderly loved as she would be by his fond father and mother and sister. He planned, too, of the grand work he would accomplish with her inspiring presence and her sweet and gentle influence ever about him.

To both girl and lover, on that happy night, life seemed to stretch out in a long vista of happiness; and both felt sure, in spite of all they had heard and read to the contrary, that in their case the course of true love would run smoothly along between banks of roses and honeysuckle.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE AWAKENING.

To be wise, and love, exceeds men's might.—*Shakespeare.*

Well it was for Katharine's reputation as an educator that none of her patrons chose that particular Tuesday in May for visiting the school. Miss Marshall, ordinarily so alert and capable an instructress, that day went mechanically through her schoolroom routine, seeing all things through a haze of dreamy happiness. Chalk rags were pinned to coat-tails, apron-strings tied to backs of benches, telltale apple cores and caramel papers were scattered upon the floor, and surprising samples of artistic talent appeared upon the blackboard. But, though vaguely conscious of growing disorder, unstrung discipline, and a general entanglement of scholastic matters, the young preceptress was dominated so completely by her own happy fancies that no misdemeanor or badly prepared recitation had power to ruffle her serenity or to awaken her to a sense of responsibility.

Promptly at seven o'clock that evening Mr. Bryce made his appearance at Willow Brook Farm. As he entered the parlor, his first glance was at the table near the door, and by the look of relief that came to his face when he saw the "Ben Hur" lying just where he had placed it the previous afternoon, Kate knew that he remembered leaving that slip of paper in the book.

At first she tried to put him at ease by talking upon general topics. After awhile, with a fine air of innocence, she picked up the book and began to speak of it. She mentioned what she considered one of its most interesting passages, the "Chariot Race," and asked him to read it to

her. He assented, and she handed him the book; but as he took it the slip of paper fluttered to the floor. He instantly stooped to recover it, and as he arose with the paper in his hand, their eyes met. For the life of her, the girl could not restrain a smile. That smile betrayed her. He colored, and looked as guilty and uncomfortable as a schoolboy detected in some wrong-doing. This was more than she could stand. She giggled impolitely and openly. Then the absurdity of the situation rushed upon her with overwhelming force, and she gave way to untimely, irresistible laughter. His expression of mortification and wounded sensitiveness warned her, but, the more uneasy and embarrassed he grew, the less able she became to stifle her mirth, of which even at the time she was thoroughly ashamed. After a few seconds, however, her laughter ceased, but still she could think of no remark to tide over the awkward pause that followed.

After an embarrassing moment, which seemed of much longer duration, he took up the book again, turned to the "Chariot Race," and began reading aloud. Mr. Bryce's elocutionary powers were above the average, but Lew Wallace would have felt greatly pained could he have heard the young preacher's rendition of the famous "Chariot Race." However, the sole auditor that night was herself in no frame of mind to criticize poor elocution.

Finishing the "Chariot Race," and the young lady still being unable to find a topic of conversation, Philip read on. There is no saying how much of the book he might have read, had not Mr. Bright entered the room. He said that he merely wanted a word or two with "Brother Bryce" concerning some little clerical matter. His profuse apologies anent his interrupting the reading only served to make the situation of the two young people the more awkward.

As though unconscious of what he was doing, Mr. Bryce, as he talked with Mr. Bright, tore that unlucky sheet of paper into tiny bits, which he, after glancing toward the grate, which was closed for the season, thrust into his coat pocket.

Katharine, sitting quietly across the room, taking no part in the business discussion between the two men, hid a smile when presently, as Mr. Bryce abstractedly drew forth his handkerchief, the torn bits of paper which he had a few seconds before so carefully stowed in his pocket again fluttered to the floor, unperceived by him, and lay scattered about the carpet under the large center-table at his right.

When Milton Bright quitted the room the reading was not resumed, but the two young people were ill at ease and little inclined to prolong the unsatisfactory interview. After some desultory talk, he rose to go. She murmured some halting, incoherent words about its not being late. In reality, she was so perturbed over the result of her ill-timed laughter that it was impossible for her to recover self-possession. To her lover, who totally misunderstood her manner, it seemed forced and ungracious to the verge of impoliteness. His leave-taking was coldly formal, and there was no hint of his coming again.

When he had gone, Kate laboriously gathered up those precious pieces of paper scattered underneath the center-table; and, taking them to her room, she placed them in a little lacquered box which she hid in the depths of her trunk.

The night before she had gathered flowers upon the Delectable Mountains. To-night she groped through the Valley of Humiliation. The moonlight seemed cold and mocking; the scent of the honeysuckle beneath her window, oppressive; the chorus of frogs and the scream of the

peafowls, which last night seemed actually musical, now seemed like the cry of evil spirits in Pandemonium.

At last she fell into a troubled sleep from which she was awakened some hours later by Puggie's soft kisses on her face, and the morning salutation: "Wake up, wake up, Miss Kate! Breakfus is weady. You's lazy this mawnin', ain't you? I'll he'p you dwess. Lemme button your shoes fur you."

Banished, to a degree, by the child's loving chatter and the morning's freshness and fragrance were the dismal forebodings of the night; and as Kate walked to school, hope breathed a flattering tale—Philip would soon get over his unhappy mood of the night before, and return to his allegiance. But when the week had passed without a word or sign from her lover, resentment at his conduct took the place of hope with the girl. During the remaining weeks of her school term she saw him at church only. He looked thin and pale, and she heard from the Brights that he was soon to go West for a six weeks' vacation.

If possible, Philip that night, after that unsatisfactory call at Willow Brook, was more miserable than Kate; and the thoughts that tormented his wakeful hours were in sharp contrast to his rose-tinted visions of the previous night. Had he not been so much in love, he would have been able to laugh with Kate over that foolish scrap of paper; but his great love for her not only made him unduly sensitive regarding anything she did or said, but also deprived him, for the time being, of his sense of humor. He was enraged with himself for having written that idiotic scribbling, and for his carelessness in leaving it in the book he returned to her. He was, if possible, still more exasperated with John Henson for having referred to it in Kate's presence several weeks ago in the library at Rose Lawn. Moreover, as he now reviewed the incidents of the

last few months, he was sure that Kate Marshall had been only trifling with him, and making sport of his love.

By the next morning the young man was, of course, thoroughly ashamed of his childish petulance, unworthy suspicions and unjust thoughts of the girl he loved. He determined to see her again as soon as possible, to learn his fate at her hands. Accordingly, on Thursday morning he wrote her asking if he might call again on Saturday evening. As he was sealing this note Robert Mason came by, as previously agreed upon between them, to take him to see a certain sick member of the church. Mr. Mason was in a hurry, for the sick man lived several miles from the village, and he wanted to get the visit over in time to return home by noon. Philip, therefore, left the letter directed to Katharine, and several other letters he had written that morning, on his desk and hastily caught up his hat, and hurried out to the gate where Mason waited in the buggy. On his way through the hall, Philip saw Sam, the negro who served at Elmarch in the capacity of mail-carrier and errand-boy. The young man told Sam of the letters on the desk, requested him to mail them at once, and then started off with Robert Mason.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday passed without bringing any reply from Kate. He was bitterly chagrined, but after a few hours love conquered chagrin, and on the next Tuesday morning, knowing that her summer vacation was drawing near, and feeling that he could not let her leave Ginseng without his first speaking with her, he rode over to Willow Brook, hoping to see her before she started for school. When he reached Willow Brook, Uncle Charley was coming through the gate leading to the pike. From him Philip learned that Miss Marshall had gone to the schoolhouse sometime since. He tore a leaf from a little note-book, and, seated on his horse and using the pommel

of the saddle as a desk, he wrote a line to Kate, asking that he might see her that evening. This note he entrusted to Uncle Charles to deliver as soon as she returned from school. He gave the negro a dime, and promised him fifty cents more, if he would bring him Miss Marshall's reply that afternoon.

That same morning Diana Henson walked over from Rose Lawn to spend the day with her Aunt Goodloe. Instead of walking home that afternoon, she accepted Mr. Bryce's offer to take her home in his buggy. Just before they started on their drive to Ginseng, and while they still lingered with Mrs. Goodloe on the front portico, Uncle Charley rode up, and stopped at the front gate. Bryce hurried down the walk to meet the old fellow, who handed him a package, and then hitched his horse and hobbled off through the side yard toward the negro cabin in the rear.

Philip, forgetful of the two pairs of eyes watching him from the portico, and thinking only of finding a note from Kate, hastily tore off the wrappings of the package. It contained some photographic views of Australian scenes and two books he had loaned Miss Marshall several weeks previously. He searched carefully through books and photographs, and, finding no note, he called out to the darkey, who by this time was half way across the yard: "Hold on a moment, Uncle Charley. Haven't you a note or a letter for me?"

"No, suh, Brothah Bryce, she nevah sent no writin's; she jes' tole me to fotch you dat air possel," was the reply.

Leaving the books and photographs lying on the grass near the gate, Philip, so vexed and troubled as to be entirely unmindful of what he was doing, sprang into the buggy and drove off in the direction of Durritt. He had not driven far before he remembered Diana. With an ejaculation of dismay, he turned around and drove back to

Elmarch. Diana, who had been greatly astounded when Mr. Bryce drove off without her, was standing at the gate when he returned. He apologized very humbly for his absent-minded behavior, and Diana, suspecting that he was in grave trouble of some kind, readily accepted his apology, and they proceeded to Ginseng.

"I'm coming over to-morrow night for a farewell visit," Ruby Stump said one afternoon to Kate, upon meeting her as she was coming out of the post-office. "There are several matters I desire to talk over with you, my dear, before you leave us for the summer," she added, tapping Kate's arm affectionately.

By one subterfuge or another, Kate had hitherto evaded Ruby's attempts to get her to read the manuscript of a novel the would-be authoress was writing; but now further escape seemed impossible, so the younger woman resigned herself to the inevitable. But when Ruby came next evening she was so full of other topics as to be unmindful of her literary aspirations.

"So the doctor and Diana Henson have quarreled, I hear, and their engagement (if one ever existed between them) is broken!" Ruby began, as soon as she and Kate were in the privacy of the latter's room. "Diana is an amiable girl, and some consider her handsome, though, for my part, I can't say that I admire brunettes of so pronounced a type; but she is too superficial to make any lasting impression on so scholarly a man as Ralph Moreland. I wasn't deceived by his attentions to her last winter. I had reason to believe that his real inclinations tended quite in another direction. And now it appears that Diana has entrapped Shelburn Broadus. Well, she is welcome to him or to Dr. Moreland, either, for all of me; but, if she did but know it, she's only second choice with either of them.

'Still waters run deepest,' and I could tell you something, my dear, that would make you open your eyes—only it isn't in me to boast."

"What bee has the foolish creature in her bonnet now?" Kate wondered.

"But before many weeks have passed, my dear," Ruby proceeded, "you will probably hear a piece of news that will surprise you. I am—ahem!—but perhaps the affair is hardly ripe enough just yet for me to confide even to you."

Katharine was weary and did not urge her companion to reveal this mysterious secret. She soon wished she had insisted, for Ruby next said in her most insinuating manner, "I presume you and Brother Bryce intend corresponding during your vacation."

"Oh, no, indeed," was the hurried rejoinder.

"Ah!" Ruby playfully replied, "you can't expect me to believe that. Of course you're bashful about admitting anything; but, my dear girl, considering the interest I take in you both, you might confide in me. I never betray confidence. Brother Bryce is one of the truest gentlemen I ever knew, and an especial favorite of mine. Perhaps he is a little too youthful in his manner sometimes, for a preacher, but of that, of course, time will cure him. And as for you, my dear Katharine, I said to myself the very first time I ever met you that you were a girl after my own heart, and closer acquaintance has but deepened that impression. There is a wonderful similarity in our tastes and views on most subjects. In fact, I regard you as my twin affinity."

Ruby's "twin affinity" still declined to be confidential, and still stoutly asserted that Mr. Bryce was nothing more to her than a friend. Nevertheless, this did not alter Miss Stump's conviction. "I was greatly surprised," Ruby resumed, "when I heard you had accepted the school for

next term. I was sure Brother Bryce would be your only pupil after this year. Still, perhaps it is advisable that you should not marry for a year or two—although, as a rule, I don't approve of long engagements. But no girl under twenty-eight or twenty-nine is fit to enter the estate of matrimony. Now, I am not ashamed to acknowledge that I was thirty last February."

Katharine wondered if February twenty-ninth were not Miss Ruby's natal day—thus allowing her only one-fourth as many birthdays as other people had.

"But my friends," Ruby continued, "constantly tell me I don't look a day over twenty. And I am thankful now that I wasn't persuaded into accepting any of the numerous offers I received during my early girlhood, as I feel that only now have I attained to years of discretion, and am capable of making a wise choice."

CHAPTER XXII.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON VISITORS.

Willow Brook Farm was favored with quite a number of visitors the last Sunday afternoon of Kate Marshall's stay in Ginseng. While Mr. and Mrs. Bright chatted with their own callers in the sitting-room, and their children played out in the yard with their young visitors, Katharine, assisted by little Margaret, who generally preferred Miss Marshall's society to that of other children, entertained Tom Slocum, Della Mason, Shelburn Broadus, and John and Diana Henson in the parlor.

"Ginseng will be a howling wilderness this summer, with you so far away," gallantly declared John to Miss Marshall in a lull of general conversation.

"It will indeed," heartily echoed the other callers.

"You're very kind to put the matter that way," rejoined Katharine, "but, in reality, it is I, not Ginseng, that shall feel desolate. I shall miss my pleasant friends here far more than they will miss me."

"By the way," exclaimed Broadus, when all had uttered their polite disclaimers to Kate's assertion, "I hear that Mr. Bryce is soon to start on a camping expedition out West."

"Yes," said Della, "that will leave our village doubly lonesome; and Brother Bryce expects to be gone quite awhile, too, I've heard."

"Oh, Bryce'll be back for roll-call the first of September, without doubt," Tom said meaningly.

"Cissy says," began Margaret, who sat between Kate and John on the sofa, "that Bwovveh Bwyce an' Miss Kate are—"

"Why, Puggie," Della hastily interrupted, "what a

pretty frock you have on! Isn't it a new one? Come here, and let me see it closely."

"Pa buyed it fuh me at Durrutt," said the little girl, in all sincerity, as she rose and stood before Della that the new chambray frock might be duly admired. "Miss Kate give me this edgin' to twim it. I only wore it once before—when Bwovveh Bwyce took me an' her a wide one even-in'; an' he said my dwess was mighty sweet, an' jus' the color of Miss Kate's eyes," she went on, looking innocently at Della.

"What was it that Cissy said, Puggie?" asked Mr. Broadus.

"Yes, let us hear what Cissy said," urged Tom.

"Margaret," interposed Diana, quickly, "I'm dreadfully thirsty; won't you please get me a drink of water?"

"Run on, dear," advised Kate, much relieved, "and tell Alec to draw some fresh water; and then I think you had better stay out in the yard, and help Cissy and Molly and Susan entertain their company."

After the little girl had withdrawn, Della said: "Brother Bryce needs a vacation. He studies too much, father says. He's such an unceasing worker, too, and doesn't spare himself in any line of duty. No wonder he looks worn and jaded."

"He certainly has appeared to be off his feed considerably, this last month or so," acknowledged Tom. "But," he continued, pointedly, with a sly glance toward Kate, "whether this is due to overwork or to heart trouble, I can't say."

This remark, to say the least of it, was in exceedingly bad taste, and John, in order to cover Katharine's confusion, and to turn the tide of conversation into another channel, gave utterance to the first thought that occurred to him. "I'm inclined to think I was cut out for a preacher

myself. My robust constitution could stand any amount of pastoral work, and my oratorical powers would find much quicker recognition if turned into the channel of pulpit eloquence, than they're likely to find in the drear and musty way of a legal career."

"If an utter lack of spiritual experience and Scriptural knowledge is any qualification, you're without doubt well fitted for the ministry," laughingly declared his sister.

"To be sure I am!" returned young Henson, stoutly. "My Sunday-school teacher used to tell me that the less I knew on any subject, the more I could find to say about it; so, my lack of spiritual perception and Biblical knowledge is, as you say, in my favor—as permitting my other talents freer range; for, after all, it isn't knowledge or experience, but fancy and imagination, that are the chief requisites for pulpit oratory."

"I may be wrong, of course," here spake Shelburn Broadus, "but, if I remember rightly, the majority of text-books on mental philosophy maintain that fancy and imagination can work only on a basis of knowledge and experience."

"That," airily retorted Mr. Henson, "is doubtless true in regard to the workings of ordinary little mentalities such as some I could mention, but—"

"Thank you!" interpolated Broadus.

"But," continued John, "my conceptive faculties are of a higher order than that. For instance, my imagination can depict a beast with green legs, blue hair, red eyes, three tails, five ears, and with seven horns growing in a row down the middle of its back; but I never saw or heard tell of such an animal."

"John, John, how can you be so ridiculous!" merrily expostulated Miss Henson.

"Pshaw, Jack!" scoffingly exclaimed Tom, "that's not

imagination, but memory. That self-same beast, or one very like it, is described in Revelation."

"But I never read the Book of Revelation, that I know of," John retorted.

"At any rate," said Broadus, "you have seen legs, horns, eyes, blueness, greenness, and all that, and your imagination, instead of working upon new material, has merely combined these things into a monstrosity which would do credit to the visions of a morphine fiend or the ravings of a 'd. t.' victim."

John's ability to answer this argument was not put to the test, for at that moment Della, who was seated beside young Slocum on a divan near one of the front windows, cried out, "Here comes Mr. Bryce! He's stopping at the stile-block."

The exultant joy that rushed into Katharine's heart at this announcement was speedily destroyed by Tom, who, after a hasty look from the window, said: "No, it isn't Bryce, at all. It's our revered P. M., the Honorable Elihu Clay."

"So it is," said Della. "At first glance that horse he's driving looked so much like Carbine that I thought Mr. Bryce was coming."

Mr. Clay held a short colloquy with Mr. Bright at the stile-block, and then drove on.

Before poor Kate, who wished with all her soul that the conversational boat could be steered clear of all mention of Philip Bryce's name, could start another topic, Mr. Broadus put in his oar. "Bryce in future will have to cut out Sunday visiting and all such frivolities, I fear. Sisters Miranda and Jane still refuse to hear reason or to accept any explanation about his going to the Townsends' party. More than that, Miss Hogg hasn't let up on him yet about that call he made here last September, the first Sunday of your stay in

Ginseng, Miss Marshall. You remember the occasion, do you not?"

"Oh, yes, quite well," she replied with admirable *sang froid*.

"Of course she does," ejaculated John. "Miss Katharine has that date marked with a white stone, because it was then that she was first honored by a call from 'Yours Truly.'"

"It was likewise the occasion upon which she had the inestimable happiness of a first call from me—to say nothing of your call, Mr. Broadus, and that of Ginseng's brightest ornament, the glorious Miss Stump," chimed in Diana, quickly, seconding her brother's efforts toward relieving the much-tried Katharine. "By the way," Miss Henson went on, "what has become of Miss Ruby? I haven't seen her for nearly a month. Can it be that she is wrestling with another poem or writing another novel, that she keeps herself thus aloof from society?"

"She spent the night with me not long ago," Kate answered, "but although her conversational powers upon other topics appeared to be as brilliant as ever, she made no reference to her poems or novel. Indeed, it struck me that for some occult reason her literary aspirations were on the wane."

"Ah, now's my opportunity!" ejaculated Mr. Henson. "The only rivals I have ever really feared in the dear lady's affections have been her literary aspirations, and if these have been laid low, the way is cleared for me to go in and win."

After the general laugh which this called forth had subsided, Della, apropos of Mr. Broadus' last speech, said, "If Mr. Bryce heeds all the silly notions of some of his parishioners, he'll have to eschew all social relaxations whatsoever."

"Bryce ain't built that way," asserted young Slocum. "He'll go his own gait regardless of the unreasonable whims of the few old women of both sexes who would like to have him wear a long face, a hair shirt, and pebbles in his shoes. But I suspect that the parson's failure to show up here this afternoon is due to his mental and physical exhaustion after that high-flown discourse he gave us this morning."

"He assuredly was in his happiest vein this forenoon," acquiesced the editor. "It was fortunate that Dr. Gifford and Professor Sturm chose to-day to drive over from Durritt to attend divine services at Ginseng, for Bryce, always scholarly and eloquent, fairly surpassed himself this morning."

"Well," frankly declared Tom, "Dr. Gifford, Professor Sturm and Editor Broadus may have been edified by all that about 'changing viewpoints,' the 'theology of comprehension,' and so forth; but it was a little too steep for me. I enjoy Bryce's sermons when he deals with practical, everyday religion, but when he soars into the realms of transcendentalism, my earth-bound pinions can't follow him. What say you, Miss Della? Could you grasp all the brilliant wisdom of this morning's discourse?"

"I must confess that although my wits stood on tiptoe all the time, I couldn't grasp nearly all that he said," Miss Mason acknowledged; "but perhaps that's the very reason I liked the sermon. I don't care to have things made too plain. Nearly every one, I believe, liked the sermon this morning. I heard Mr. Foster say after service that it was the best discourse Mr. Bryce had ever preached here."

"Daddy Foster was, of course, in a position to judge, as he slept straight through the sermon from start to finish," dryly observed young Slocum.

"The new-fangled philosophy which is being delivered

from the pulpits nowadays makes me doubt sometimes whether modern preachers know exactly what they do believe, or that they have any fixed religion at all," observed young Henson.

As no one else made any answer to this, Kate, who felt that it behooved her to take a more active part in the conversation of her guests, said: "But, Mr. Henson, are you not confusing two quite distinct things? Isn't there a vast difference between religion itself and the various beliefs or doctrines on religious subjects?"

"You're right, Katharine," said Diana.

"A distinction without a difference, I should say; but perhaps if you'll explain more fully, Miss Kate, I may catch your point," said John.

"I fear I can't express myself very clearly, but my meaning is something like this: Religion is a life, while the ever-changing religious doctrines are but so many different explanations of that life," replied the girl.

"Granting that," returned John, "yet the old proverb, that one must cut his garment according to his cloth, still holds good. That is, if religion is a life, that life is shaped (or should be shaped) in accordance with one's creed or schedule of beliefs. Hence, practically one's religion and one's religious doctrines are one and the same thing."

"I think, John"—here spoke Broadus, condescendingly—"that you misapprehend Miss Marshall's thought. If I understand you, Miss Marshall, you mean this: that one should distinguish between the essence of religion or Christianity and its multifarious creeds, or, in other words, that Christianity is something widely different from adherence to credal formulas. Is that correct?"

"Oh, yes, thank you, Mr. Broadus. You've put it nicely—far better than I could," answered Kate. "The point I meant to emphasize is that the fundamental principles upon

which religion—that is, the Christian life—is based don't vary from one generation to another, but are the same yesterday, to-day and forever; while points of views, creeds, beliefs are constantly changing."

"Well, then," rejoined Henson, "I for one wish they wouldn't. I want a system of religious beliefs as unchanging as the Rock of Ages."

"After all," observed Broadus with his air of superior wisdom, "the gospel message as proclaimed by our more conservative thinkers is much the same as that delivered by our younger, more liberal-minded scholars. The only difference is that the former cling to the older, narrower forms of delivery, while the latter seek to clothe the message in terms of modern thought."

"If," said John, dryly, "the toploftical stuff that's being handed out to us from some of our pulpits at the present day is modern thought, I don't believe that Modern Thought, even when spelled with capital letters, knows exactly what the message of salvation is; or else it is so wrapped about with philosophical speculations, and so concealed by the garments of high-flown verbiage and flowers of speech, that it would take an X-ray to discover the message to ordinary minds."

After a pause Diana said: "Really, you know, Mr. Broadus, some of these modern ideas are rather startling; at least, they are to me. For instance, that view that Moses didn't write the Pentateuch, but that it is a compilation from the works of many writers who lived at a much later period than the Mosaic."

"Yes," added Kate, "I must acknowledge that doctrine seems to me not only startling, but blasphemous; for does not Jesus himself refer to these writings as being the work of Moses? Hence, if Moses didn't write them, Jesus was mistaken; and if so, what of his own infallibility?"

"And," added Diana, "some of the expounders of this new theology aren't content with turning our beliefs as regards the Old Testament topsyturvy, but they attack the New Testament, too. The authorship of Hebrews is questioned, as well as the authority and inspiration of Paul's teachings in others of his writings. Worse even than that! some of the modern thought theologians claim that the accounts given by Matthew and Luke of the birth of Christ are unauthentic."

"Precisely," agreed Tom. "And I'd like to know what you church-members all over this broad land mean to do about it."

"I for one," declared Katharine, blushing, but speaking decidedly, "am going to reject all such new theology, and cling to the older, safer ways of thinking."

"And I, too," said Diana, stoutly.

"I understand little about and care less for these higher critical—or hypercritical—doctrines. The old way of thinking is good enough for me," was Della's dictum.

"Much of the trouble and the mistaken ideas in regard to parts of the Scriptures are due to the Bible's having passed through so many translations; and thus much extraneous and irrelevant matter which was not in the original text has crept into its pages," said Shelburn Broadus, didactically.

"I think the only safe thing to do is to accept as Holy Writ every word; and, like old man Jucklin, 'believe in the good Book frum kiver to kiver,'" declared John Henson in his whimsical, half-jesting way.

Katharine, ignoring John's remark, said: "Why, Mr. Broadus, that view only makes the study of the Bible the more bewildering to us who aren't Greek and Hebrew scholars. How are we to know what parts of the Scriptures are interpolations, and what are not?"

"And," subjoined Diana, "according to higher critics, about half the Bible consists of interpolations."

"And the other half," laughed Della, "is figurative language which means something totally different from what it says."

"I'll tell you what it is, good people," said John, and there was no hint of jesting in his tone, and he spoke more soberly than was his wont, "a system of theology, I don't care how scholarly it may be, which gives us an expurgated Old Testament and a discredited New isn't to my notion; and if I ever do become a Christian, it will be by accepting Christ as revealed in the old-fashioned, unexpurgated Bible that my forefathers loved and revered as the inspired message from heaven."

CHAPTER XXIII.

FRIENDS IN ADVERSITY.

For friendship, of itself an holy tie,
Is made more sacred by adversity.—*Dryden.*

Ralph Moreland and Philip Bryce, living under the same roof and having many similar tastes and pursuits, had long been close friends; and now that each was suffering from disappointment and heartache, they were more than ever attracted to one another, although each maintained a strict reticence concerning his troublous love affairs. They made free use of each other's books, magazines and other belongings; and there were few of their leisure evenings which they did not spend together.

One evening Moreland, at one side of the big center table in Bryce's room, sat writing and smoking. At the other side Philip, sunk into the depths of an arm-chair, was reading. The evening was rainy, and unusually cold for June, and the room, lit by a bright student lamp, looked very cozy.

Presently Moreland, as he rose to relight his pipe, glanced across at his companion, who had thrown aside his magazine, and sat tilted back in his chair, his hands in his pockets, his legs stretched out before him, his abstracted gaze fixed upon a picture over the mantel.

"Why don't you ever smoke, Bryce?" asked Moreland, resuming his chair and puffing away at his pipe. "I find tobacco a great solace when I'm worn out in body or have the blues. You haven't any strait-laced notions on the subject of preachers using tobacco, else you wouldn't let me smoke in your den, as is my nightly custom."

"I'm constituted differently from you, Moreland," was

the reply. "You can indulge in a pipe or a cigar when you choose, and when you choose you can let smoking alone. But with me it would be different. It would be as impossible for me to be a moderate smoker as it would be for me to be a moderate drinker. With tobacco as with intoxicants, it must be for me, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' or else slavery to the habit. It took a terrible bout of typhoid, when I was a lad of twenty (a fever which, the doctors said, was much aggravated and complicated by my having been an excessive cigarette-smoker), to cure me of the cigarette habit. Since then I've never dared use tobacco in any form. If I began again, I'd soon be a slave to the weed."

Moreland said no more, but resumed his writing. When he had finished his letters, both men sat awhile in silence, each busy with his own thoughts.

At last, and after some hesitation, the older man again spoke. "Philip," he said, "you won't, I trust, misconstrue the motive of so sincere a friend as I am, if I say a certain thing to you, will you?"

"Certainly not; especially after that persuasive preamble of yours," laughed Philip. "So, say on; don't be afraid."

The doctor toyed with a glass paper-weight lying on the table, and still hesitated until his companion said encouragingly, "What is it, Ralph? Let me know what is on your mind."

Moreland, thus urged, said, "It is this—I sometimes fear that some of those speculative doctrines of yours might, to some extent, prove stumbling-blocks to some of your hearers."

"'Stumbling-blocks'!" exclaimed the preacher. "I hope not. It is my endeavor to remove obstacles, instead of placing them."

"I know that, I know that," was the quick and hearty rejoinder.

"Then, what did you mean about 'stumbling-blocks'?"

"Well, for instance," answered the doctor, "those new-fangled ideas of yours about miracles, and concerning the authenticity of certain Scriptures and the inspiration—or, rather, the *non*-inspiration—of some other portions of the Bible; also that idea about the Book of Job being nothing more than uninspired Hebrew drama; besides various other of your peculiar views and notions."

"My views! My notions! Well, I like that!" exclaimed Bryce with enjoyment. "Why, so far from their being my peculiar views, they are held by all the Biblical scholarship of the day. More than that, I'm certain they are correct and sound."

"As to their correctness and soundness, I'm not myself enough of a Hebrew and Greek historian and critic to judge," answered Ralph, modestly, "but—"

"But what?" asked Bryce, as the doctor hesitated.

"But even if they are true," answered Moreland—"and, as I said, I'm not in a position to argue on that head—do you think it altogether wise to advocate these new ideas quite so freely as you have been doing lately?"

"But, Moreland, even the most carping critic among those who cling stubbornly to the old ways of thinking can't expect that the thought of to-day on matters of Scriptural analysis and interpretation is to be fashioned upon the pattern of a former generation. Surely, then, you, of all men, are too broad-minded to expect such a thing. Furthermore, as I've stated again and again in my preaching, it isn't our belief in this or that theory of Scriptural exegesis that has saving power. It's our acceptance of Christ and his teachings."

"But don't some of these new views dwarf or slur over

Christ's teachings or tend to invalidate them?" mildly ventured Moreland.

"Oh, no, no indeed," was the preacher's emphatic reply.

"Well, waiving that point," returned the doctor, "you've admitted that the acceptance or the rejection of these new theories has no saving power; so, why not cut them out of your sermons, and confine your preaching to the things that do count—the vital principles of Christianity? Discuss these critical speculations in private as much as you please, but let your sermons deal with practical issues and the things that lead men Christward. Then you will certainly be on safe ground. Don't you think that sound advice?"

Philip sat awhile in deep thought and then said: "Well, old fellow, in your blunt, uncompromising way you strike straight out from the shoulder. You've hit the mark, too, and I am going to hearken to your admonitions. In future my preaching shall deal only with those practical, essential truths which are held by all religionists, whether of the old or the new school of thought."

"Thank you, Philip, for taking what I said in such good part," said Ralph, taking up a newspaper, as though to end the subject.

Bryce, too, picked up a periodical, but he did not resume his reading. After musing some time, he again spoke. "See here, Moreland, you were so straightforward in what you said awhile ago, that I hope you'll be equally frank with me on another matter."

"What is it?" asked the doctor.

"Are the members of this church finding fault with my preaching or disapproving of me in any way? Please tell me, plainly. If they are, I should know it; since, in that case, I'm not doing the good here that I had hoped, and I should resign."

"I hope you don't think anything I said just now was

meant to imply that your work wasn't acceptable to your congregation. What I said was meant merely as a hint for your future work, and not as an implication that the church isn't pleased with you. So far as I know (and I think I do know pretty thoroughly), the people here love you and think you are doing excellent work."

"Of course," resumed Bryce, presently, "I'm aware that Miss Hogg and her sister have been set against me almost from the start—ever since I tried to make peace between them and Miss Charity Bird. And for some weeks after that concert last March the Fowlers, too, were anything but cordial—or, rather, I should have said that Mrs. Fowler wasn't. So far as Mr. Fowler is concerned, he has always, so far as he dared do so with the fear of his more assertive wife before his eyes, manifested a friendly spirit toward me. And of late even Mrs. Fowler has appeared cordial."

"Of course she has," laughingly agreed Ralph. "Didn't you dine with them when 'Daut' was home for the Easter holiday, and didn't you praise that accomplished young woman's playing? To say nothing of that drive you took her, or of the music you ordered and sent her with your compliments. Those deeds more than condone your earlier offense of not advocating Miss Fowler's being sent for to take part in that concert. Oh, yes, you're thoroughly reinstated in Sister Julia's graces, and all you've got to do to remain in favor is to occasionally show Daut some slight attentions during her summer vacation. As for the hotel people, Mrs. Jane was never very bitter against you. Only, she, like poor, henpecked Jim Dick Fowler, doesn't dare to openly oppose the ruling household power. So, you see, in reality Miranda Hogg is the only one of the two hundred and twenty-odd members of your church who is opposed to you; and she's so ignorant and prejudiced and unreasonable that no one pays attention to her likes or dislikes. Leav-

ing her out of the question, you are solid with your congregation; and that, let me tell you, is what none of your predecessors could boast. Why, man, you're the only preacher we've ever had that those two contrary old fellows, Brer Foster and Brer Lane, ever could agree about. Before you came, if one of them asserted a thing to be white, the other would swear it was black, for no other reason than a desire to oppose his enemy. As a consequence of their contrariness, our church was always more or less divided into factions; but under your administration these two cantankerous brethren are as smooth as silk. Rest easy. The people love you, and the church is prospering as never before."

Again Moreland took up his paper, and was soon absorbed in its contents, but Bryce, although he picked up his magazine, did not read. He sat idly turning its leaves, his mind on other things. At length he said: "In spite of what you say, Moreland, about the satisfactory condition of things here, I sometimes heartily wish I hadn't accepted the call for three years. A spirit of restlessness is upon me, and I long for a change."

"I sympathize with you there; I, too, wish I could get away from this place, and never come back to it," acknowledged Moreland.

"Of late," continued Philip, "I've felt that it would have been better had I done like my chum, David Jones, and had gone back home as soon as I had graduated from the university."

"For my sake, at least, I'm glad you didn't, Phil," said Ralph, heartily.

"If you put it that way," said Bryce, "I've more reason than you have, to be thankful. Your friendship and companionship are very helpful to me."

After awhile, Moreland inquired, "What has become of

that other compatriot of yours—Mr. Carey—who spent a few days with you here last fall? He's still in America, isn't he?"

"Yes, he came over when Jones and I did; but during his second year at college he was called home on some important family matters. He was back in Australia nearly three years. He then came to America again. He graduated at Lexington last June, and he is now preaching in one of the upper counties of this State. He doesn't return to Australia until I do, two years hence."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED.

The process which starts with rejecting the *objective* atonement has its natural and inevitable issue in the denial that Christ has any essential part in the gospel. We can only assent to such a view by renouncing the New Testament as a whole.—*Dr. Denny.*

Moreland was perfectly sincere when he told Bryce that Miranda Hogg and Jane Burgess were the only disaffected members of the church at Ginseng, for, since his rupture with Diana, Ralph had held little social intercourse with any one except Philip himself.

"What did you think of Brother Bryce's lecture at prayer-meeting last night, Brother Henson?" asked Mr. Mason, one rainy afternoon in June, when Henson was calling at the Mason homestead.

"Ah! Robert," answered the visitor, with a sad shake of the head, "we're hearing strange doctrines nowadays."

"Why, what could be found amiss in Brother Bryce's little talk last night?" asked Mrs. Mason. "I thought what he said about the humility and reverence with which one should approach God in prayer was exceedingly helpful."

"Yes, that part was all right," Henson agreed; "but it was upon the next phase of his subject that I must take issue with him. He spoke as though its reflex action upon the human soul is all there is to prayer."

"I didn't understand him that way," said Mrs. Mason.

"Did you not?" Henson replied. "To me the whole trend of his thought was that prayer is altogether subjective in its benefits; and, if that be true, Sister Mason, don't you see that it cuts the very heart out of prayer?"

"No, Mr. Henson," answered Mary Mason, "I didn't

gather that idea from what he said; and really, I must say that I find nothing dangerous or even misleading in any of his teachings—although they are perhaps slightly tingured with the so-called New Theology."

"But what we want, my dear madam, is the theology of the Bible," persisted Henson.

"Oh, yes, certainly, that of course," she assented; "but may not the New Theology be that?"

Henson, too much in earnest to heed her question, went on: "If the Christian Church has a distinctive plea, that plea is for the restoration of primitive, apostolic Christianity, which means implicit obedience to the commands of the New Testament and unswerving reliance upon Biblical statements and promises, to the exclusion of all human dogmas, inferences or speculations concerning them. In short, we as a people stand for a return to the direct, plainly stated teachings of Christ and his apostles; and I, for one, maintain that no man who is unprepared or unwilling to give us that kind of teaching has any claim to be considered a minister of the Christian Church."

Mary Mason held her peace, but her husband said, "I'm beginning to fear that Milton Bright and I were wrong, Henson, when we overruled your hesitancy about calling our present minister."

"I erred more grievously, Robert, when, after I had given in to you and Milton about calling Bryce, I advocated a Gamaliel-like policy in dealing with him. Had we spoken to him candidly at the outset, it would have been much better for him and for the church," acknowledged the older man.

"Every one likes Brother Philip," said Mrs. Mason. "We never before this had a preacher so indefatigable in visiting the sick, rousing the congregation to activity in every line of church work, nor one who was so popular

with the young, nor one who commanded so large an attendance at every church service."

"He has a most lovable personality," answered Henson, "and there can be no question as to his talents, his zeal or his activity; but I can't see that his presence in a sick-room or in the abode of sorrow or affliction is any more helpful than would be that of any other cheery visitor. Nor do I see that his influence with the young people of his congregation is especially uplifting. It appears to me to be no more so than that of any other cultured, pleasant-natured young man, for I don't believe that he ever, outside of his sermons, seeks by direct word, suggestion or example to lead those with whom he associates to think of spiritual matters. And, as for the appreciation which so many manifest in his sermons, it is purely literary or æsthetic."

"Like you, Brother Henson," acknowledged Robert Mason, "I think he lacks spirituality. And more than that, I fear those new views of his on many Scriptural themes."

"Have you ever spoken with Milton Bright on this matter?" inquired Henson, presently.

Mason replied: "Knowing how intimate Brother Philip is with the Brights, and how much as one of themselves he is considered by the family at Willow Brook, I hesitated for some time to say anything to Milton; but last week I ventured to broach the subject to him, and I find that he thinks just as you and I do about it."

"Well, I must say, Brother Henson, in spite of what you and Robert have said, that I see no dangerous tendencies in Brother Bryce's teachings nor any lack of Scriptural truth," stoutly maintained Mrs. Mason.

Her husband rejoined: "I grant you, Mary, that he does preach a kind of spirituality, in a vague, intangible sort of way—beautiful to listen to, and which sounds like gospel truth. I admit, too, that his text is always taken from the

Bible; but, when taken, instead of being used to elucidate some divine truth, it seems to serve him merely as a peg on which to hang all sorts of highflown sentiments—good enough in their way, but not what the soul hungering for the bread of life needs."

Henson took up the subject. "Saving faith, repentance toward God, hell, and judgment to come, redemptive suffering, the Holy Spirit, the supreme authority of the word of God, are never urged, and but rarely mentioned, except in a casual, hasty, half-hearted way that fails to press the subject home to the listener."

"Henson, why don't you have a talk with Bryce on these matters?" asked Mason, after another space of silence.

"I've been thinking of it. As senior elder of the church, it's my duty to do so; and I shall try to see him before long."

"I hope you will," answered Mason. "You'd know just how to approach him so as to impress him, and at the same time not to hurt his feelings."

Peter Henson, after reiterating his intention to talk with his minister, and agreeing with his brother officer and Mrs. Mason that they must not discuss any of these matters with the others of the congregation, took his departure.

On the Saturday and Sunday following that Thursday afternoon conference in Robert Mason's sitting-room, there was held at Hastings a convention of all the Christian Endeavor societies of Filson and adjoining counties. Bryce had been invited to make the address at the Sunday afternoon session of this convention. He consented, and, feeling this to be an occasion of especial importance, he put aside for the time all his troubles and perplexities, and concentrated every thought and energy upon the preparation of an address. He chose as his subject, "Self-realization." His address was

enthusiastically received by the convention; but to Peter Henson, who made one of the vast audience that Sunday afternoon in the public hall at Hastings, the teachings of that address seemed unscriptural and dangerous, and he concluded it was high time to speak to Philip. Accordingly, he set forth for Elmarch early the next morning.

Now that the enthusiasm which had buoyed him up during the work of the past week was over, Philip's former unhappy mood had returned in full force this Monday morning, and there was the shadow of perplexity and sorrow on the face he lifted to greet his visitor, which touched the kind heart of the older man, who, after they were seated, said solicitously and with a keen but kindly look: "You're not looking at all well, Brother Philip. Your color is not good; there's a tired look in your eyes, and you certainly have lost flesh this last month. I fear you're overworking; and probably, too, the unusually hot weather of the last two or three days is trying."

"Oh," said Bryce, with a fitful smile, "I can stand any amount of hot weather. You forget that I'm a South Australian."

"Whatever the cause," rejoined the caller, "your looks indicate that you're not in your usual health; and it's a good thing that your vacation is near at hand. Let me see! It begins sometime about the middle of next month, I think."

"Yes, about July sixteenth."

"You've arranged for that young Brother Carey, who spent a week or so with you last winter, to fill your pulpit while you're away, have you not?" Henson inquired.

"At present Carey's engaged half his time with a church in Woodford County, and can come here only on the first and third Sundays. I haven't yet found a man who can preach for us on the second and fourth Sundays; but I hope to find one before I leave," answered Philip.

"If you don't succeed in this quest," said the elder, "we can manage without preaching for those remaining Sundays of your absence. So, don't worry about it while you're away. You've decided to go to Colorado, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir. I've never been west of the Mississippi, and I want to see your grand Rocky Mountain scenery."

"You'll enjoy it, I'm sure; but while you're about it, why not go on to California?"

"That wouldn't seem like new ground," returned Philip, "for, from what I've heard about Californian scenery, climate and vegetation, that State must be much like my part of Australia."

"And for that reason, all the more enjoyable to you, I should think," said the older man.

"No," replied Philip, with a sigh; "on the contrary, it would only make me homesick."

"At all events," said Henson, "you'll enjoy Colorado, and I trust the trip will do you great good."

After a short silence, the visitor again spoke: "Brother Bryce, I have come over this morning to have a serious talk with you, and I fear some of the things I have to say will wound you. This is all the more to be deplored because you seem already in low spirits; but the matter about which I wish to speak is one that should not be postponed. Besides, I hope you know that I would not say anything to hurt your feelings, if it could be avoided."

"I believe that, Brother Henson. Furthermore, I never take offense where none is meant. So, speak freely."

"First, then, about your speech at the convention yesterday."

"Ah! what was amiss with that?" asked Philip, flushing sensitively.

"So far as in me lies," replied the elder, "I mean to tell you. But first allow me to say that it was a well-prepared,

scholarly production, and ably delivered. As a writer and a speaker, you are, for so young a man, rarely gifted. You possess one power, too, which few even of our best orators have. Instead of bewildering or overpowering or hypnotizing your hearers, you stir and stimulate their thought. But, my dear brother, do you always stimulate them to think rightly?"

"It is my earnest endeavor to do so," answered the young man, somewhat startled at the question.

"I'm sure of that, Philip," was the hearty reply. "But about that address. I must say that either your idea of salvation is wrong, or else I have misapprehended the whole scheme of redemption. I believe your definition was this, 'Salvation is making the best of the best that is in man.' Am I correct?"

"Yes, sir, those were the words; but, while I believe them to be true, I don't claim them as my own. You remember I said the definition was a quotation."

"Yes, I remember," Henson answered; "but I can't accept that definition. It is, to say the least, misleading."

"In what way?"

"It misses entirely the Scriptural meaning of the thing defined. Salvation, in a Bible sense, is the change wrought in the human heart by divine grace through faith. It means the begetting of a new heart. Isn't that your conception of salvation?"

"Yes—I suppose so—something like that," was the young preacher's halting admission.

"But," continued Henson, "the definition you gave your audience yesterday isn't, as I just said, in accord with that Scriptural meaning of salvation. Hence, your whole line of thought based on that definition was erroneous. In short, if you will pardon such plain speaking, it was no better than some ethical but pagan, or at best human, system of phi-

losophy. Salvation such as that has nothing to do with grace, faith, repentance, the work of the Holy Spirit, or the sacrifice on Calvary; but it means solely the development of the germ of good already in the natural man."

"But, Brother Henson, you surely will not deny that salvation does develop the best that is in the natural man?"

"Assuredly I don't deny that," Mr. Henson answered, "but that development is the effect of salvation—it isn't salvation itself. A gospel based upon such a theory as that which your definition sets forth is a devitalized gospel ignoring Gethsemane and Calvary."

"Oh, no! no! no!" vehemently protested Bryce.

"But if salvation were what you define it," asked Henson, "what necessity would there have been for our Saviour's coming into the world?"

"To embody for us all purity, love and righteousness; to become our perfect teacher, our inspiration, our divine model by which we can fashion our lives unto the likeness of God," answered the preacher.

"He is all that," returned the older man, "and infinitely more—our Redeemer, suffering, dying in our stead."

"Ah!" declared the young man, with a wise shake of his head, "that old substitutionary theory is unethical and contradictory of eternal truth."

"How unethical? How contradictory?" was the shocked inquiry.

"Unethical, Brother Henson," rejoined Philip, gently, but with conviction, "because, for the innocent to be made to suffer for the guilty, violates the basic principle of all equity and justice. Or, as Martineau puts it, 'The transference of guilt from one individual to another standing on the same plane involves a contradiction of the first principle of morals.' Contradictory, because, as Channing says, 'It

shows God, or the Godhead, as making atonement or sacrifice to himself.' This whole theory of sacrificial, atoning, propitiatory salvation is Jewish, and opposed to the Christian religion."

"Not so!" thundered Peter Henson, bringing his clenched fist down upon the table with resounding force. "Christianity is not an opposed or a contrasted religion to Judaism. It is the development, the fulfillment of it. You astound me, young man. I can't believe that you realize what you are saying; or else, you're merely taking this position for argument's sake."

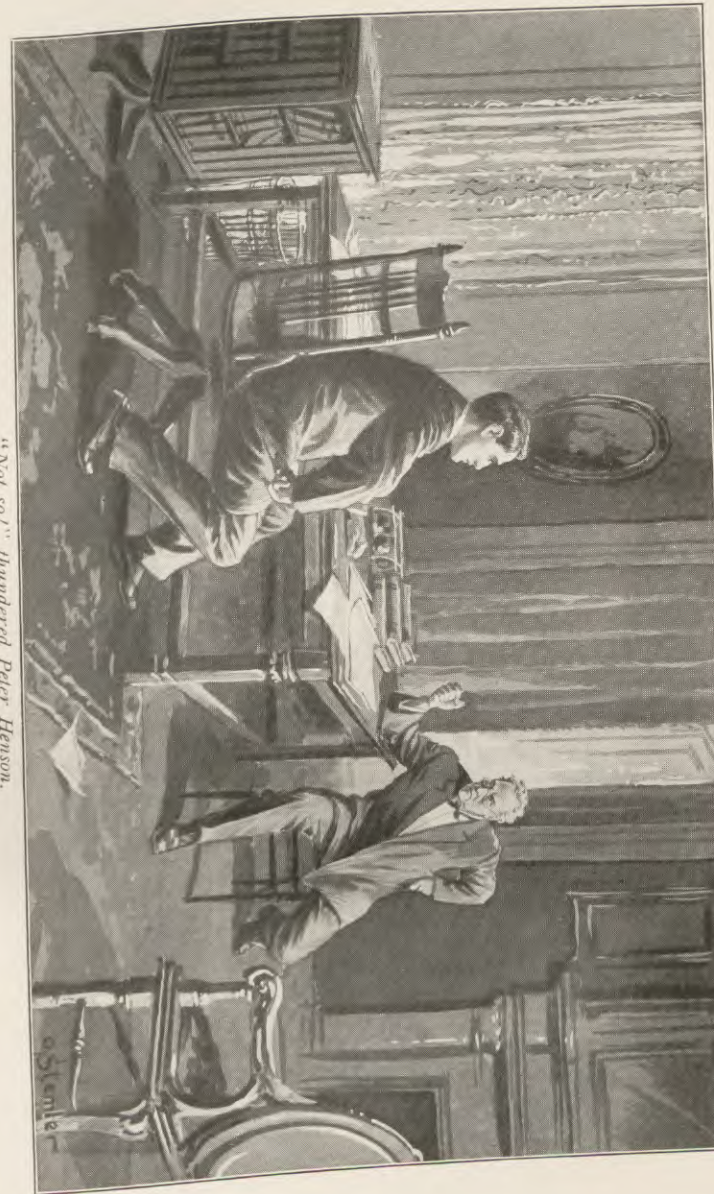
"No, indeed, I am not," protested Philip.

His visitor went on as though he had not spoken: "This principle of vicarious atonement is the central thought of the gospel. It's the pivot on which revolves all New Testament truth. It's the chain of pure gold running through the entire woof of divine revelation. Take it out of the scheme of redemption, and what is left? A Christ whose mission is nothing more than that of a regenerator of society. Ah, my boy, my boy!" he went on as he gazed sadly at his young preacher, "if that's where this vaunted New Theology lands one, its votaries need to get back into leading-strings. So far as any real conception of spiritual truth is concerned, they're too feeble to walk alone."

"But," returned Philip, too intent on his view of the subject to notice this gibe at the New Thought apostles, "the doctrine that Christ's mission on earth was to appease the wrath of Jehovah gives one a terrible and repellant conception of God, and—"

"'Terrible and repellant!'" interrupted Henson. "What is there terrible or repellant in the truth that God is just as well as merciful?"

"But that is it—it doesn't show the justice of God, but the contrary," protested Philip. "All the best of modern



"Not so!" thundered Peter Henson.

theological scholarship now rejects that vicarious atonement theory, Brother Henson. Just hear what Horace Bushnell, Harnack, Dr. Cheyne and Ritschl say on the subject."

The young man turned around in his study-chair so as to face the revolving bookcase at his left, and rapidly selecting several volumes, began searching for the passages wanted.

Henson, who in his excitement had thrust aside his chair, risen, and was now pacing the floor, with a wave of his hand indicating that he cared nothing for the treasures of human wisdom with which the eager young man would have enlightened him, quoted, with an ease and volubility which only long and close reading of the Scriptures could have given, the following passages:

"'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' (a)

"'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' (b)

"'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.' (c)

"'But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.' (d)

"'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith by his blood, to shew his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.' (e)

"'He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' (f)

"'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on

(a) Pet. 3:18; (b) Gal. 3:13; (c) 1 Cor. 15:3; (d) Heb. 2:19; (e) Rom. 3:24, 25; (f) 1 John 2:2.

the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.' (a)

"'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'" (b)

Finally, Philip, seeing that Henson was in no mood to listen to his books, thrust them aside, and said: "Brother Henson, please hear me a moment. If you'll only allow me to explain myself more fully, you'll see that we're not so far apart, after all."

"I shall be glad indeed to find that I've misunderstood you," said the old man, halting at the table, and looking wistfully at his companion. "For I'm more grieved about this than I can say. Go on," he continued, seating himself again. "Let's see if you can set this matter straight."

"First, then," said Bryce, "is there any blasphemy, any infidelity, any tampering with the eternal verities in holding the idea that Jesus' death was the inevitable result of his having lived a life of holy love and righteousness in a sin-cursed world?"

"In a certain sense, no. But what of it?"

"Therefore," continued Philip, answering the admission, but not the question, "being true to his message and mission was what led him to the cross. You believe that, do you not?"

"Certainly I believe it, but that doesn't mean that his death was not in atonement for the sins of the world, or that he is not our Sin-bearer, our atoning Sacrifice. To become that was the chief aim of his earthly mission," answered Henson.

Bryce continued: "He was the great Teacher, divinely sent; but the world, expecting a different kind of leader,

(a) 1 Pet. 2: 24; (b) 1 John 4: 10.

rejected his teachings, persecuted and crucified him. His fate on Calvary was the climax of tragedy. Yet it was the same tragedy, though in a much higher degree, as that which nearly seven hundred years earlier had befallen Isaiah, and that which at another period had Socrates, at another, Paul, and at a still later period, Savonarola or Ridley or Rogers, as central actor or victim. The same spirit actuated alike those who drank the hemlock, endured the rack, suffered the fagots, died on the cross. The defense of the right, the good of the world, divine, self-effacing love was the motive in each instance."

"Then," said Peter Henson, in a voice trembling with intense feeling, "the rack, the fagots, the hemlock mean as much, and appeal as forcibly to you, as the cross does."

"Oh, no, no, no!" was the vehement protest. "Not by any means to the same degree."

Henson, unheeding this, went on: "Wrong! egregiously, blasphemously wrong! Such a view dishonors the cross, dishonors our Redeemer. Isaiah, Socrates, Paul, Savonarola, Ridley, Rogers, and the whole host of martyrs, died in defense of the right, or what they deemed the right; and their sacrifice reaches the highest point of human nobility. But our Saviour's death means all that Isaiah's did, all that Paul's or Savonarola's or Rogers' or Ridley's, and infinitely more."

"Yes," ejaculated Philip with fervor, glad that he could agree with his companion in this, "infinitely more! It was more voluntary; since He, unlike the others, saw the end from the beginning."

"And far more than that, my brother," added Henson. "He died not only in defense of the right, and to show forth his infinite love for fallen humanity, but also as a ransom, a propitiation for our sins, that we through him might be saved. 'He was wounded for *our* transgressions; he was

bruised for *our* iniquity; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him; and with *his* stripes *we* are healed.' Don't you believe that?"

Philip, who, while the older man was thus speaking, had sat with his elbow on the table, his hand shading his face, now, without meeting the eager, questioning gaze bent upon him, mutely shook his head. But presently, raising his troubled eyes to his companion, he said in a wistful, husky voice: "It cuts me to the heart, dear Brother Henson, to wound and shock you thus; but I can not see this subject as you would have me do."

For a moment they sat in unbroken silence. Then Henson exclaimed: "This is far worse than I had feared. To think that you, a preacher of the gospel, Philip Bryce, our own well-beloved and trusted minister, should go so far astray as to repudiate the fundamental principle of Christianity! I am sick at heart over you, Philip, whom I have loved with almost a father's love; and over the souls of this community, that we have blindly entrusted to your teachings."

"So far as in me lies, I shall at once remedy the latter part of your trouble, dear Brother Henson," said Philip, firmly but with deep respect. "The only right thing for me to do is to express to you my sorrow, and to tender my resignation of the work of this church. I shall write my resignation now, to take effect at once."

"Let us not act hastily in this. Wait, Brother Philip. Don't write anything," said Henson, motioning with his hand to arrest the young man, who had already drawn writing materials toward him, and was dipping his pen into the ink.

"Let me think a moment," added Henson.

"Indeed, I think," protested Bryce, "that it would be better for me to resign at once; but, if you so advise, I

shall continue my work here until my vacation begins. Then, when I go away, leave my resignation with you. You can, in the six or seven weeks of my vacation, have time to find another preacher to take my place altogether."

The church officer, after some thought, said: "No, take no action in this matter until you return. Then, much as we all love you, and much as your leaving us is to be regretted for other reasons, you should, I think, resign the care of this church, if you then still hold the same doctrinal views as you have to-day revealed to me. But I can't help thinking (though it may be that my earnest wish is father to the thought) that these alarming ideas, of which even before this morning I have seen some slight evidences now and then in your sermons, are but a passing phase of thought which, when you have more closely and prayerfully investigated, you will relinquish. Wait, then, at least until after you get back from your little outing, before we decide upon what our future course should be."

The preacher finally consented to this advice, and in a short while the elder rose to go. Bryce likewise rose; and the two, with their right hands clasped, stood for a moment looking into each other's faces.

Presently Philip's eyes were suffused, and the tears were coursing down Henson's cheeks as he, laying his left hand on the young man's shoulder, said tenderly: "Philip, thus far in your upright young manhood you have never, I think, grappled with and been overpowered by any great temptation; hence your own strength has been sufficient for you. But when the hour of your extremity does come (as sooner or later it will come, my boy), you, realizing your own impotence, will reach out and up to a power mightier than self. You will then, my dear boy, begin to spell out the meaning of Calvary. You will then find Christ."

After Peter Henson had gone, Philip Bryce, disregard-

ing the clanging peal of the dining-room gong, and telling the negro who a moment later came to summon him to dinner that he did not wish anything to eat, locked his door, and went back to his chair. Here, with his face buried in his arms on the table, he sat in troubled silence, reviewing the past.

Not once during his five years of preparation and one of ministry had he ever seriously been troubled with doubts as to his fitness for the sacred vocation to which he, without premeditation, had impulsively committed himself. But now as memory, spanning the intervening years, brought again before him that summer night scene in the old church at Merdin, and that bedside interview with his mother next morning, he for the first time understood the full significance of William Hammond's admonition to the three young volunteers, and of his own mother's tender, troubled, warning words to her boy. He now began to realize that he had entered the ministry with unready hands and an unprepared

CHAPTER XXV.

EPISTOLARY.

During the summer, voluminous missives from the three oldest Bright children kept their teacher in touch with life at Willow Brook Farm. Other correspondents were no less kind in their efforts to keep her apprised of the happenings in the village social circle.

In July, Ruth Vanarsdale wrote that Tom Slocum and Della Mason were to be married in the fall, and that he had leased Pleasant View, a charming cottage in the outskirts of Ginseng, for the future home of himself and Della. Ruth also stated that Mr. Bryce had gone to Colorado, and that it was understood that he intended to take a tour through New Mexico and other Western States before returning to Kentucky.

The same correspondent wrote that it was currently reported that Diana Henson was betrothed to Shelburn Broadus. "Poor, mistaken, impulsive Diana!" thought Kate as she read this last bit of information. "What happiness can she promise herself, married to that refrigerated piece of egotism, Shelburn Broadus, even if she does not still love Ralph Moreland—as I suspect she does—with every throb of her warm heart?"

The slow weeks of that long summer dragged by without bringing Katharine any word from Philip Bryce. She tried to find consolation in the thought that he was unworthy, else he would not have allowed a trifling misunderstanding to estrange him from her. She called pride to her aid, and there were moments in which she cheated herself into the belief that she had effaced his image from her heart, but at other times she knew that her efforts were

THE MAN FROM AUSTRALIA

vain, and that just as she had loved him in the beginning, she loved him now, and must love him to the end.

At last she had a letter from Diana—at least, the handwriting was Diana's, but there was little of the real Diana in the production. There was much in the letter about Mr. Broadus—his fine talents, scholarly attainments and high-mindedness. There was still more about "honor and esteem" as a better foundation on which to erect an enduring superstructure of married happiness than the romantic rhapsodies of a first love. The studied, formal style in which she announced her engagement was, Kate thought, in painful contrast to the way Diana would have written, had the man she had promised to marry possessed the fealty and devotion of her generous, loving nature. Kate felt that she had lost not only her lover, but her best loved girl friend as well, for Diana, married to Shelburn Broadus, could never be to Kate the same bright, joyous, sympathetic friend she had been in the happy months that were gone.

Late in the summer, Katharine had the following characteristic epistle from John Henson:

"MY DEAR MISS KATHARINE:—I write to prepare you for the reception of the last two copies of the *Jupiter*, which I am sending under separate cover, with various items marked with red ink. Should you without warning alight on the tidings contained in said papers, even your stout nerves could not withstand the shock.

"Item No. 1 was hurled from the *Jupiter* office last Thursday week, and fell upon the unsuspecting citizens of our erstwhile quiet village like a thunderbolt from a sunlit sky. It announces for September 15 a triple wedding—Thomas Slocum and Della Mason; Rev. Charles Abner Maybloom and Pearl Octavia Slocum; Dr. John C. Calhoun Goodman and Nellie Claire Slocum. The part of the above

EPISTOLARY

219

item which refers to the first mentioned couple may not surprise you, as it has long been apparent that the title 'Platonics,' by which Tom and Della designated the little guest they have been entertaining for the last six months, was merely a *nom de plume* for an individual whose real name of four letters begins with an *L* and ends with an *e*. It's the latter two-thirds of the announcement that has made our eyes fairly bulge out of our heads. Pearl unearthed her Maybloom, and Nell her Good-man, while on that Christmas visit to Paducah, and have corresponded with them ever since; but the two swains were never so much as heard of by the rest of our villagers until they dawned upon our horizon, ten days ago.

"The Rev. C. A. M. is a spectacled, bandboxy young theolog of Baptist persuasion, and has charge of a thriving church in southern Kentucky. Nell's treasure-trove is a dentist—handsome, muscular. Looks strong enough to pull a rhinoceros' teeth with ease. He's a genial fellow with a jovial laugh and plenty to say for himself. The two lovers stayed in Ginseng four days, and made love to Nell and Pearl like the C. & O. express train—no stops at way stations; refreshments served on board at all hours. The atmosphere about the Slocum mansion is so heavily charged with love that the very door-bell has a sentimental ring; and the future looks to Tom and Pearl and Nell like a bunch of thornless roses.

"And now, I beg that before you read another line you provide yourself with camphor bottle and smelling-salts, and choose some nice, soft spot to fall on, for faint you undoubtedly will when you read my second item.

"Are you ready? Then, here goes! Ruby Stump is married!! actually, irrevocably married! This event, which, I assure you, has made an old man of me, happened Thursday last. All traffic is suspended, business paralyzed, and

the nerves of the entire community knocked sky west and crooked by this most marvelous of Cupid's capers.

"Sweet are the uses of advertisement,' says Mrs. Partington or some other genius; and Ruby has proved the truth of the saying. It seems that about four months ago a certain Prof. Alonza Caxton advertised for a lady correspondent. Miss Stump answered the advertisement. A brisk exchange of letters followed: result, the blasting of my fondest hopes.

"So far as I can make out, Ruby told no one of this matter until Professor Alonza actually arrived on the scene last Monday. He remained until Thursday afternoon, when he bore away Ginseng's brightest jewel, after a quiet wedding in Mrs. Samuel Lane's parlor.

"Caxton is president of a college in Mansfield, O. He is reputed wealthy—having, I'm told, a fine mansion, considerable bank stock, and five lovely young olive branches resulting from two former matrimonial ventures. He's nuts on ologies and classics and 'furin tongues'; and Ruby asserts that he is at home in ten different languages. (I wonder in which one of the ten he did his courting.) In spite of this remarkable amount of learning, he doesn't appear to suffer from the infliction known as swelled head. On the contrary, he's meek and mild, and will, I think, make Ruby an excellent husband. There will be but one drawback to the future bliss of Mrs. Alonza Caxton No. 3; and that is, that the care of her five newly acquired hostages to fortune will leave her scant time for the cultivation of the poetic muse. But the reading public's loss in the little Caxtons' gain, for Ruby, notwithstanding the vagaries of her erratic literary aspirations, is extremely kind-hearted, and she will make a good stepmother.

"And now, having apprised you of the above startling happenings, I've a still sadder event to prognosticate;

namely, that you are likely to lose your valued assistant teacher. You no doubt recollect Mr. Carey, that good-looking Australian who visited Bryce last winter. Well, he has been here again (as perhaps you already know), preaching for us on the first and third Sundays, while Bryce is off wandering through the 'wild and woolly West.' This Carey seems much taken with my dear cousin Ruth; and, between you and me, she doesn't appear at all averse to his attentions or intentions.

"By the way, speaking of these dangerous young Australians, Bryce hasn't written a line to any one here since he departed on his travels. I mean to write him in a day or two, and ask him what he means by treating us with utter disdain. Perhaps, though, you have been more fortunate than the rest of us, in this respect. I hope so, and also that he gives you good accounts of himself. I like Philip. He's one of the finest fellows I know—in spite of his high-faluting theological notions.

"This has been a hard summer for me, bereft as I am, not only of you and my precious Ruby, but of my Queen of Hearts, Cecelia Miller, who, after all the pains I've taken with her, has the poor taste to prefer a musical course at Boston Conservatory to the devotion of her jo John. However, I've still on hand enough love to stock a matrimonial agency; and, as it is against every tenet of frugality that so much good affection should be wasted, I'll transfer what is left of my battered but still serviceable heart to you, if you will deign to accept the gift. The only bright spot in my horizon just now is the thought that you will soon be in our midst again. Until that glad day, farewell.

"Faithfully yours,
JOHN HENSON."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WEDDING BELLS.

Four of the Willow Brook family were at the station to meet Katharine Marshall when she returned, the last Saturday of August; and soon she and Cissy and Molly in the surrey, and Alec and Bobby in the spring wagon, in charge of the luggage, were homeward bound. Notwithstanding the glad welcome of the children, Kate's heart, as she drove along, was heavy with sadness as she contrasted this drive with her first one over this same road, one year before.

As the cavalcade neared the schoolhouse, Susan and Margaret sprang out from behind the alder bushes by the roadside, clambered into the surrey, and rapturously kissed their beloved Miss Kate. When they drew up at the stile-block, the clamor of Doc and Toby brought out Mrs. Bright, who, tying on the inevitable white apron, hurried down the yard to meet the teacher. The rock walk had been weeded, the front porch newly scoured, and the whole house swept and garnished in honor of Miss Marshall's return. The dogs frisked joyously about her; even Ichabod, the disdainful, permitted her to stroke him, and Brindle came purring and rubbing against the girl, to attest satisfaction over her return.

Kate soon made her way to the kitchen, where Aunt Cassie and Ivory were busy with supper preparations.

"I declar', Miss Kate, de sight ob you is good fuh sore eyes," exclaimed Aunt Cassie, wiping her floury hands upon her apron. "But you looks kindah pale an' pecky, honey," she added solicitously as she shook hands with the girl. "I reckon de city airs doan agree very well wid yo' constibu-

tion; but now you's back heah wid us, we'll soon hab you lookin' fat an' sassy ag'in."

"It's a Gawd's marcy you's heah once more, Miss Kate," said Uncle Charley, bowing and scraping in the doorway, "to take some ob de 'sponsibility ob dis heah fambly offen my ole shouldahs. De chillun hez been dat rampagious all summah dat dah hain't been no peace fuh nobody. I's most worritted intah my grave, tryin' to keep down dem bawdacious youngsters, Alec an' Polly an' Susie. Dey's full o' tricks ez yearlin' colts."

On Monday Kate set to work with renewed vigor, resolving to put aside vain regrets, and to find in school interests a panacea for heartache.

Besides her schoolroom duties she found other matters demanding her attention, as the interest of the whole community was for the present centered in the triple wedding for September the fifteenth. The school was to have a half holiday on the fifteenth, for not only did every man, woman and child within a circumference of four miles of the village purpose to attend the wedding, but Miss Marshall was to play an important part in the function—John Henson and herself, Shelburn Broadus and Diana Henson, Ralph Moreland and Ruth Vanarsdale having been selected as attendants to the prospective brides and bridegrooms.

The only one who did not appear satisfied with this arrangement was Julia Fowler. She was indignant that Sadie Jean, who had delayed her return to boarding-school until after the fifteenth, was not included in the list of bridesmaids. Standing in the churchyard, within hearing of Mrs. Slocum and Mrs. Mason, one Sunday after service, Mrs. Fowler thus spake her mind to Mrs. Foster: "I don't see why there should be all this fuss an' folderol about them gals gittin' married. To my mind, it'd be more fittin' to hev a quiet home weddin', instid of our church bein' used,

seein' as all but one of the intendeds is Baptists. As for Daut not bein' bridesmaid, I told her flat-footed that she shouldn't demean herself by mixin' up in the affair—no, not if Pearl an' Nell Slocum an' Dell Mason went down on bended knee to ask her to. An' the dear knows, Daut's as purty as that brown-skinned Di Henson ever dared be, an' a heap more so than Ruth Vanarsdale or that other stuck-up little schoolmarm. In my young days schoolteachers wuzn't considered fust cut, but now, it seems, they hold their heads as high as anybody."

A day or two after this a joint letter from the prospective brides, inviting Sadie Jean to play the "Wedding March," wrought a change in her mother's views.

"Play for 'em! Of course Daut'll play, or do anything else to pleasure the sweet girls," said the good woman, fairly glowing with benevolence. "And I promise you she'll render up them marches in a style that'll knock the socks offen anything ever hearn in this town. Ruby Stump couldn't hold a candle to Daut when it comes to performin'."

From that time Mrs. Fowler constituted herself mistress of ceremonies and chairwoman of the committee on decorations. Judging by her proceedings during the next few days, one could not help being convinced that she regarded the other bridal arrangements as a mere background, and prospective brides and grooms, attendants and minister as but trifling adjuncts to the scene of which the chief feature was to be the display of Miss Fowler's musical talents.

The wedding was to be on Wednesday afternoon, and early Monday morning Mrs. Fowler began preparations; and there followed such an upheaval of the established order of things in Ginseng Christian Church as made the more conservative members hold up their hands in consternation. Old Sister Clark declared that "she didn't know

whut perfessed Christians wuz a-comin' to, allowin' the meetin'-house to be turned hinderside foremost in that ungodly way." "Hinderside foremost" the building was certainly turned for the great event—at least, as regards the furniture.

"'Twon't never do fur the benches to set as they do now, facin' them front doors; fur, even if Daut wuz to play as fast as a race-horse can trot, she couldn't git in more'n half of Mendonson's 'Bridal March' as the percession comes in, or more'n half of Longrin's 'Weddin' Chorus' as they go out, if the bridal party stood thar at the foot of the pulpit platform," was Madame Fowler's dictum.

Accordingly, she set men to work to build a big platform in the rear end of the building, and to turn the benches around to face it; and, as the floor sloped upward from front to rear, the benches when turned had each to be elevated with a block under the back to make the seat level. "Them that don't like what is done, is free not to like it," declared Mrs. Julia, when these arrangements had been completed.

Some of the church officers regarded this bouleversement as a serious matter, but at the same time they felt it would be a still more serious matter to interfere with Sister Fowler. Deacons Foster and Bright, however, did venture to hint to Mr. Fowler that perhaps his wife was taking rather too much upon herself; but Jim Dick, whatever his subjection to his energetic better half, was not, as he said, "a-goin' to be dictatered to by Jake Foster an' Milt Bright;" and, drawing his five feet five of slim manliness up to its full height, and bringing to bear upon his two brethren the force of his fierce eyebrows and ponderous voice, he intimated pretty plainly that Mrs. Fowler knew what she was about, and had best be allowed full sway.

The platform built, benches turned and propped, Mrs.

Fowler next directed her energies toward decorations. Nearly every dwelling in Ginseng was made to pay tribute in the way of furniture or flowers or bric-a-brac.

Peter Henson, seeing chairs, tables, curtains, rugs and ornaments being taken to the church, gravely remarked that it was a pity Tom Slocum had rented Pleasant View for his future residence; "for," said he, "if they'd only add a kitchen range, a few dishes and a bed to the stage appointments, Tom and Della could go to housekeeping on that platform."

The floor of the platform was covered with rugs; marble-topped tables occupied the extreme right and left; upholstered arm-chairs were grouped around in an artistic manner; and Mrs. Lane's fine leather couch was placed, as Mrs. Fowler expressed it, "diadlin" (diagonally) "across one side to give a toney effect."

It must not be supposed that this stage was intended for the bridal party. On the contrary, that was to arrange itself in a meek and lowly semicircle at the foot of the platform, which was fitted up solely for Miss Fowler and her piano. Jardinieres, embroidered throws, etc., were arranged artistically about; vines, palms and potted plants were placed everywhere on and around the stage, save in the center, where was left a vacant space to afford the audience an uninterrupted vista of Miss Sadie Jean at the piano. As a crowning effect to this decorative achievement, a life-sized portrait of Alexander Campbell was brought from Sister Fowler's parlor, and hung in a prominent position on the stage. "For," she declared, "we want everybody to know that this is a *Christian* church, if this weddin' is mostly a Baptist affair. Whut's more, I hope that pictur of Brother Alexander Campbell will be the fust thing Preacher Eaton" (Reverend Dr. Eaton, who was to perform the marriage ceremony) "will set eyes on when he comes in this house."

No one viewed these innovations with more disfavor than did Miranda Hogg; and, indeed, they came near wrecking the lifelong friendship between her and Julia Fowler. On Wednesday morning a band of workers under Mrs. Fowler's supervision was putting the finishing touches to the decorations, when Miss Hogg entered.

"Up-pon my word! I nevah seen sich carryin's-on!" she ejaculated, as she stood in one of the aisles, scornful disapprobation expressed in every line of her figure.

"Sh—! Sh—!" cautioned some of the decorators. "Mrs. Fowler's behind that screen—she'll hear you."

"Heah me! Whut if she does? Who keers fuh Jule Fowler, I'd like to know?"

Out stepped Mrs. Julia from her screen of palms—eyes blazing, arms akimbo—and faced the indignant spinster. "Them that don't like these doin's, Randy Hogg, kin lump 'em. I'm runnin' this thing."

"'Pears to me like you'd got the devil to help you, then," snorted Miss Hogg. "I nevah in my borned days hear tell o' sich ongodly doin's. It's wussen the money-changers in the temple—a stage right heah in the meetin'-house, an' all them flowers an' fool gimcracks strowed 'round, till the place looks like a cross between a theater an' the floral hall at Durritt Fair. Whut's this chu'ch a-comin' to, anyway—a worldly minded preachah, gallivantin' off to the dear only knows whar, an' everything in the chu'ch at loose ends, and every membah, most, gittin' ez worldly as the preachah?"

"As I said before, I'm runnin' this business, an' I'll stand no meddlin' frum no one. I know whut's whut when it comes to style," said Mrs. Fowler.

"Style, indeed!" sneered Miss Hogg. "I'll tell you one thing—ef them gimcracks an' all thet trash hain't carted off, thet stage tore down, them benches turned 'round, and the whole place cleaned up befoh prayer-meetin' to-night, I'll

nevah set foot in this chu'ch agin—my sakes alive!" she broke off to ejaculate in a tone of horrified amazement, "if thet hain't Alexander Campbell's pictur a-hangin' up thah!! It's a wondah it don't make him raise up in his grave to see a Christian chu'ch, the chu'ch thet he foundered by his zeal and godly labors, dissercrated; an' his own pictur actually hung thah in the midst! The idee uv sich imperdence!"

"Impudence!" exclaimed Mrs. Fowler; "don't you dare call nothin' I do impudence!" advancing upon Miss Hogg, who manfully stood her ground.

A downright hand-to-hand combat now seemed imminent, and the girls who were assisting in the decorations were almost paralyzed.

"Moly Hoses!" faintly ejaculated John Henson with well-simulated fright, "they'll be at each other tooth and nail, directly. Non-combatants to the rear! Let us save the women and children!"

"Oh, please, please do something to stop this disgraceful scene," pleaded Diana, wringing her hands, and looking imploringly, not at her affianced, Shelburn Broadus, who stood in helpless amazement, watching the bellicose dames, but at Ralph Moreland—forgetting that she had not spoken to him for months.

Dr. Moreland came forward, and, laying a gentle hand on the irate Miranda's shoulder, said persuasively: "My dear Miss Miranda, you can speak your mind to Mrs. Fowler later on and in some other place—not here, please. It is too late now to make any changes in the arrangements for the wedding; but I pledge you my word that everything shall be put in good order before next Sunday, if not in time for prayer-meeting to-night. So, like the sensible, kind soul that you are, go quietly home now. Do so to oblige *me*, won't you?" With this he, still politely but firmly holding her arm, conducted her to the door.

Matters soon quieted down, and by noon the decorations were completed, and the workers went home to eat a hasty lunch, and to array themselves for the function at three o'clock.

The entire marriage program was beautifully carried out. Miss Fowler not only played the "Wedding March" in excellent style, but she likewise gave a musical recital of half an hour's length before the arrival of the bridal party.

It was a beautiful wedding. Susan Bright asserted that when she got married, she meant to have one just like it; and the favorite amusement of the schoolchildren for the next month was to enact the wonderful triple wedding.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION.

We fall to rise; are baffled to fight better.—*Browning.*

After that Monday morning interview with Peter Henson, Philip Bryce felt more than ever out of harmony with his surroundings. His work at Ginseng had become an intolerable grind—serving no good purpose, either, he thought wearily, if, as Henson had told him, his whole system of religious teaching was at best but a garbled mixture of sentiment and speculation, having no power to lift the soul in need. He wanted to get away to some remote spot where, with no demands on his time or sympathies, he could break through the mists of doubt and misgiving which were beginning to obscure his mental outlook; and where, apart from every association that reminded him of the girl he loved, he could strive to forget her—or, failing that, where at least there would be no need to mask his wretchedness.

His bodily health, too, was beginning to feel the strain of overwork and sleepless nights. One excessively hot Sunday afternoon in early July he walked two miles into the country to call upon a poor man who was very ill. The walk through the dust and heat tired him; the squalid surroundings of the poor man's home oppressed him, and the close, fever-tainted air of the invalid's room sickened him. On the return walk after his hour's visit, he was caught in a sudden rain-storm. When he reached Elmarch he had barely time to exchange his wet clothes for dry ones before evening church. By the time the service was concluded he was exceedingly nervous and depressed, and felt a severe attack of neuralgic headache coming on.

He and Moreland walked home from church together. Here an urgent summons to hasten to the bedside of a very sick patient awaited the doctor, but before setting forth on this mission he gave Philip a small box of tablets with directions to take one at once, and to repeat the dose in one hour, if necessary. Moreland, as he was hurrying off, told Bryce that this medicine was only for temporary relief, and that he would in the morning write out a prescription which would be of more permanent benefit.

When Philip retired to his room, and was about to take one of the tablets, the thought occurred to him that it might contain morphine. On account of the appetite contracted during his long spell of fever in Australia, six years before, he dared not, even now, tamper with the narcotic. He, therefore, thrust the little box into his vest pocket, resolving to battle through a sleepless night of suffering rather than to resort to the dangerous drug.

Upon being questioned next morning, Moreland acknowledged that the tablets did contain a portion of morphine, but he gave it as his opinion that, considering the length of time that had elapsed since Philip had been addicted to the morphine habit, there would have been no danger in his now resorting to the drug to relieve pain.

Soon after this episode the brotherly affection Bryce had long had for Moreland began to be disturbed by a feeling of mistrust. One day Philip, going into Ralph's room for a book while the latter was not at home, saw on the table a letter directed to Katharine Marshall in the doctor's handwriting. A few afternoons later Bryce was lying in the hammock on the veranda when the negro boy, Sam, came from Ginseng with the mail, which he handed Philip. Among the half-dozen letters handed him was one postmarked Covington, and directed to Ralph Moreland, in Kate's well-known writing.

"So, they correspond," was Bryce's grim thought; "and Moreland, thrown over by Diana Henson, consoles himself with Katharine Marshall. Of course he has a perfect right to do so, if he—no, he hasn't, either; or, at any rate, knowing as he does that I love her, he should have given me some hint as to how matters stood between him and her. Why, this may be the cause of his rupture with Diana, since there's no telling how long this affair with Kate may have been in progress."

Shortly after this, Philip started on his vacation, which had been postponed from the middle of July to the first of August. He had arranged to join two of his former college mates for a fortnight camping expedition. These two young men had already started—the one from South Carolina, the other from Pennsylvania—for the appointed rendezvous, Colorado Springs. When Bryce reached that place he found the two men awaiting him, and the next day the three set forth with their camping outfit for an elevated region about ten miles from the Springs.

Congenial companionship, the free, open-air life and the invigorating mountain environment so pleased the men that the fortnight was extended to over three weeks; and it was with much regret that at the end of that time they broke camp, and bade one another adieu—the others returning to their homes, and Bryce to the Springs to spend a short while there before starting on a two weeks' wandering amid places of interest in New Mexico.

Awaiting him at his hotel in Colorado Springs were two letters postmarked at Ginseng nearly two weeks earlier. One was from Tom Slocum, announcing the three marriages for September fifteenth, and asking Bryce if he could be home by that time, as the prospective brides were desirous that Philip should assist in tying the three nuptial knots. In a postscript Tom wrote, "Of course you are

informed of that Covington marriage next week" (the third week of August) "in which the doctor and Miss Marshall are to officiate."

Greatly disturbed by what he had read in Tom's postscript, he tore open the other letter, which was from John Henson, written in his customary racy style, and containing in substance the same items of information he had written to Kate Marshall. In this letter to Philip, John likewise referred to another engagement, "which," he wrote, "is not at all to my notion, as I had hoped, as I dare say you had, that the dear, deluded girl would have made another choice. But there's no dependence to be placed in girls, is there?" John referred to the engagement of his sister to Shelburn Broadus, but Philip, reading this letter immediately after Tom's startling postscript, naturally concluded that John meant an engagement between Ralph Moreland and Kate Marshall, although even yet he did not believe it to be true. "There must be some mistake," he thought. "Even though Kate never loved me, I can not believe that Ralph, in spite of those letters that I know passed between them earlier in the summer, would treat me thus—live in close intimacy with me from day to day while all this was pending, and give me no intimation of it."

Thus thinking, he mechanically tore off the wrapper of a newspaper that had been handed him with the two letters. It was a copy of the Cincinnati *Enquirer* of August twentieth. Idly wondering who could have sent him the paper, he glanced carelessly through its columns until his attention was riveted and his whole being shocked by an item on the third page, announcing the marriage, August nineteenth, at the First Christian Church of Covington, of Dr. R. D. Moreland, of Filson County, to Miss Catherine Marshall, of Covington.

Soon after reaching his hotel that afternoon, and before going to his room to read his letters, he had arranged to ascend Pike's Peak next day in company of a party of tourists stopping at the same hotel as himself. He arose next morning after a night of sleepless, despairing misery, in no mood for the jaunt. Afterwards, however, he decided to go, hoping thus to escape for a few hours from his great unhappiness. But the long and exciting expedition (under any circumstances a fatiguing one) was to poor, unhappy Philip like a horrible nightmare. He came back to the hotel at nightfall utterly spent and hopeless, and with a blinding attack of neuralgia. He went directly to his room, hoping to be able to sleep. He could not; and by nine o'clock the pain in his head was so intense as for the time to banish consciousness of anything except physical agony, from which he felt that if he could not get relief soon, he should either go mad or die.

Desperate as he was with pain, he would have resorted to any drug to banish the demon which was racking every nerve, piercing his temples with red-hot needles, filling his veins with fire, and even clutching at his very heartstrings. He was about to ring his bell to summon a servant to go for a physician, when he recollected the tablets Moreland had once given him, and which, only a day or so ago, he had found in the vest pocket of the suit he had worn that Sunday night in July. He had not worn the vest since, but he had it with him. It was hanging in the closet of his room here at the hotel. Reassuring himself by recalling what Moreland had said as to there now being no danger of a return of his old, diseased appetite for morphine, and also by the statement that the tablets contained but a small proportion of that narcotic, he took one of them. It had no perceptible effect, and after another half-hour of acute suffering he took two more.

In a short while pain was vanquished; but, instead of causing drowsiness, the drug aroused, stimulated him to an unnatural degree. Bodily suffering, heartache, sorrow, no longer held sway; instead, weird fancies, beautiful, fantastic thoughts, trooped through his brain.

Presently this mood gave way to a more restless one. The quiet of his room grew oppressive, and a desire for excitement dominated him.

Why, he asked himself, was he pacing this dull, stuffy little room, when there was so much to be experienced in this lively Western city? He would go out sightseeing and adventure-hunting. But first there was a hateful task to perform. "What was it?" his bewildered brain questioned. Ah! it was to write to his false sweetheart and his still falser friend, to denounce their perfidy.

He sat down at the table, and drew writing materials toward him; but there were such ringing, clamorous noises in his head that his thoughts were chaotic. He threw down his pen, and clutched his throbbing temples. To whom had he intended writing? he wondered. Ah, yes! to a man called Moreland and a girl called Kate—or wasn't her name Martha? How was it? She had told him her name was Kate, but she was false in this as in everything else, for her real name was Martha—Martha O'Mallory. And this Moreland, who was he? A charlatan, a quack doctor, and a thief, who, while he himself was dawdling here in this room, would escape. Instead of wasting time writing this thief, he should be hunted down, and made to restore the stolen property. Why, he was here—this Moreland—here in this very town, hiding somewhere—he and his bride, the perjured girl he had stolen. "I'll find him!" exclaimed the delirious Philip. "I'll drag him from her clinging arms, and chastise him before her eyes."

His brain throbbed madly. His veins pulsed with fiery

heat. A frenzy of rage possessed him. He was trembling violently. To steady himself he took another tablet. Then, quickly donning outdoor garments, and snatching up his hat, he hastened out through the quiet, dimly lit upper corridors of the building, and descended to the first floor. When he reached the brilliantly lighted office or lobby, where a score or more of casual guests still lingered, talking, reading, smoking, card-playing, the aromatic fumes from the bottles of wine and whisky behind the bar aroused him to a still fiercer desire for stimulants. He was in an insane condition, but the strangers around him, engrossed in their own pursuits, noted nothing unusual in his appearance or bearing. He passed unchallenged through the room to the bar; called for whisky, and took a drink which, had he been in a normal condition, would have overpowered him, but which, in his present delirious state, only acted as an incentive to greater activity.

Hours afterward he found himself lying across his bed. Too weak and depressed to lift his head, he again closed his eyes and lay motionless, until the fog that clouded his brain lifted somewhat, and he had a dim sense of his surroundings. The sunlight streaming into the room through the wide-opened windows; the clang and whirl of electric cars, and the cry of venders calling their wares in the street below; the occasional tinkle of a bell somewhere in the hotel; and the murmur of voices, and the sound of footsteps passing to and fro in the hall outside his door, indicated that the morning was well advanced.

Presently memory resumed her sway, and with a painful recoil he recollected yielding to his old enemy, the appetite for morphine; but when he tried to recall the subsequent events of the night he was still bewildered. A vague, tormenting impression of strange, repulsive scenes again and again troubled him; but the impression was so horrible and

so foreign to his accustomed modes of thought that he tried to put it aside as but the phantom of his own sick fancy.

When overpowered by physical suffering the night before, he had taken those tablets, and had then thrown himself here across the bed, and had slept until now. Hence, he reassured himself, those odious fancies about his having left the hotel, of his going into a gambling-den, and there engaging in a drunken riot, were only a nightmare caused by the powerful drug he had taken.

He looked at his watch. It pointed to ten o'clock. He got up, and, clinging for support to chairs and center-table, he crossed the room to the dressing-table, and gazed with horror at the image the mirror reflected—a face with blood-shot eyes, pallid, dirt-besmirched skin, parched and blackened lips, a discolored, swollen bruise on the left temple and a slight cut just above it and half hidden by the matted hair. He examined his clothing. The coat was creased and torn, and there were blood stains on its cuffs, and another on the bosom of his shirt.

In a passion of horror and self-loathing, he realized that that which he had thought but the disordered imagining of a delirious brain was grim, ghastly reality. He, a minister of the gospel, he whose life until now had been blameless, had fallen so low as this.

He went back to his bed—too horror-stricken to think or act. But after a time he rose and made as careful a toilet as he could in his trembling, sick condition. He had eaten nothing since the noontide luncheon on the mountain-side, the day before; and he now ordered the Chinese servant, who answered his bell, to bring him breakfast. After eating what was served him, he left the hotel for a walk, but before long he felt too ill to continue the exercise, and returned to his room. He again craved stimulants, and the

sight of the box of tablets on the dressing-table aroused within him a raging desire which shook, tortured, mastered him. For the time self-control was gone; all power of resistance, paralyzed; and the devil's own emissary, the old appetite, held him in its clutches.

There followed for Philip Bryce, alone in that Western city, a six days' struggle which shook him like a tempest, shattered his self-confidence, humbled him to the dust; but which in his final victory steadied his will, clarified his spiritual vision, and strengthened his soul forever afterward.

During those six days there were intervals of comparative calm, when sensation seemed deadened and all appetite quenched. Then the merciless grip of a diseased craving would again seize him. The contents of the box were soon exhausted. He then bribed the Chinaman who attended to his room to fetch him opium and whisky.

There were other hours of that terrible week in which his will again asserted itself, and he would lie stretched on his bed, his teeth set, his hands clenched, until he thought he had vanquished the enemy for good and all; but, instead of its being defeated, it had only recoiled that it might return with renewed force.

In the daytime he was better able to cope with temptation. Sometimes he would descend from his room, and going out of the building by a side entrance, in order that he might escape the temptation which the sight of the dazzling array of liquors at the office bar was to him, he would seek the streets and wander about, hoping thus to find distraction from both desire and remorse. In this Western health resort his pallid, weak appearance caused no surprise. To those who saw him feebly promenading the streets he seemed only one of the many sick men who come to this place in search of health. But at night, alone in his room, there would again be the devil's clutch on his quiver-

ing nerves, and the devil's own imps whispering to and tempting him.

In his freer, saner moments he felt that he needed the help of some one to lift him over this terrible crisis, but pride revolted at the thought of calling in a physician, since that would entail a confession of his weakness and degradation. Rather than that, he always concluded, he would struggle on alone.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MOUNT OF VISION.

. . . climb the Mount of Blessing, whence, if thou
 Look higher, then—perchance—thou mayest—beyond
 A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
 And past the range of Night and Shadow—see
 The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day
 Strike on the Mount of Vision.

—Tennyson, "Ancient Sage."

Upon the morning of the seventh day Philip awoke, limp in body, sick of heart, but fully realizing that, if he would recover his manhood, he must get away at once to some spot where it would be impossible for him to procure the drug which was ruining him.

He thought of the camping expedition of the week before, and resolved to return to the spot, and alone. He wanted no comrades, no witnesses of his pitiable condition and his struggles for self-mastery. His resolve, once taken, was promptly executed. It took but a few hours to get together the meager outfit. A surefooted little mountain burro was hired and laden with blankets, provisions, cooking utensils, a change of raiment, his neglected Bible, and a few magazines; and early that afternoon he started, and soon after sunset he had reached his camping-ground.

In the bracing air and the matchless beauty and grandeur of the mountains he spent two weeks with the faithful burro, the birds, and the few wild but harmless animals of the region, as his only companions. Here, where no echo of human help or sympathy could reach him, there came to him the sense of Divine Presence, Divine Strength; and the whole world was transfigured, and he, like all others who

have even faintly and from afar once heard that Voice, and caught a glimpse of that majestic Personality, could now understand the force of Mrs. Browning's beautiful lines:

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
 And every common bush afire with God."

But this period of exaltation did not come at once. It was preceded by one of deepest humiliation. As his physical strength returned, the feverish, half-delirious cravings of a diseased appetite left him, and in their stead came bitter remorse and self-loathing—not only because of his having the week before, when under the stress of great bodily pain and mental anguish, given himself over to the debasing influence of a baneful narcotic; but also because his awakened conscience now showed him that with a heart unconsecrated by faith and deep-seated conviction of duty he had dared to enter the ministry.

In this gloomy interval, alone in the solitude of the mountains, he learned, too, that the speculative vagaries of the "New Theology" and the vaunted learning of those who, led away by the ignis fatuus of so-called "higher Biblical scholarship," deem themselves "wise above what is written," are utterly powerless before the deeper needs of the human heart. Then it was that, as dear old Peter Henson had foretold, Philip began to spell out the meaning of redemptive suffering. Prostrate before that Saviour whose sacrificial love he had until now so poorly comprehended, the young man cried aloud, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief," until here, at the foot of the cross, the faith of his childhood, which he had allowed to become overlaid with foreign growths, reasserted itself, crushing out every ism, every doubt, and accepting only that divine, all-comprehensive assurance, "He died that we might live." Then his awakened soul, looking "past the range of Night and Shadow," saw "the dawn of more than mortal day strike

on the Mount of Vision," and his whole being was suffused with ineffable peace and trust in the infinite, eternal love of God.

As Philip Bryce hour after hour, by the light that was now given him, reverently studied his Bible, he found its seeming contradictions to be gems of agreement, and those parts hitherto regarded by him as discrepancies to be but different aspects of the same essential unity of truth. He saw, too, that Paul's main doctrine—vicarious atonement for sin; James' central thought—the necessity of human effort, work and service; Peter's dominating themes—grace and spiritual sustenance; John's principal teachings—obedience and lovingkindness, instead of being contradictory dogmas, were but variants of the same divine truth; or but different arcs of the one great circle whose center is God himself, and whose circumference is his redemptive plan of salvation.

To Philip Bryce that wooded Colorado height ever afterward seemed a veritable Mount of Blessing, upon which had been fought and won the supreme battle of his life.

On the fifteenth day he returned to the Springs to gather up his belongings, preparatory to setting forth for Kentucky. Among the letters awaiting him at the hotel was one which, with a shock of surprise, he saw was from Ralph Moreland. The sharp pangs of disillusionment, useless longing and hopeless love, which during his mountain vigil had been to an extent dulled by the shock of other experiences, came back to him in full poignancy at sight of that letter. After regarding it a moment in indignant surprise, he opened it. Its contents made his heart leap for joy over the discovery that the friend for whom he had felt a brother's love was still worthy of all trust.

The letter showed that the wedding to which Tom

Slocum had referred, and which the Cincinnati newspaper announced, was that of a Dr. R. D. (Richard Dana) Moreland, a cousin of our R. D. (Ralph Dwight) Moreland, to Miss Catherine Marshall, a relative of the Katharine Marshall whom Philip Bryce still loved.

The newspaper had made a mistake in giving Filson County instead of Kenton County as the home of the bridegroom. Furthermore, Bryce, after reading that communication from the doctor, was confident that the letters which had passed between Ralph and Katharine during the summer had had reference solely to this marriage, in which Ralph as "best man," and Kate as maid of honor, had officiated.

Moreland wrote that he had accompanied Dr. and Mrs. Richard Dana Moreland on their bridal tour through the Eastern States and Canada; and that it was not until after his return from this extended trip that he had found leisure to write his friend.

Bryce returned to Ginseng the last week of September, after an absence of nearly eight weeks. The day after his return he sought an interview with Peter Henson, to whom he made full confession of the evil which had overtaken him in that terrible week in the Colorado hotel, of his bitter shame and remorse, of his struggles for self-mastery, of his spiritual awakening, and of his return to the faith of his childhood. He likewise related the circumstances that had influenced him six years before to rashly pledge himself to the ministry, when neither his mind nor his heart were prepared to enter the sacred vocation. He then tendered his resignation of the work at Ginseng. But Mr. Henson, who had listened with tenderest sympathy to the young man's confession, urged him to remain at his post, and gave it as his firm conviction that the experiences through which Philip had recently passed were just what

had been needed to make him worthy of the work he had undertaken.

Strengthened and cheered by the sympathy and the loving admonitions of this wise counselor, and by his assurance that the church at Ginseng needed his services, Bryce consented to remain, although had he consulted his own wishes he would have sought some other locality where he would not be so constantly reminded of the girl he hopelessly loved.

The reaction which inevitably follows such moments of exaltation as Philip Bryce experienced, when on the mountain-top he had held communion with the Unseen Presence, came to him after he had settled down to his winter's work, and there were many hours in which he felt depressed and saddened; but although the glory of the spiritual did in a measure pass, it left the young man with that enlightenment of understanding, that enlargement of soul, and that quickening of sympathies, which find their best expression in active service for the good of others. His daily prayer was not now, "Lord, what must I do to be saved?" but that nobler petition, "Lord, what wilt thou that I do in order that I may bring other souls to a knowledge of thy boundless love?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

AUNT CASSIE AND "DE RABBIT FOOT."

The quiet monotony of Katharine Marshall's second fall and winter in Ginseng was in marked contrast to the bright variety of her first. She as well as Philip Bryce battled bravely against heartache and vain regrets, and tried to forget the past by concentrating every thought on duty; but she, no less than he, often regretted not having sought some other field of work. Indeed, in one respect her situation was sadder than his. He had the daily companionship and hearty, if unspoken, sympathy of his congenial friend, Ralph Moreland; but with Kate it was as she had predicted when she first heard of Diana Henson's engagement to Shelburn Broadus. Although still loving each other tenderly, the two girls did not seek one another as frequently as formerly, and when they did meet, there was always a feeling of constraint between them.

Philip and Kate, of course, avoided each other whenever it could be done without exciting comment. His calls at Willow Brook were brief, infrequent, and of a strictly professional nature. The cause of this change on the part of their beloved young minister was perfectly understood by kindly Milton Bright and easy-going but astute Nancy Bright; and she, loving Kate and Philip, often wished it in her power to set matters straight between them, but, like the true gentlewoman she was, she said or did nothing to force the girl's confidence.

Cissy Bright was as reticent as her parents, but the younger children often bewailed that "Brother Bryce" did not come to see them as he once did.

"Polly tole Mamie Bates that you an' Buvvah Bwyce

was goin' to get married, some day, Miss Kate," said little Puggie one day; "but he don't nevvah come to see us or take us a-widen' like he used to; an' Susie she says she's goin' to marry him herse'f when she gets big. She asked him, one day last summah, an' he promised to wait for her till she is old 'nough to git married."

In December the five youngest members of the household at Willow Brook were down with the measles, and Kate Marshall at the same time was confined to her bed with a severe attack of tonsilitis. Mrs. Bright's and Cissy's time and attention were demanded by the downstairs patients; and the care of Katharine devolved for the most part upon Aunt Cassie, who during the day spent as much time as she could spare from her culinary duties with the sick girl, and slept at night on a pallet in Kate's room. Aunt Cassie, besides being a gentle, careful nurse, was possessed of a fund of anecdote and quaint superstition which furnished her patient with amusement.

She held the medical profession in no great esteem, and though she liked Ralph Moreland, she thought little of him as a physician. "I tell you whut, honey," she said to Kate one morning as she was giving the girl her medicine, "you doan 'pear to git bettah fast 'nough to suit my notions. Yo' froat's ez raid an' swelled ez it wuz a week ago. I reckon Doctah Moahlan's ez good at docturin' ez they mek 'em now-days, but I doan pin my faith to none o' dem pur-feshinal fo'ks. De ole-time rem'dies is bettah dan all dese heah froat washes an' cupsules an' bottle med'cines; an', ef you hain't bettah soon, I'se gwintah try my cure fuh froat complaints."

"What is your cure, Aunt Cassie?"

"De grease ob de polecat, honey. It'll beduce dat swellin' an' cl'ar up yo' windpipes."

"But a polecat, Aunt Cassie!" protested the girl in horrified tones.

"Well, he air a jubus crittah to tackle, dat's a fac', but his grease beats all de doctah's stuff in creation. You ketch a polecat, an' roast him, ha'r an' hide, an' when de fat begins to sizzle out, you git some raid flannel—a piece ob a ole flannel petticoat is de very thing—an' you soaks it in de polecat grease, an' bind it 'roun' yo' froat. Ef dat doan cure you, dah's only one thing whut kin."

"What's that?" asked Kate, anxious to turn the old darkey's attention away from the polecat question.

"De rabbit foot, chile," answered Aunt Cassie, standing at the foot of the bed, her hands on her hips, as she gravely inspected her patient. "Dat'll chawm 'way any froat trouble in de world. I usetah suffah wid dem nasty brown creeters" (bronchitis) "in my froat, an' sometimes I would git so stopped up I could hardly draw brea'f an' would wheeze an' rattle wossen a sawmill. Ole Doctah Clark he dose an' he dose me, an' tinkers at my froat an' chist; but I nebbah got no bettah tell I got dat rabbit foot. Jake Simmons (he's daid now) he wuz a cunjur—not de bad kind, honey, but de sort whut goes 'roun' like dat S'mar'tin' man in de Bible—he comes ovah one day when I wuz settin' propped up in bed, wheezin' turble, an' he said, 'Sistah Withers, I fotch you somethin' whut'll knock dem brown creeters outen yo' wind-pipes quicker'n you kin say Jack Robinson. It's de lef' hine foot ob a buck rabbit. I kotch him in de graveyard at twelve o'clock Sat'dy night. You jes' grease yo' froat an' chist an' de bottoms ob yo' feet, den bine dis heah rabbit foot 'roun' yo' naik, shet yo' eyes, an' go to bed backuds, an' you shorely will git well.' I did jes' ez he say fuh two, three nights, an' ebry one dem brown creeters done lef' my froat, an' I breave lak a new-bawn infunt. I wore dat rabbit foot 'roun' my naik a long time, an' nebbah had no

trouble wid my froat nor nary tech o' rheumatiz, nuthah; but de string got ole, an' I drapped that rabbit foot one day when I wuz in de yard, hangin' out clothes; an' I reckon de dawgs mustah eat him, fuh I nebbah find him. But if dat bawdacious niggah, Charles Withers, wuz at hisse'f, he could ketch another rabbit fuh us. Gawd he'p de pore creeter! I doan know whut's gwintah come o' him."

"Is Uncle Charley sick?"

"La, honey, he hain't whut you might call sick, but his wits been a wool-gethrin' more'n a week—he's got one ob his spails on him—de wust he's had since dat time two, three years ago when he wuz took suddint lak on his way home frum de post-office. He fell an' cut his haid dreadful, an' he lost de mail-sack an' all de lettahs. He bled pow'ful frum dat cut, an' I reckon most ob de bad blood wuz let outen his haid, bekase he didn't hab nary spail fuh a long time. But now he's got 'em ag'in, an' de moon's full, too, an' dat aggavates his malurdy. Whut you reckon he done yistiddy? I seed him out at de woodpile, tryin' to dig de frozen groun'. I ax him whut he wuz doin' wid dat spade; he look kindah sheepish lak, an' say he's a-diggin' fishin'-worms, bekase he 'lows to go fishin' next day, ef Boss kin spar' him outen de harvus-fiel'. Did you evah heah tell o' sich crazy doin's—thinkin' it harvus-time, when it's cold 'nough to freeze de buttons offen yo' shoes; an' a-diggin' fuh fishin'-worms, when de groun's froze hard ez a brickbat? Shore's you're bawn, dat blue-gummed witch niggah, Lishe Handy, hez done cunjur him, fuh he act jes' lak de man in de Good Book whut wuz pressed by de debble."

"But, Aunt Cassie, Mr. Bright says Uncle Charley's spells are due to a kick on the head from a mule."

"Go 'long, Miss Kate! Dat's only white folks reas'nin'. Charles done got ovah dat mule-kick long 'go. I tells you

he's cunjured. He'd been well ez common fuh a long time, an' spry ez a ant, tell day befoh yistiddy mawnin', when he went to de bawn to feed; an' when he come back he wuz a-reelin' an' tremblin' an' talkin' to hisse'f; so I's sartin a hoodoo chawm had been laid fuh him in dat bawn loft. Whut's more, Lishe Handy laid it, kaze I seen him airly dat mawnin' slinkin' 'roun' behind de bawn, with a big sack ovah his shouldah, with somethin' heavy in one end. Dat wuz somethin' fuh to cunjure Charles."

"Perhaps it was a jug of whisky in that sack, and Lishe sold it to Uncle Charley," ventured Katharine.

"Whisky? Good land! Whut put sich notions in yo' haid, Miss Kate? Don't you know Charles Withers is a good tippler, an' b'longs to de Blue Ribbon Band? He wouldn't tech a drap o' whisky if 'twuz fuh to save his life. He's a pore, 'flicted crittah, but he hain't no drunkud, I kin tell you. Why, I's hearn him say of'en an' of'en dat he hates de stuff wossen pizen, an' dat a drap o' liquid would kill him. 'Sides, he gibs me his money to keep. He hain't got nary a cent to spend fuh whisky. Lishe Handy do sell de stuff, dey say, an' he gits it ovah to Durrutt, but Charles Withers hain't one o' his customers, dat's sartin."

"But Mr. Bright gave him an extra fifty cents, you told me, last Saturday. Perhaps he might have spent that for whisky," again ventured the sick girl, saying this merely for the sake of drawing the old negro out, but not intending to hurt her wifely feelings.

"He nevah spent dat fuh no whisky, I kin tell you. He drapped it outen his britches pocket, out in de stable lot, de very day befoh he had dat spail in his head. He come straight an' tole me 'bout it, an' I knowed it wuz true, fuh I seen de very hole in his pocket he drapped it frum, an' I went an' hepped him look fuh de money. We couldn't find it, so I 'lows it done rolled undah de stable. No, ma'am!

Charles air a pore, onfortunit niggah, but he hain't no drunkud; an' I didn't think you, Miss Kate, would 'cuse him o' sich doin's," and, so saying, the old negress picked up her tray of dishes and departed from the room in high dudgeon.

When Dr. Moreland called to see Kate and his downstairs patients, that afternoon, Aunt Cassie was still in a huff, and very crusty and contradictory. When she had left the room for awhile, Kate told Ralph and Mrs. Bright, who had come upstairs with the doctor, what had displeased Cassie. They laughed heartily, and Moreland said he was convinced that Uncle Charley did have a jug hidden in the stable loft, and that his crazy spell would last just as long as the whisky did.

That night Ralph, in order to bring a smile to Philip's unusually somber face, laughingly related the incident of the "hoodoo chawm." He likewise spoke of the old negro man's accident of a year or two before when he had lost the mail-sack. "The old fellow," he added, "is, or has been, subject to slight epileptic fits now and then, and, moreover, he is getting very old and childish and forgetful, but I believe his 'spails,' as his wife calls them, are more frequently due to whisky than to epilepsy or senility. At any rate, he isn't to be trusted; and, if I were Bright, I wouldn't keep him on the place."

The doctor resumed his newspaper, and Bryce took up his book again, but he did not read. He recalled his having given that note to Uncle Charley to hand Kate, and he now for the first time doubted as to its having reached her; but then he thought of that first note, the one he had sent her through the mail. He also thought of how she had returned his books without a line or a message of any sort, and he was still puzzled.

CHAPTER XXX.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

"Miss Kate," said Mrs. Bright one afternoon in January, "have you heard the news? Shelburn Broadus is off to Chicago—he left this morning, bag and baggage; and he doesn't mean to return, I reckon; for the *Jupiter* office has the sign 'To Rent' posted over the door, and the printing apparatus and office fixtures are advertised for sale."

"Gone to Chicago!" exclaimed Kate. "What can be the reason for this sudden move?"

"Diana Henson's the reason, I guess," answered Mrs. Bright. "I'd bet anything she's thrown him over; and, between you and me, I hope she has. Mr. Broadus is a very nice man, so far as I know; but he and Di aren't at all suited to each other, and whatever possessed her to promise to marry him, in the first place, passes me. Anybody with eyes in her head could see she didn't care three straws about him."

Katharine spent the night with Diana, soon after this, and learned all about the matter.

"It's easy for people to criticize and call me a flirt," said Diana, when the two girls had retired to their room, "but other people weren't engaged to Shelburn Broadus for seven months, hence they can't understand what I endured. I was in a reckless, discontented mood, or I should never have accepted him."

"Of course you were, and unhappy, too—as you deserved to be for treating Dr. Moreland as you had done," boldly asserted Kate.

"Oh, never mind that now. It's done and can't be helped, and I want to forget. I was, as I said, reckless and unha—discontented. Moreover, I was touched by what

I thought Mr. Broadus' deep love; but before we had been engaged a month I found I had been mistaken about that. He was proud of what he was pleased to consider my good looks; and I suppose he thought I would be a credit to his taste, and that the marriage would be a prudent match for him, from a worldly point of view; but, as for love, he hasn't learned the alphabet, nor ever will. He's a born old maid with a mind encased in prudery, primness and prejudice."

"Aren't you a little bit unjust?" asked Katharine, slyly—not that she did not acquiesce in Diana's reading of the editor's character, but that she wanted to draw Diana on to speak her full mind. "Mr. Broadus is well read and cultured, and he has a nice sense of humor, too, if only he'd give it its head, instead of swaddling it in conventionalities, and keeping it in the leading-strings of proprieties; but your influence could probably have cured him of that."

"If I'm unjust," answered Diana, petulantly, "you're insincere. Of course it's nice of you to always take up for the absent, but you don't really believe that rubbish about Shelburn Broadus' culture, any more than I do. I admit that his brain is a perfect thesaurus of facts and generalities, but he has no more originality or independence of thought than a flea; so how can you call him cultured? Being engaged to him was like being tied to a bundle of statistics or associated with a walking bureau of unprofitable information."

"What did your father and mother say to your engagement?" Kate presently inquired.

"Mother cried a good deal, and looked very mournful for a few days, but after that she seemed to get over her disappointment—you know what a placid, easy-going old dear she is. But, poor Dad! he took it as hard as if I had announced an intention to enter a convent. He and I have

always been such chums, and it made me perfectly wretched to know that he disapproved of me. He told me I was a willful, capricious girl, and that he'd lost confidence in me. Then he used to look at me sometimes with such a look of disappointment and wistfulness; and, do you know, he never made a pun nor told a single joke for weeks; so he must have been hard hit. But John was the worst of all. At first he wanted to go straight off to Mr. Broadus and tell him I had acted hastily, that I had changed my mind, and wanted to be free. When I wouldn't allow him to do that, he was absolutely outrageous. He said I was an unfeeling wretch, that I had treated Ralph Moreland shamefully, that I was bent on wrecking my own life and breaking father's heart. He ended his harangue by declaring that he was done with me, and that I might go to ruin my own way, for all of him. Just think of such a speech from John, the sunniest natured, most affectionate brother that ever was! It was the only time in his life that he ever spoke rudely to me, and it nearly killed me. After about a month of this uncomfortable state of affairs, John found me alone in the library one evening, crying. He sat down beside me, put his arm around me, and we had a nice, comfy little weep together. He told me he had been too harsh with me, and asked pardon for every hateful word he had said. He must have spoken to Dad, too, for he (Dad, I mean) was much less frosty after that, and the next time Mr. Broadus came they were all quite cordial to him. I think mother really grew to like him. Dad tried to like him, but he never quite succeeded, and every now and then he would let escape some disparaging comment. Oh, it was a trying, weary time, I do assure you. I wanted sympathy, and I longed to talk over everything with you, but I felt that you disapproved of me; and so I kept aloof from you as much as possible."

"Yes, you would have had scant sympathy from me. I wanted to give you a good shaking," bluntly acknowledged the other girl. "But tell me," she added, "how you at last summoned up resolution to break with Mr. Broadus?"

"As I said, I soon found he didn't really love me. At first he was all tenderness and admiration, but he gradually became critical and faultfinding. Nothing I said or did or *wore* seemed to please him. Yes, he actually took to criticizing my clothes, and to hinting about poor taste."

"What? How dared he!" was Kate's indignant ejaculation.

"And," continued Diana, "he would preach about extravagance. He was a regular miser, I soon discovered. He was never willing to spend money taking me places, and the only presents he ever made me were a lot of the dullest, driest books; and to make sure that I read them, he'd ask questions about their contents. My answers never seemed to please him, either, and he'd intimate that my mind was frivolous and my education sadly superficial."

"You poor darling!" was Kate's fervid ejaculation. "No wonder you couldn't stand him! As a professor in a feeble-minded institute, his services would be invaluable; but as a lover—insufferable!"

Diana, greatly comforted by her friend's sympathy, went on: "He'd talk about 'intellectual standards' and 'cultah' and such stuff, until I longed to throw something heavy at his head."

"It's a wonder you didn't; I should, I'm certain."

"Oh, no, you wouldn't; you're too dainty and dignified for that," rejoined Diana; "but, as for me, I don't see how I restrained myself. Well, after a time he ceased trying to cultivate my mind by means of books (I suppose he concluded it was a hopeless task), and then he began a system of instilling knowledge better adapted to my poor,

untrained faculties—I mean the conversational method. No matter what subject we talked upon, he'd manage to give the conversation an improving turn, by insinuating tidbits of cut and dried wisdom, which he kept done up in neat little packages ready for any emergency; and these he was continually offering me, as though they were chocolate drops or caramels; until I felt that I was getting to be a compendium of statistical information, myself. Of course I was wild to get rid of him; but whenever I'd hint that we weren't suited to each other, he'd become alarmed, and declare I suited him exactly, that he loved me devotedly, and all that kind of palaver. He'd be real nice and considerate for awhile, and I'd think I was really beginning to like him; but just as I was getting a little reconciled to the engagement, he'd drop his loverlike manner, and become as opinionated and faultfinding as ever. It was 'Rasselas' that finally brought the crisis."

"'Rasselas'?" was Kate's inquiry. "Fancy any one discussing 'Rasselas' in this day and time! Why, the subject is prehistoric."

Diana continued: "We were, as usual, discussing books, and he said 'Rasselas' was one of the finest pieces of literature he had ever read. I always detested the book—never could see anything find about it. Could you?"

"Except, perhaps, the opening passage, and that has been greatly overrated, I think," was the reply.

"At any rate," said Diana, "when I expressed my opinion, he was horrified. He told me I had no literary discernment and that my mind was in a state of utter confusion. I told him that well might be, for to have to listen to him from day to day was enough to reduce any mind to chaos; but that I had brains enough left to see that this state of affairs was getting unendurable. I offered him his ring. He wouldn't take it. Instead, he began preaching about 'honor'

and the 'sacredness of one's plighted word,' and so on. By this time I was reckless of consequences, and I said something which so shocked him that he snatched his hat and left without even saying 'Good evening.' Next morning I sent his ring and letters and books with a note saying my decision was irrevocable, and that I desired never to see him again. He sought an interview with Dad at the mill. I don't know exactly what passed between them, but, a few days after, he left for Chicago. When Dad came home from that interview, he just opened wide his arms, and I rushed into them, and he kissed me for the first time in months, and said: 'Thank Heaven! I have my precious girl back again! And as for that refrigerated bundle of egotism, Shelburn Broadus, he shall never darken my doors again!'"

"Di, what was that speech you made that caused Mr. Broadus to hustle off without bidding you good evening?" Kate asked presently.

"Kate, it was something horrible—so unladylike. I'd rather not tell."

"Come, out with it, Miss! I shan't let you off."

"I told him he had the wrong name—that he should have been called 'Shelburn Narrow-gauge;' for that a more narrow-minded bigot never lived."

"As for that," replied the other, "his name suits him to a T—the word 'Broadus,' being interpreted, means, 'Ye gods, make us broad!' But was that all you said to him?"

"No," was the reluctant admission, "it wasn't. I told him, too, that it would be a crime for him to marry me; as he was so wedded to his own opinions that it would be nothing less than bigamy. Wasn't that an outrageous speech for a young lady to make?"

"Good for you, my dear!" was the reply. "I should have said it, too, in your place—only I never think of sharp

speeches until it's too late to make them. He richly deserved all you gave him. And, oh, I'm so happy that I have my dear, naughty old Di back again. So, let's go to sleep. The clock struck one some time ago."

After lying still a few moments, Diana said, "Kate, have you noticed the change in Mr. Bryce's preaching, since he came back?"

"Why, yes. His views appear to have gone through some process of readjustment," was the nonchalant answer.

"Don't you like the change?" asked Diana.

"Of course. You know I never believed in any of those 'New Cult' ideas on religious subjects. But why discuss the matter now? We'd much better get to sleep," answered Kate, uneasily.

Instead of following this suggestion, the other girl waited a moment and then asked, "Katharine, what's wrong between you and Mr. Bryce?"

This question was parried by another, "What in the world makes you imagine anything of the sort?"

"Imagine, indeed!" was the impatient retort. "I know there is. So please tell me all about it."

With a short laugh and a tone implying that the speaker meant to ignore the request, came the answer, "My experiences, if I have any, are like some stories, the better for not being told."

But Miss Henson, who had no intention of letting her bedmate off in this way, persisted until Kate related all that had transpired at her last interview with Philip.

"He did act absurdly," acknowledged Diana, "and so did you, for that matter; but his sensitiveness and embarrassment were only a proof that he loved you. However, after he'd had time to think, he surely wasn't so foolish as to let a laugh estrange you from him. What happened after that? He wrote you, didn't he?"

"From that day to this I haven't had a line from him; nor have we exchanged a word alone together," was the emphatic reply.

"I can't understand it, but I'm sure there's a big mistake somewhere," said Diana. "I was over at Aunt Sarah's soon after that. Let me see! It was the second Tuesday in May. I remember it distinctly. It was when Dr. Moreland was attending the Medical Congress in Louisville, so I felt free to go to Elmarch; and it was on Tuesday, the day after he had gone. That was just a week after the interview between you and Mr. Bryce, wasn't it?"

Kate had good reason to remember that date, and her answer was prompt, "Yes, the last time he called on me was Tuesday evening, May fourth."

Whereupon Diana told of the incident of Uncle Charley's bringing back Philip's books, and of how disconcerted Philip was when he found the negro had brought no message. "Imagine, if you can," she continued, "how I felt when Sir Philip, after having asked if he might drive me home, sprang into his buggy, and drove off in the opposite direction without even deigning me a look. When he finally came to himself sufficiently to remember my existence, he hurried back, and was profuse, even abject, in his apologies. On the drive home he talked rapidly and laughed a great deal, but his laugh had a bitter twang, and as for his conversation, I don't believe he even was conscious what he was talking about. But I forgave him everything, for I could see that he was troubled about something, and I shrewdly suspected you to be that something. So now, explain this matter, if you can."

"But I can't," answered Katharine. "You think he wrote me, but if he did, I never had the letter. I thought, just as you do, that however much he might have felt hurt that night when I laughed, he was too sensible to let so silly

a' cause long disturb him. So I expected him to come back soon. In fact, I looked for him every night until a whole week had passed, and then, when he still gave no sign, I grew indignant, and returned his books without a word."

"I'm as sure as that I'm lying here, that he did write, and that he loved you with all his heart," Diana declared. "And now, my dear girl, what is the best thing to be done to set this matter straight?"

"There's nothing to be done. My lips are closed, of course," said Miss Marshall.

"But mine are not," answered her friend, "and I'm not going to let you two ruin your lives for want of a word from me. I mean to have a talk with that young man before I'm twenty-four hours older."

"You shall do no such thing!"

"Oh, I'll be careful and diplomatic. I won't say or hint a syllable to compromise you, but—"

"Indeed, indeed, you shall say nothing—nothing whatever," reiterated Kate, emphatically. "If he's so foolish as to let things go on without himself trying to clear up the misunderstanding, why—why, he isn't worth troubling about. Besides, he might have been only having a little flirtation with me, in the first place. For all we know to the contrary, he may be engaged to some girl in Australia."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Diana. "He was a mere boy when he left Australia."

"But," weakly put in Kate, "he might, since coming to America, have become betrothed to some Australian girl—by corresponding with her, you know."

"What!" ejaculated Philip's defender, "Mr. Bryce engaged to another girl, when at the same time he was telling you by every glance of his eyes and every tone of his voice that he loved you! He isn't that kind of a man."

Katharine, more for the pleasure of hearing her friend

defend Philip than because she believed what she herself was saying, said, with well-assumed indifference: "Preachers are great flirts, I've been told, and think nothing of having three or four love affairs on hand at the same time. So, one never knows what they're up to."

"One does know," was the indignant rejoinder; "at least, one does know, if the man is such a one as Philip Bryce. He's far from being one of that abominable species, the preacher flirt. You deserve a good pinching for that speech, my lady; and I'd give you your deserts, too, if I weren't perfectly sure that you don't believe a word of what you're saying. I'm confident (and what's more, I believe you are) that Philip Bryce loves you still. Oh, I could so easily make it all right between you, if you'd only let me, you stubborn, proud girl."

However, Diana finally yielded a reluctant promise that she would not interfere. Presently Kate, to change the current of her friend's thoughts, asked, "Di, why did you break your engagement to Ralph Moreland?"

"Because I was a simpleton—a willful, conceited simpleton," Diana answered petulantly, flouncing over on her side, and giving the bed-clothes an impatient tug.

"You may have been all that," Katharine laughingly answered, "but that's no reason why you should now snatch all the cover, and leave me only a little corner of the sheet to keep me from freezing, nor why you should hump up your back at me in this way. Just turn over again, and tell me all about it, like a good girl."

"We quarreled first about my going to Townsends' party with Harry Sylvester," was the grudging reply.

"Yes, I guessed as much. But why should he quarrel with you about that, if Harry asked for your company before Dr. Moreland had done so?"

"I did treat Ra—Dr. Moreland—shabbily. I half led

him to think I was going with him, instead of telling him straight out and at once that I had made a previous engagement for the evening with Harry; but I thought I could make it up with Dr. Moreland as soon as I saw him. I meant to be so sweet and gracious that he'd forget my behavior in regard to Harry. But when we got to that ill-fated Townsend ball, everything seemed to work contrariwise. As soon as Dr. Moreland came he sought me out, and told me that it was no place for me, and urged me to leave at once. His tone wasn't by any means gentle or persuasive, but peremptory and dictatorial; and each word he said made me the more determined to have my own way. He left me in a huff, and after that he wouldn't come near me the whole evening. Instead, he stood mooning and glooming around, and glaring at me and my partners as though he thirsted for our blood. His conduct so enraged me that I did all in my power to punish him. The more he scowled, the harder I flirted with Harry Sylvester and others."

"But surely, Di, he had some excuse for his surly behavior."

"Haven't I admitted that he had? But if he felt that way, he should have left the house, or else have carried himself coolly before other people, instead of making himself conspicuous by his surliness. So, when he came to see me next morning, I fully expected him to be ashamed of himself; and after he had expressed penitence, I was to ask pardon for my little peccadilloes, too. I had it all beautifully mapped out—what he was to say, and what I was to say, and how we were then to kiss and make up. But he began by being hateful. He sneered and called me a vain, heartless coquette, and all that—you know the style, just like a trashy novel. Then I got mad, too, and that ended the interview. From that day to this he hasn't spoken to me. He won't even bow; and I am so miserable! But

there! The chickens are crowing for day, and we won't get a wink of sleep, if we talk any longer. Besides, all the talking in the world won't mend matters or bring back the dear, happy days that are gone."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE CLOUDS DISPERSE.

"You girls don't look as though you slept very well last night," was Mrs. Henson's comment as Diana and Katharine, heavy-eyed and pale, made their tardy appearance at the breakfast table the morning after their all-night conference.

"Of course they didn't get a wink," said John before either girl could speak; "and what's more, they wouldn't let me sleep, either. There's a popular superstition that pretty young ladies don't snore. I never believed it myself, and last night when I kept hearing a low, continuous, rumbling sound from the direction of Diana's room, I concluded she and Miss Marshall were engaged in an energetic snoring bout."

"Never mind what he says, Miss Katharine," said Henson senior, fearing that their guest might feel hurt at his son's blunt teasing. "It was only the echo of his own snores he heard."

Henson junior, taking no notice of his father's insinuation, proceeded: "I sat up in bed to listen, and presently I thought I could discern from the quality of the sound which was Miss Kate's and which Di's snore. There was a pianissimo, legato movement. 'That's Miss Marshall,' I thought; and then a deeper, staccato, forte strain. 'That's Miss Henson,' I concluded. You had both eaten more broiled ham for supper than was good for you, I thought; and after supper you had toiled away on that hideous old duet about 'Dreams;' so I concluded you were continuing your practice in your sleep, and that the 'Dreams' had turned into a nightmare."

"But, Mr. John, how could that be, if, as you asserted.

a moment ago, we didn't sleep a wink?" was Kate's very reasonable query.

"Just wait one moment, Miss Katharine, and you'll see," said John. "I stood the uproar as long as I could, but when it got on my nerves to such an extent that I found my reason going, I—"

"Your *what* going?" inquired Diana, saucily and insinuatingly.

"My dear little girl," replied John, patronizingly, "you really should stop trying to be satirical. It isn't your style, and the effort is undermining your constitution." Then, resuming the thread of his interrupted narrative, he continued: "As I was saying, I got up, intending to stop the racket. I grabbed my shoes, went into the hall, and was about to hurl them against your door, when I found that, instead of any snoring performance, you two lassies were actually talking all the time. To think of any one with a grain of gumption squandering the hours that belong to balmy slumber in foolish tittle-tattle!"

"Daughter, you and Kate must try to take a nice nap some time to-day, or else you'll both have headache, I'm afraid," was Mrs. Henson's matter-of-fact advice.

"If that's the way you girls are going to carry on every time you spend the night together, kindly say so right now; so that next time I can carry my bed down cellar or out to the stable loft," said John.

One morning about a month later the quiet of Miss Marshall's schoolroom during writing-hour was interrupted by a peremptory knock on the front door. When she opened the door there stood Ralph Moreland, looking as radiant as if he had just stepped out of heaven. "I won't detain you a moment, Miss Katharine," he said. "I just stopped by to hand you this note, and to tell you that Gin-

seng Male and Female Academy is to have a holiday four weeks from next Thursday, and that you are expected to assist at a little ceremony at Rose Lawn, at two o'clock that day. Good morning!" and he hurried off.

The note was from Diana—the craziest scrawl in which congratulations and hopes and happiness were so confusedly blended, and the pronouns so hopelessly mixed, that a stranger reading it would have been puzzled to know whether the writer was congratulating Katharine or asking Katharine to congratulate the writer. The only clear thing about the missive, except the joyousness which danced and sparkled all over the page, was that "Darling Kate" was to come to Rose Lawn that night, and hear all about something or other. Of course "Darling Kate" went.

After Dr. Moreland, who spent the evening at Rose Lawn, had gone, Diana said: "Now, Jack, I give you fair warning that Kate and I intend to talk all night. So, if you think best, you can 'take up your bed and walk' down to the coal cellar or out to the stable loft."

"If you mean to spend the night in confabbing, why go to roost at all? Why not stay right here by this good fire, and talk, so that I can have the benefit of your conversation?" retorted young Henson.

"Few indeed would be the words that Kate or I could get in even edgeways, if you were in the room," blithely commented his sister.

"Furthermore," said Kate, "we don't intend to let you on to all our little confidences, Mr. John. Do we, Diana?"

"Don't you?" retorted John. "We'll see about that. I mean to tote my little bed into the hall, and to lay me down just outside your chamber door. I've awfully sharp ears, and—"

"Don't mind this rascal, girls," jocularly spake Peter Henson, giving his son a slap on the back. "I'll see that

he behaves himself, even if I have to administer chloroform to keep him quiet."

The week after Ralph and Diana were married, Philip Bryce and Robert Mason were to go to southern Kentucky as delegates to the State Convention of Christian Endeavor Societies. They left early Tuesday mornin' That afternoon Katharine received the following letter:

"ELMARCH, Tuesday Morning, March 22.

"MY DEAR MISS MARSHALL:—I enclose a note written you ten months since, and which, until this morning when I found it between the pages of last May number of the *Forum*, I supposed you had received, and had declined answering.

"The Tuesday morning after the date of the enclosed, I entrusted the old negro, Uncle Charley, with another note for you. I had no answer to this second attempt; but the discovery this morning of the first note inclines me to hope that the negro failed to deliver the second.

"I have no time now for further explanation, as Mr. Mason is waiting to drive me to the station to catch the train for Henderson, where, as you may already know, we go to attend the State C. E. Convention.

"We are to return next Tuesday. Will you grant me an interview on Wednesday evening, the day after my return? Please address your reply to me at Henderson, Ky., care Convention Hall.

Yours sincerely,

"PHILIP BRYCE."

Longfellow has said, "The rays of happiness, like those of light, are colorless if unbroken;" and now, when the girl read this communication from Philip, it seemed to her as though the dreary hopelessness and despairing loneliness

through which she had passed did but make her present happiness brighter, sweeter, more satisfying.

After spending a few moments alone in her room in deep thankfulness, she dispatched a line to Mr. Bryce, stating that she would be glad to receive him at the time requested. This done, she went for a long walk, and tried to realize her happiness.

It was one of those rare, still, bright days which capricious March occasionally grants impatient nature, as a voucher that winter is departing and spring approaching. The air was yet cold, the earth brown, and the trees bare; but underneath the coldness, the brownness and the bareness was the strong heart-beat of coming spring. Katharine's mood was in accord with the hope and promise of the day.

Coming home from her walk, she encountered Uncle Charles, and she stopped to question him. "Uncle Charley," she asked, "one day last May, just before my school closed, Mr. Bryce gave you a note for me. Why didn't you deliver it?"

The old darkey, who was getting feebler and more absent-minded every day, scratched his head in perplexity a moment, and then said in an aggrieved tone: "Brothah Bryce nevvah give me no note fuh you whut I hain't give you. Dis heah ole woolly pate is gittin' mighty addled, an' I fears sometimes that I's gwintah furgit my name nex'; but I's a man uv honah, Miss Kate, ef I is a pore, addlepated niggah," as he spoke, drawing up his bent figure and throwing back his head, proudly, "an' one thing is sartain," he continued, "if he gives me any note or lettah, I's shore to delibbah it. That stands to reason, Miss. I is allus to be depended on in sich mattahs."

"But think a minute, Uncle Charley. It was one Tuesday morning last May—the day when I sent you in

the afternoon to Elmarch to take some books to Mr. Bryce."

Upon the dusky countenance of this "man uv honah" there dawned a gleam of recollection. "Shore 'nough! I riccollec' all about it. I wuz gwine outen the gate wif a bridle on my arm. I wuz on my way to the fuh pastur' to ketch Fleetfoot fuh Miss Nancy to ride ovah to see thatah sick gal at Mistah Simpson's, when Brothah Bryce he rid up on his bay nag. 'Whah's Miss Marshall?' he axes me. Says I, 'She is done gone to school.' Then he whips a little book outen his ves' pocket, an', a-settin' right thah on his nag, he leans de book on de pummel uv his saddle, scratches off some writin', an' hands it to me, an' he says ef I'll gib the writin' to you soon's you 'turn frum school, an' bring him yo' answer, he will give me fifty cents."

"But you never gave me the note."

"It wuz disah way, Miss Kate. I'll gib you de whole sarcumstance. I didn't know you come back dat ebenin' tell I hearn you a-callin' fuh me; an' when I comes, you speaks up suddent lak, an' say I is to tote a passel uv books to Brothah Bryce. You hustle me 'roun' so lively dat I saddles ole Roan, takes de books, an' gits ha'f way to Elmarch 'fore I riccollec' thatah note. Fust, I thinks I'll turn back an' give it to you. Den I reasons that it mustah been somethin' consarnin' the books; so, ez you wuz a-sendin' 'em anyways, it didn' mattah 'bout de note. So, thinks I, I'll jes' go on wif de passel, git my money, an' come 'long home. I done eggzactly datah way, an' delibbahs de books all right. But, would you b'lieve it, Miss Kate, I's nevvah laid eyes on datah fifty cents yit! I stayed a spail in de kitchen, a-passin' de compulmints uv de season wif Tishy an' Sam, an' a-hopin' all de time dat Brothah Bryce would riccollec', an' come 'roun' to de kitchen to pay me whut he owed me. But he didn' come; so aftah awhile I passes

roun' to de front yard ag'in. But whut you think! Brothah Bryce he done hopped in his buggy, an' lit out fuh a ride wif another gal, Miss Di Henson. It wuz suttinly hot dat day, an' my haid had been feelin' quare lak; 'sides, I wuz obfuscated kaze Brothah Bryce (him a preachah, too) wouldn't pay me my money. So datah note clean slip my mind."

"What became of the note, Uncle Charley?"

"Gawd knows, Miss! I reckons I jes' tote it 'roun' in my britches pocket tell it got wored out. I is pow'ful sorry ef it discomboburated you any, Miss Kate."

"Oh, it doesn't matter now. I just thought I would ask you about it. Don't worry over it, Uncle Charles," said the young lady in her most gracious manner.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"THE UNDIMMED HOUR."

Nothing is true but love, nor aught of worth;
Love is the incense which doth sweeten earth.

— *Archbishop Trench.*

If Philip Bryce had feared there would be difficulty in obtaining an interview with Katharine, free from intrusion of other members of the family at Willow Brook Farm, he was speedily reassured when he came to see her after his return from southern Kentucky. Mrs. Bright, whom Kate had that morning told that Mr. Bryce was expected in the evening, fully understood and sympathized with the situation. She met the young man at the door, ushered him into the parlor, and, lingering only long enough to express her pleasure in welcoming him again to her home, and to tell him that Miss Kate would be down directly, she retired into the sitting-room.

During the three days that had elapsed since he had received Kate's letter, Philip had thought of little else than this meeting with her, and he had decided upon his mode of procedure. Before telling her his love, he would reveal all that had befallen him in Colorado; and then, having made full confession of his weakness, sin, struggle, and of his new resolves and beliefs, he would ask her if she could love and trust him enough to marry him. That, he reasoned, was the only prudent or straightforward course for him to pursue in his wooing. But love is stronger than reason, and laughs at prudence as at locksmiths.

After Mrs. Bright left the room, he, too perturbed and eager to sit still, paced the floor. His heart was pulsing madly, and a perfect battery of electric thrills seemed ting-

ling through his veins as he waited the coming of the girl he loved.

He had not long to wait; and when she stood upon the threshold—tall, slim, rounded, her blue eyes shining, her sweet face flushed—she seemed to his enraptured senses so beautiful, so pure and so altogether desirable, that he forgot prudence, plans, everything, except that he adored her.

With hands eagerly extended, he hastened forward—his face white, his eyes impassioned. For one moment they stood facing each other, their hands clasped, their eyes revealing the secret yet unspoken by the lips; and then he—this prudent planner, this eloquent pleader—blurted out as baldly as a hobble-de-hoy, "My—my—Kate, will you marry me?"

Blushing furiously, she tried to evade him—an effort he frustrated by imprisoning both hands. Still making an attempt at composure, she said, "Won't you take a seat, Mr. Bryce?"

Ignoring her polite request, he repeated, "Kate, will you marry me?"

Utterly disconcerted by this abrupt wooing, this usually well-poised young woman could only stammer out, "Why—why—why—" her voice trailing away into silence at the last repetition of the senseless monosyllable.

His own composure somewhat restored by the sight of her blushing confusion, and the fact that he held her fast by both hands, he, in answer to her foolish exclamation, said, "'Why,' dearest? Well, just to oblige a friend of yours, one Philip Bryce, who loves you with every fiber of his being, and who is yours, heart, mind and body, if you will accept the gift. Will you, sweetheart?"

Her shy, monosyllabic answer was so low that he had to bend close to hear, but it was eminently satisfactory, and in an instant his arms were about her, and his lips were press-

ing kisses on her brow, her drooping eyelids and her trembling mouth.

"Do you love me, dearest?" asked this foolish lover presently, when they were seated on the old-fashioned sofa—he bending over her and trying to get her eyes to look into his.

"That can be taken for granted, can it not?" she said tremulously, as she tried to withdraw from his encroaching arm.

"But I want to hear from your lips the sweet confession, 'Philip, I love you.' Won't you say it, darling?" he murmured.

Again essaying to draw away from him, and to free her hand from his clasp, she faltered: "I don't believe in making unnecessary or compromising admissions. Besides, I—I—can't talk freely while you sit so close to me, and hold my hand like that."

"But it's *my* hand, and you surely can't blame me for wanting to hold it securely or for making much of my priceless possession, do you?" he answered, as he raised her hand and kissed it fondly.

Resigning perforce the hand into his keeping, she, with a tone that she vainly strove to make one of remote, conventional politeness, inquired, "Had you a pleasant visit to Henderson, Mr. Bryce?"

He impolitely ignored her inquiry, and repeated, "Say 'Philip, I love you.'"

"I like you better than I do your manners this evening, sir," she parried, laughing uneasily.

"Please say it, darling."

"I—I—love—oh, Philip," she at last stammered. Then, regaining courage, she looked up bravely into the eyes so eagerly questioning hers, and with a fire equal to his own said: "You are the only man in the world for me. Your

voice is my music; your touch, your presence, my heaven. Are you satisfied now—you persistent, masterful Philip?" she added with attempted playfulness.

"To my heart's core," he answered rapturously, drawing her into a still closer embrace.

After a short spell of blissful silence, he needs must put the query which all fond lovers since Adam first wooed Eve appear to have found it necessary to voice, "When did you begin to love me, dear one?"

"I've told you quite enough for one night, I think. Moreover, it isn't fair for you to do all the catechizing. It is my turn to question you, isn't it?"

"Ask what you will. I shall gladly answer."

"When did you begin to lo—to care for me?" she falteringly asked.

"'Care for' is too meager a phrase. Say 'love.' That is the sweetest word in human language," he interrupted.

"Well, then, most exigent of men, when did you discover that you loved me?" she amended.

"I think it was that day when you, standing forlorn on that dreary railroad platform, raised your sweet, anxious eyes to mine and asked, 'Are you Mr. Bright?'"

"What! Even while you thought me an Irish nursemaid?" she exclaimed incredulously.

"But 'a glorious, radiantly beautiful vision of a nursemaid,' as I explained to you an hour later," he interpolated.

"But surely you couldn't have fallen in love at first sight of my dust-stained, smoke-grimed face!" she expostulated, still unbelieving.

His answer was prompt: "Yes, right there and then Cupid began to get in his work on me; and after that whenever I heard your voice or was in your presence, the world seemed radiant as a June morning. But I wasn't

perhaps fully aware of my condition until the night of the old folks' concert. Then, however, I knew without peradventure that I was yours to do with as you willed; and from that night on for weeks I seemed to be in a happy dreamland, in which the whole world was but a background for the vision of sweet Katharine, and all other persons and happenings mere accessories to the picture. Then came doubt and despondency. Sometimes I'd think you returned my love, and my heart would sing the Jubilante Chorus; and sometimes I'd think I was no more to you than others of your friends here, and I'd be plunged into the lowest depths of gloom."

"That night last May when you left me so abruptly, even rudely, did you love me then?" she questioned.

"Madly, passionately. You know I did, and that I had come to tell you so. Moreover, you know that twice before that night I had tried to tell you, and that my purpose was frustrated—first, by little Susan and Margaret; and the second time, by John Henson."

"In that case, how could you have allowed my foolish laughter, which was altogether caused by excitement and overwrought nerves, to turn you from your purpose?"

"My behavior that night was imbecile," he acknowledged; "but it was not due to wounded self-love over the discovery that you had read that childish sentimental balderdash of mine, on that scrap of paper. It was because I felt that your laughter, yes, and your demeanor afterward during the rest of the evening, indicated that you didn't care for me, and, indeed, that you were weary of my presence. When I went away that night—"

"Looking as gloomy and as soul-embittered as the hero of one of Augusta J. Evans Wilson's romances," interjected Katharine, smiling at the recollection.

"I felt," he continued, "as though the gates of Eden

had clanged to, and had left me out in the blackness of despair."

"But," she reminded him, "the same hand that had the power to shut the door had power to open it again; yet you didn't try to regain your Eden. Why didn't you?"

"I did long to try again; but by the time I had come to my senses the light in the parlor had gone out, and it was too late, for that evening, at least. What must you have thought of me!"

"I felt that with you had departed all my hopes of earthly happiness," confessed the girl; and with a laugh she added, "and without leaving me even the poor consolation of a P. P. C. card, either."

"Or without giving me any chance of an R. S. V. P.," he rejoined. "And since that unlucky evening," he continued more gravely, "a series of misadventures and misunderstandings and lost notes have made of my life one unbroken misery. But this," he continued, as he drew her fondly to him, "fully repays for all I have suffered."

After a short while silence again fell between them. He sat with his eyes fixed upon the fire, a sad, worried look upon his face.

She broke the silence by the question: "Of what are you thinking? Your mouth is grave and stern, and there's a perplexed, even sad, look in your eyes."

"I'm thinking of my great unworthiness of the priceless gift of your love," he answered.

"Of course," she returned, speaking playfully. "that's quite the proper thing to say. I suppose all lovers say it. But in this case it is I, not you, who should feel humility. I can't, though. Instead, the knowledge that I possess your heart makes me proud. But for you to speak of your being unworthy—how absurd!"

"Ah! you don't know you can't know," he replied

dejectedly; "and when I have told you all, as I must do, and as I intended doing before asking you to be my wife (only, when I saw you I forgot everything except my overpowering love for you), you may yet turn from me."

"You really can't have any very heinous crimes to divulge; but, anyway, I promise beforehand full absolution for them, whatever they may be."

"No, you mustn't promise that. When I have told you all, you may feel differently," he answered firmly.

She looked very grave at this, but tried to speak lightly, "You talk as though there were a regular Bluebeard chamber of horrors hidden somewhere in your past."

"There is, there is," he confessed with darkening gloom.

"And you want to reveal this chamber of horrors to me?" she questioned in a trembling voice, but taking his hand reassuringly.

"Yes, I must. It's my duty to do so."

"No, no," she protested. "At least, not to-night. Let us have this one evening of unmarred bliss. After that, tell me what you will; and," she added, smiling bravely up into his troubled eyes, "when the secret places of your past are opened up to the sunshine of my love and sympathy, 'like snowdrift in thaw-time,' your Bluebeard bogies will vanish forever."

"Ah! my dear one, I wish I could think so," he exclaimed.

"Listen to me, Philip," she said, rising and standing before him. Then, as he, too, rose, she laid her hands upon his shoulders, and there was a celestial radiance in the eyes she lifted to his. Her form seemed to glow and expand, as with the utmost earnestness she spoke: "I have told you that I love you. Do you know what that means? Listen! I love your heart, your mind, your nature, your manliness and strength and tenderness; but if you were to



"I have told you that I love you. Do you know what that means?"

lose all that could attract another woman; if you were bereft of health, beauty, position, reputation; if you were a poor, broken-down, suffering, sinful wretch—I should still love you with every fiber of my being; and I should ask no greater blessing than that of cherishing, caring for and shielding you to your life's close."

Philip's lip trembled; his eyes filled, and he covered his face with his hands a moment, and then murmured brokenly: "Oh, brave, true, tender heart! What am I that such a blessing should be mine! How can I ever deserve so priceless a gift?"

His words were hardly a question, but she answered them. "By trusting me fully, and by believing me when I say that nothing you can have to confess, nothing you have done or thought, or could do or think in the future, could shake my love. So, be comforted, O foolish, doubting, fearful Philip."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"WHERE THOU GOEST."

Where thou goest I will go,
 Through the sunshine or the snow;
 Where thou dwelst I will dwell,
 In a court or in a cell;
 All thy people mine shall be,
 Since myself is one with thee.

—*Unknown*

Katharine, who had noted, as many others had done, the change in Philip's preaching during the last six months from what it had formerly been, naturally concluded that the confession he was to make to her was connected with this change. Accordingly, when he came to see her upon the Thursday evening after their betrothal, she, thinking thus to make his disclosure easier for him, introduced the subject by saying, "What you wish to tell me relates to your religious views, does it not?"

"To some extent, yes," he answered.

"Well, then, before you begin, I want to say that I never held with these modern-thought doctrines. To be frank, I must confess that some of them seem to me to be very vague and unsatisfactory, and others of them really sacrilegious. I've often wanted to tell you this, but until now I haven't dared. So, if you mean to avow that you have renounced these, to me dangerous or at the best unsatisfying positions, you may be certain beforehand of my joyful sympathy."

"Yes," he replied, but not so brightly or hopefully as she had expected, "my outlook on all the vital questions of life and religion is widely different from what it once was; and it's the humiliating, terrible experiences through which

I passed, and which caused this change, that I must tell you about."

"Begin at the very beginning, and tell me everything," she urged with a smile of encouragement.

It was a little while before he could begin. He got up and walked several times across the room, and then, instead of resuming a seat beside the girl, he took a position on the hearth, and, with head bowed and eyes fixed upon the fire, he stood with one arm leaning on the mantel, as he told her.

She sat motionless with her hands tightly clasped, nor did she interrupt his recital by question or comment; and only once (while he was describing that week of debauch at Colorado Springs) did a single, quickly suppressed exclamation of horror escape her blanched lips.

As he heard that cry he lifted his head and looked at her, but, at the sight of her stricken, ghastly face, with an ejaculation of despair he buried his own face in his hands, and the bitterness of death swept over his soul.

"Go on! Tell me all," presently she said bravely.

He did so. When he had finished she came quickly to him. "My dear one," she exclaimed in a tone of melting tenderness, as she stroked his bowed head, "look at me."

"Can you ever forgive me?" he asked brokenly.

"I've nothing to forgive, dear Philip; and what you've told me only makes me love you more tenderly."

"But are you not afraid to trust me?"

"Afraid? No. On the contrary, I've more solid ground than ever before for my trust. Against great odds, with no human being to help you, and while you were not only sick in body but sick of heart, you fought against your old appetite, and conquered; and 'this victory will help you others to win.' You remember, don't you, that lovely thought from Amiel—'How, then, is one to recover cour-

age enough for action, after one has once succumbed to temptation? By extracting a richer experience out of our losses and lessons."

"Then, you don't think there is danger of my becoming a morphine fiend?" he asked with a shudder at the revolting idea.

"No, no! You know your weakness, and will guard against it; and our Father in whom you now so reverently trust will help you to win. My precious boy, I can, like you, thank him for the awful trial through which you have passed, because that trial was what was needed to clear your spiritual vision of doubts and speculations, and to plant your feet firmly on the solid rock of faith."

"Yes, yes," he said, "it has done all that for me; and that should make me forever grateful for the humiliation of that fearful experience through which I had to pass to teach me the truth. But, oh, darling, if it had cost me your love and confidence, it would—"

"But that love and confidence, instead of being destroyed, are stronger than ever before," she again assured him.

"How you comfort and strengthen me," he exclaimed, as they were again seated side by side on the sofa.

After a short silence he said, "Beloved, there's something else I should have made clear to you before I asked you to plight me your troth."

"What is it?" she asked, smiling bravely and trying to speak confidently.

"You may remember my telling you one day last spring that it was my intention to return some day to my native land?" he said, looking at her inquiringly.

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, I can't alter that intention. I'm needed there far more than here. Moreover, I'm pledged to the work out

there; and my parents have my promise that I will come back as soon as my three years' engagement with the church in this place is fulfilled. But are you willing to give up your home, kindred, country, and to go with me to the Antipodes—for life, it may be; for a long term of years, at any rate?"

"'Whither thou goest I will go.' 'For better or for worse' I am yours, dear Philip."

"But does not the '*better*' mean, with you, life in America; and the '*worse*,' life in Australia?" he asked, looking at her anxiously.

"The '*better*,' nay, the *best*, means anywhere with the man I love. The '*worse*,' anywhere without him," she stoutly asserted.

"Spoken like my own noble Kate!" he rapturously exclaimed.

"Furthermore," she continued with a mischievous smile, "I've a great desire to see that far-away country of yours, if for no other reason than to find out for myself how much of its glories you have so often described to me are realities, and how much are the patriotic rhapsodies of your vivid fancy. Oh, yes, Sir Philip Sidney Bryce, by your leave or without your leave, I mean to visit that home land of yours; and if you won't let me go with you, I'll go alone or with some party of emigrants."

"Oh, well," her lover said, playfully pinching her cheek, "under the circumstances I suppose I had better let you go along with me. I might lose you were I to allow you to wander alone or with strangers through our vast country."

"You must remember, too," she resumed presently, with more seriousness, "that I am singularly alone in the world—with no close home ties to bind me to this country. True, I am always sure of a welcome in my uncle's house, but he and his wife have children of their own, and don't need me.

So it isn't as it might have been, had you chosen some girl richly dowered with near kindred. Your poor Kate is motherless, fatherless, brotherless and sisterless."

"Ah, sweetheart, all that is changed now," he hastened to assure her. "My people shall be your people. My father and mother will open wide their arms to their sweet Kentucky daughter, and Helen will be your dear sister. They'll love and cherish you as their own. How I look forward to seeing you with them at Undulata, their beautiful Australian home."

The girl said nothing, but the grateful, happy look in the eyes she lifted to her lover's was answer enough.

"So now," he said after awhile, "the next question is, When and where can we be married?"

"There's a long time in which to arrange the when and where of that matter," she answered. "It will be nearly two years, will it not, before you go to Australia?"

"What of that? Do you imagine I intend to wait to claim you until I am leaving this country?"

"But the voyage to Australia would make an ideal bridal trip," she said.

"Very well," he replied, "marry me now, and we'll take our wedding tour two years hence. It will still be our honeymoon time, you know; for that is going to last throughout our life."

"A bridal tour two years after marriage would indeed be a novel procedure," she laughingly commented.

"So it would," he assented, "novel and romantic and ideal. Hence, you see, there's really nothing to prevent our being married at once. I need you every day and hour; and I've already waited for you over a year. I don't think I can wait any longer. So, I propose that, without saying a word to any one about it, we drive over to Durrity to-morrow and get married. Wouldn't that be heavenly?"

"To-morrow!" she exclaimed, aghast at such a proposal. "On *Friday*, too! The very idea!"

"Sure enough! to-morrow will be Friday. I'd forgotten the day of the week, and everything else, for that matter, except that you are my promised wife. But you're too sensible a girl to heed that silly superstition about Friday being an unlucky day. Still, I don't want to hurry you too much. I, therefore, amend my proposition, and name some day next week as our wedding-day—say Wednesday or Thursday. What say you?"

"Now do be a little bit rational," she pleaded. "You forget my school. That doesn't close until the last week in May."

"But you can resign."

"No, that would be treating my patrons shabbily," she objected. "Besides, impetuous man, I decline to rush into matrimony in this offhand, hurry-skurry style. You fairly take my breath away when you propose such a thing. Why, for one thing, I haven't any suitable clothes."

"Clothes!" he ejaculated with true masculine contempt. "What is the use of bothering about that? You're always beautifully dressed; and, as for a trousseau, you can get it afterwards—a post-nuptial trousseau, you understand. As for the rest, you've a dress suitable to be married in, I know."

"Perhaps," she said saucily, stepping out before him and making him a mocking curtsey, "you think this antiquated blue serge garment would do as a wedding gown."

"Certainly. I think it is lovely. However, if you don't consider it altogether *comme il faut*, where's that fluffy, frilly, diaphanous white dress, in which you looked so entrancing that first Sunday afternoon I called on you? White is always in style, isn't it? And nothing could be more appropriate for a bride."

"That old Paris muslin!" she ejaculated scornfully. "Why, I gave it to Aunt Cassie last fall, to make over into a dress for Ivory to wear to a negro festival."

"Oh, now I have it!" the young man exclaimed. "That sheeny, silvery, silky blue confection you wore the night of the Townsend party, when you ruthlessly trampled on my pride and affection. Poetic justice would demand that you wear that very gown when you marry me."

The entrance of Alec at this moment, with coals to replenish the fire, interrupted this interesting dress discussion; and when he left the room the topic of wedding garments was not resumed.

Katharine adhered to her resolution to finish her school term; and her lover, therefore, at last reluctantly consented to wait until June, and then to be married at Covington, at the home of Kate's relatives.

A week or two after this matter had been settled, Philip told Kate that he had been thinking he should preach a sermon which would clearly set forth the change in his religious views. At first she tried to dissuade him from this purpose, by arguing that the trend of his teachings for the last six months had been in that direction; but he still thought he should come out more plainly. "I must do my utmost," he said, "to remove the difficulties and doubts which my former erroneous teachings have created in the minds of some of these people. Until I do this, I can neither feel that I have won the entire confidence of the few of my brethren who are aware of my changed position, nor can I forcibly and effectually present the truth to those who once accepted my false views as the true gospel; and in order to do this, it isn't sufficient that I now preach the truth, but it is also necessary that I publicly and emphatically declare that I have forever renounced my former false doctrines."

"Yes, I now see that is the right thing for you to do," said Katharine, sympathetically; "but it will be very trying, very hard for you."

"How hard, how trying to a person of my temperament to publicly acknowledge that he has been in error, even you, my darling, who love me, can hardly comprehend. But it is my duty to do this, and by God's help I shall do it."

"Yes, and if my encouragement and sympathy can help you any, you may be sure they are yours, dearest," said the girl, with a loving smile.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MAGNETISM OF THE CROSS.

If the Christian church is going to tie her fortunes to moral philosophy, God help her! We must get back to the religion of our fathers, to the atoning blood, or go on to pessimism, atheism and despair.—*President Patton.*

Upon a certain Sunday morning in May, Philip Bryce, prompted by his sense of duty to the people whom in times past he had misled by his teachings, encouraged by the noble girl who had plighted him her troth, and guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, preached a sermon which stirred the heart of each listener, and ushered in a new epoch of spiritual growth to the church at Ginseng.

After the morning Scripture reading, which consisted of the last eighteen verses of the first chapter of First Corinthians, the congregation united in singing that inimitable hymn, "When I survey the wondrous cross;" after which prayer was offered by Milton Bright.

As Philip came forward at the conclusion of the prayer—his face pale, his features tense—Katharine sent him one look of sympathy and comprehension that cheered and strengthened him for the ordeal before him. As he spoke, his voice was held to a quiet, even tone only by the force of his strong will, but his utterance was so distinct that every syllable was audible throughout the room. The customary Sunday morning serenity of the congregation was dispelled by his opening words: "If my future ministry among you, my beloved people, is to be as effectual for good as it should be, I must no longer shrink from publicly acknowledging to you that there has been much in my former teachings which I now see is contrary to divine

truth. Guided only by the imperfect light of human wisdom, I have hitherto oftentimes dealt with the delusive vagaries of negative truths and the dry husks of ethical philosophy, when I should have been proclaiming unto you the unsearchable riches of Christ's gospel."

He paused a moment and passed his hand across his forehead as if to wipe away the pain that some mental vision had stamped there; and then in a voice which had regained its clear volume he proceeded: "Through great humiliation and bitterness of spirit I have learned the powerlessness of ethical philosophy and the critical negations of so-called 'modern thought' and 'new theology;' and I stand here before you this morning to say that the only message that can bring relief to a burdened conscience and hope to a despairing soul is this, the throbbing message of the cross, 'Christ died that we might live.' Brethren and sisters, I have done forever with the jots and tittles of Biblical criticism and the vain imaginings of human scholarship; and henceforward, with God's help, I shall preach only the enduring principles of the all-sufficient gospel: '*God, the Father; Jesus Christ, his Son, our atoning Sacrifice; regeneration and new life by the Holy Spirit; and the Bible in its entirety as our only efficient and our all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.*' I beseech your prayers that henceforth I may 'continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel.'"

A shiver of sympathetic comprehension thrilled through the audience as the young man made this noble acknowledgment of past error and future purpose. The momentary silence that followed his closing words was broken by Peter Henson, who, standing in his accustomed place, poured forth a prayer of thanksgiving and a petition for future guidance for both preacher and people. Then the hymn, itself a prayer, "Jesus, keep me near the cross," was sung

by the entire congregation as few in that audience had ever sung it before—with full understanding and heartfelt power.

As the last thrilling tones of the blessed old hymn died away, the minister again arose, and, with a face aglow with the light of his new-found faith, pronounced his text: "*Ye were redeemed not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life, handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.*"* "*Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we having died unto sins might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.*" **

He paused a moment that the words of his text might have their full significance, and then in a tone which gathered force and volume as he proceeded, he said: "As teacher and leader, prophet and lawgiver, healer and comforter, worker of miracles and exemplifier of holiness, no language is adequate to express the 'Man of Galilee' save that which has been called the classic of Christianity, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

"The death of our Saviour," he continued, "would have been meaningless, had it been preceded by any other kind of life than the one he lived, which illustrated his Sonship with God, as our representative, and was an exemplification of purity, truth and love; but although the guiding power to fallen humanity of that perfect life can not be over-estimated, it must ever be borne in mind that the authority of his precepts, the uplifting influence of his character, and the winning power of his matchless personality find their completest expression in the cross."

He next spoke of the tendency of some modern teachers to place the emphasis upon the life rather than upon the

* 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19. ** 1 Pet. 1: 24.

death of our Saviour. He declared this mode of teaching misleading, illogical and perverse of truth: misleading, because without Christ's sacrifice of himself as our atonement, the sinless life he lived, instead of mitigating or removing man's guilt, accentuated its vileness, gave sharper pangs to the tortures of man's despairing helplessness, and the more forcible justification of God's condemnation; illogical and perverse of truth, because it destroyed the unity, the coherence, and even the meaning of the gospel writings, since nowhere in those writings were the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation attributed to the personality, the character or the earthly ministry of Jesus, but were always placed in connection with his death, as giving the only ground for man's reconciliation with God.

By abundant texts he proved that this cardinal truth, the supreme importance of the death of our Saviour, was the presupposition upon which the apostles reasoned, pleaded and warned; and also that the "Great Teacher" himself ever placed the chief stress on his sacrificial death as the all-important fact in his earthly mission. "For this cause," He said in speaking to his disciples of his approaching death, "came I unto this hour" (John 12: 23-27).

Philip's next thought was that this misleading tendency to minimize the importance of Christ's death was due to a misconception of the character of sin. "Man's need," he said, "and God's remedy are commensurable terms; and it is only when the searchlight of the Holy Spirit is turned upon the recesses of the human heart that one realizes the loathsomeness of the sin lurking there, and one's utter powerlessness. So that the beauty of the Creator's redemptive love, in all its height, depth, breadth, can be truly realized only when seen against the black background of guilt, death and eternal punishment."

In this connection reference was made to the three

theories of sin most prevalent among the advocates of the various latter-day religious cults, and which diverge most widely from orthodoxy; namely, (1) *Eddyism*, that denies the existence of evil, guilt, sickness and death. (2) The *evolutionary view*, which, being based on the false premises that good and evil are simply parts of one great whole, and that "whatever is, is right," defines sin as merely "a persistence in man of his animal instincts or a remnant of the brute stage of his development; and, therefore, but a necessary, an unavoidable and a logical step in his upward progress."* (3) *The heredity theory* (falsely so called), whose chief tenet is that individual sin being but a result of past experiences of the human race, one's evil proclivities and impulses having been inherited, are for that reason largely beyond one's control; and that, therefore, the individual is not so much to be blamed, after all, for the indulgence of or the yielding to said evil proclivities.

Such theories, Philip asserted, tend to invalidate the true nature of sin, and to present the subject in a way radically opposed to the Scriptures, which show sin to be an unnatural thing, alien to the divine nature, and marring the harmony of creation—a willful violation of the moral faculty implanted in each reasoning human being.

Under the second head of his discourse he showed how the vicarious nature of the atonement is taught in the Scriptures: First, by Old Testament prophecy and by the type and symbol of Levitical ritual founded on the idea of a sacrifice foreshadowing the great sacrifice to come; second, in the New Testament by the direct words of Jesus and his apostles, and by the terms used by them,** and recurring

*Prof. John Fiske.

**"Our offering" (Eph. 5:2); "Our redemption" (Col. 1:14); "Our reconciliation" (Heb. 2:17); "Our passover" (1 Cor. 5:7); "Ransom" (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6); "Sacrifice" (Heb. 7:27; 9:26).

again and again in a host of passages—all accentuating the one idea that Christ's death was a substitutionary atonement for human guilt; third, by Christ's indirect teachings in which he declared himself the Messiah of prophecy, and applied to himself those prophecies of the Old Testament writers which showed the Messiah as coming as the "suffering one," the "slain one;" fourth, by that greatest of object-lessons, the "Lord's Supper," in the institution of which Supper he uses the significant words, "This is my body broken for you;" "This is my blood shed for you."

"No loose system of Scriptural exegesis," Philip Bryce declared, "no quibbling subterfuge of those who are so eager in their tithing of the anise and cummin of negative Biblical criticism as to pass over or to misinterpret the weightier matters of the gospel, can invalidate the force or destroy the significance of this cardinal truth of Christianity, the vicarious nature of the atonement, which is so integral a part of the gospel record that without it the Bible, instead of being an harmonious whole, is an incoherent and even meaningless book without divine origin—a mere travesty of truth, furnishing no consistent representation of God in his relation to the human family, no clear or adequate rule of life, and no plan upon which the soul can rely for refuge and salvation. Therefore, it is not the acceptance of Jesus as only the divine teacher or as the embodiment of wisdom, truth and love, but the acceptance of him as the Christ crucified for our sins, that can save us; for the meaning of all Old Testament symbol and prophecy, and the power of all gospel truth, are summed up in the one all-comprehensive utterance of our Saviour: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.'"

Until now the speaker's manner had been quietly forcible without gesture or excitement; but when he reached the peroration his powers kindled to a fire of eloquence

unattempted in the preceding parts of his theme. "It is," he proclaimed, "the magnetism of the cross that draws mankind. Without this atoning cross there is no theology which can awaken saving faith or true repentance, or that offers eternal hope to perishing humanity. The point around which all divine revelation clusters, the center of the Christian's faith and hope, the dynamic of all Christian effort, is the cross of Christ—that cross which in its representation of sacrificial love reaches up to the very heart of the Father, and down to the deepest needs of his human children."

While the congregation were singing the beautiful hymn, "Saviour, thy dying love," John Henson came forward in response to the invitation which the minister, at the conclusion of the discourse, had extended to all who felt their need of Christ.

When the hymn was concluded, Philip, grasping John's hand, feelingly propounded the one basic question of Christianity; and in answer, instead of merely giving a silent or a murmured assent, John repeated with deep earnestness the words of "the good confession": "*I believe with all the heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

CHAPTER XXXV.

UNCLE CHARLEY GETS HIS MONEY.

Kate Marshall completed her school term the last week of May. About a month later various Cincinnati and Kentucky newspapers contained an announcement something on this order:

BRYCE—MARSHALL.

On Wednesday morning, June 29, at the residence of the bride's uncle, B. D. Marshall, of Covington, Kentucky, Philip Sidney Bryce, formerly of Adelaide, Australia, and now the minister of the Christian Church at Ginseng, Kentucky, was united in marriage to Miss Katharine Logan Marshall, of Covington.

Philip and his bride returned to Ginseng Wednesday afternoon, and on Thursday evening there was held at Elmarsh, in their honor, an informal reception which was attended by a large concourse of friends who came to offer their good wishes to the newly wedded pair.

"I'm 'the last rose of summer, left blooming alone; all my lovely companions now married and gone,'" was John Henson's lugubrious salutation to the bride and groom, that evening.

"Our friend has a novel way of tendering congratulations to a newly made Benedict and his bride, has he not?" laughingly observed Mr. Bryce to Katharine.

"Mr. Henson is always delightfully original—even in his mode of offering congratulations," answered the bride, smiling up at John.

"Neither my vocabulary nor my philosophy, my dear madam, contain at this moment anything adaptable to congratulatory phrases; for life hath nothing more to offer me save mockeries of the happy past," said John, with a fine pretense of melancholy.

"You'll have to get married yourself, friend John," said the bridegroom, blithely.

"Sir, by suggesting such a course you but add insult to the injury you have recently inflicted upon me," answered young Henson, with a reproachful shake of the head, and an expression of well-counterfeited sadness.

Tom Carey had run down from Lexington to attend the reception, and he, with Ruth Vanarsdale, was standing near Philip and Kate. John's next remark was addressed to both Philip and Tom, "Are there no pretty girls in your native land, young gentlemen?"

"Pretty girls are as plentiful in South Australia as blossoms on a microphylla rosebush," answered Philip with patriotic fervor.

"As 'thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks of Vallombrosa,'" was Carey's corroborative testimony.

"Then, why is this, thus?" inquired young Henson, dramatically. The "*this*," as indicated by a sweeping gesture of his right arm, included not only bridegroom and bride, but likewise the unmarried couple beside them.

Philip laughed heartily, Katharine smiled, but Carey and Ruth looked self-conscious and embarrassed at John's audacious speech.

No one making any reply to his query, Mr. Henson continued: "What this 'land of the free and home of the brave' needs isn't a more stringent immigration law, but a stricter emigration enactment prohibiting foreign youths who come to this country, *ostensibly* for the enlargement of their minds, from carrying off with them, when they return to their native wilds, the brightest and best of America's fair daughters. Don't you agree with me, Ruth?" he mendaciously inquired, turning to his cousin.

Miss Vanarsdale colored rosily, but commanded both voice and countenance very creditably as she nonchalantly

replied: "I concern myself little with either the immigration or the emigration laws of my country. I leave such questions to the brilliant legal powers of such men as my cousin, the honorable John Henson."

The Saturday after Mr. and Mrs. Bryce were established at Elmarch, they drove over to spend the day with the Brights. Near the bridge, on their way to Willow Brook Farm, they were waylaid by Uncle Charley, who came up to the buggy, bowing graciously, and saying as he shook hands with the young couple: "I wantstah be de fust uv my fam'ly succle to cungratulate Brothah an' Sistah Bryce on de auspices uv dis happy uccasion. I wuz shorely tickled when I hearn you two wuz gwinetah wuck togethah in double harnish. You suttinly has got a splendid wife, Brothah Bryce. Ef she hain't pussessed uv much uv dis world's mammons, she's got healf an' strengf an' purty looks an' purty ways, an' ev'rything else whut goes to make a good mate. She's one uv my fav'rites, an' I allus said she wuz cut out fuh a preachah's wife."

"I'm by way of being of that opinion myself, Uncle Charles," interpolated Philip, with a smiling glance at Kate.

The negro now turned to the bride, and said: "An' you, Sistah Bryce, you's done kotch a good husban' whut will treat you well, an' whut you kin allus be proud on."

Kate thanked him prettily, and he went on: "I predict-ered dis match, Brothah Bryce, evah sence wintah befoh las', when you wuz comin' to our house so much. I reckon, too, I hed some hand in makin' de match; kaze I wuz thah ev'ry time to hitch yo' nag, an' I allus did my level best to keep dem bawdacious childuns frum runnin' in on you an' Miss Kate when you wuz a-doin' yo' courtin'. Den, when you quits comin' to our house, fuh a long spail, las' fall an' wintah, Cassie she 'lowed you an' Miss Kate done hed a rumpus; but I knowed bettah. I tole Cassie you wuz jes'

keepin' away awhile, to frow dust in folkses' eyes, so's to mek 'em think you an' Miss Kate warn't thinkin' uv each othah. But you didn't frow no dust in *my* eyes, suh; an' shore nuff, it's turned out jes' ez I perdictahed it would. So now, Charles Withers wishes you bof ev'ry joy an' prosper'ty whut kin come to us pore morsels in dis vale uv troubles."

"Thank you, Uncle Charley," both bridegroom and bride heartily exclaimed. Then Philip chirruped to his horse to go on; but the old darkey laid a detaining hand on the buggy top, and, planting his foot on the wheel, said: "Brothah Bryce, hain't you furgittin' somethin'?"

Philip looked an inquiry, and the negro proceeded: "Whah is datah piece uv money you promised me las' summah fuh totin' dem notes an' things 'tween you 'n' Miss Kate? I reckon you's been so busy doin' yo' courtin' that you done furgot about it; so now, ez you an' yo' sweetheart hez got mattahs all 'ranged satusfact'rily, I ventures to remind you. I needs the money pow'ful bad. Cassie she's a-naggin' an' a-pesterin' me fuh something to buy a dress fuh Iv'ry to wear to de Sunday-school picnic uv de colored chu'ch, nex' Sat'day, an' I hain't nary a cent to give her."

The young man suppressed a smile, and tried to speak in a businesslike tone: "But, Uncle Charles, you never gave Miss Kate that note I left with you, for her."

"Whut diffruns, ef I didn't? My will wuz good to delivah it, suh. B'sides, I toted the passels all right, I reckon; so thatah note wuzn't uv much 'count, nowadays."

"I see the force of your reasoning, Uncle Charley, and I apologize for being such a poor paymaster. How much did I promise to give you?"

"Fifty cents it wuz, suh; but you's kep' me outen my money fuh more'n a year, now, an' de intrust hez been a-runnin' on an' mountin' up considahble."

"Will this be sufficient to settle my debt in full?" asked the bridegroom, holding out a bright, new silver dollar.

The old darkey's eyes glistened, and, making a low bow as he pocketed the coin, he said gratefully: "That's suttinly pow'ful good intrust on my money. Thank you, thank you, Brothah Bryce. I'll remembah you an' Sistah Bryce in my prayers, fuh this," and, so saying, he stepped back, and permitted the couple in the buggy to drive on.

They had gone but a few rods farther when out from the alder-bushes on the roadside sprang Susan, Margaret and Buddy, and also Doc and Toby. A most clamorous greeting ensued, after which the three children were permitted to crowd into the buggy, and, with the dogs leaping and barking excitedly around them, they proceeded on their way.

"Here they are! They've come! They've come!" shouted Alec and Marie Louise from the stile-block, as the buggy approached. Ann Elizabeth, closely followed by her mother, ran bareheaded down the walk.

"My dear child! My dear Kate!" murmured Mrs. Bright as she clasped the girl lovingly in her arms, and kissed her fondly.

Philip looked on at this demonstration a little wistfully, and as Mrs. Bright released his wife he said: "If Mrs. Bryce is like a daughter to you, dear Mrs. Bright, can't you find a son's place for me in your motherly heart?"

"That I can, my boy," she responded heartily. "You shall be just like my own son, from now on," and, after a moment's hesitation, she kissed him.

"Turn about is fair play," laughingly exclaimed Milton Bright, who had come up just in time to witness Mrs. Bright's affectionate greeting of Mr. Bryce; "and if you kiss my wife, Brother Philip, I reckon I can kiss yours," and he did so.

In the afternoon, when the family and their guests were assembled under a big elm-tree in the yard—Mrs. Bright in a large rocker, fanning herself; Messrs. Bright and Bryce stretched upon the grass, the former smoking, the latter idly musing; Katharine, Cissy and Puggie swinging in the hammock; and the other children and the dogs revolving about in circles more or less eccentric—Puggie, cuddling up to the bride, said plaintively: "Me an' Buddy has to start to school in September, an' now you've gone an' got married; so I weckon we'll have to go to a teacher we don't know. Whut made you go an' marry my Miss Kitty dirl, Bwovvah Bwyce, an' take her away frum us, to live ovah at Elmarch?" she inquired, turning reproachful eyes upon Philip.

Whereupon, that astute young philosopher, Robert Graham Bright, standing before the bridegroom, with his hands in his pockets, said: "Miss Tate likes teachin' school, I weckon; but her likes marryin' wosser. Don't her, Bwovvah Bwyce?"

"That she does, my little man!" answered Philip, heartily.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

Ere the curtain is rung down for the last time upon the various scenes and incidents which make up this narrative, one more brief glimpse is afforded of the dear people of the quaint and beautiful village of Ginseng.

Ralph Moreland and his winsome, comely wife still make their home at Rose Lawn with Father and Mother Henson, who, according to Diana, spoil their two grandsons, Henson Moreland, aged seven, and Philip Bryce, aged four, to an alarming extent. Dr. Moreland has a wide practice, and no man in Filson County is more beloved than is he.

Although Peter Henson has passed his seventy-first milestone on life's highway, he is hale and hearty, genial and jovial, and ever zealous for the welfare of his church and his community.

The old signboard over the main entrance of Ginseng roller flouring-mill was taken down about a year ago. In its place is one bearing this inscription:

HENSON & BRIGHT,	
Manufacturers of	
ROLLER PROCESS FLOUR, MEAL, ETC.,	
AND DEALERS IN COAL,	
Ginseng,	Kentucky.

The Bright whose name appears on this signboard is

not Milton Bright, but his son Alexander, now a thorough-going, handsome young man of twenty-three. When he, after having been graduated with honors from Transylvania University, decided to enter the milling business, some surprise was manifested that he should choose a business career instead of one of the learned professions. His parents, however, think he has chosen wisely; and Milton Bright is wont to declare that the ranks of commerce, trade, agriculture and manufacturing afford as much scope for the talents of a college-bred man as do the so-called learned professions.

Ginseng's new milling firm maintains its well-deserved reputation for enterprise, square dealing, and good flour; and the business methods of the firm of Henson & Bright, like those of the former firm of Henson & Son; furnish ample refutation of the old saying, "Every honest miller has a golden thumb."

The bond of friendship that has ever existed between the Rose Lawn and the Willow Brook households is now stronger than ever, not only on account of the business connection between Mr. Henson and Alec Bright, but also on account of the marriage, three years ago, of Peter Henson's only son to Milton Bright's eldest daughter, Ann Elizabeth, better known as Cissy Bright. "Duneden," the residence of Mr. and Mrs. John Henson, in the suburbs of Durritt, is a beautiful, well-ordered, hospitable home. John Henson is practicing law in Durritt. He is rapidly winning recognition among his compeers, as one of the most incorruptible as well as one of the ablest young lawyers of the Kentucky bar.

Nancy Bright's easy-going system of domestic training, combined with the more stirring policy of her husband and the Christian example of both, has proved successful in the rearing of their children. At present none of the children

are at home, except Alexander and Buddy, or, as he insists on being called, Robert Graham Bright, a sturdy, merry lad of fourteen. Mary Louise (Polly) and Susan have returned to Lexington for their fourth and last term at Hamilton College, and this year Margaret accompanied them, and entered the Sophomore class of the same college.

In reference to this trio of girls, Aunt Cassie declaims as follows: "It's a good thing Cissy married befoh her sistahs set out; fuh Cissy she is as well favohed as most gals, but she can't hold a candle to Polly nur Susie, when it comes to good looks. An', as for Puggie (I nevvah kin re-collec' to call dat chile Mar'git—bless her sweet face!), she is gwinetah take de rag offen de bush fuh beauty. When dem three gals gits back frum dat finishin'-off school at Lexin'ton, they'll be de belles uv Filson County; an', hitched along disheah front fence ev'ry Sunday evenin', dah will be a string uv fine hosses an' rubber-tared buggies belongin' to de beaux whut comes courtin' our three handsome young ladies."

Aunt Cassie complains now and then of a "tech uv rheumatiz," but she is still her Miss Nancy's trusty handmaiden, and is noted throughout the countryside for her culinary skill. Uncle Charles still suffers from "spails in de haid," when the moon is full, as he claims, or when Uncle Charles is full, as is the generally accepted belief of the neighborhood. Nevertheless, he is still (in his own estimation) the mainstay of Willow Brook Farm; and it is his unchangeable conviction that to his own skillful management and wise admonitions is due the fact that the Bright children have turned out so creditably.

Elihu Clay retains his position of Ginseng postmaster. He has, as of yore, much to say concerning his illustrious kinsman, "The Great Pacificator," and is fond of telling all newcomers to the village about his wife's descent from the

ap-Morris who in 1009, A. D., married the daughter of Edmund Ironside, King of England.

Soon after leaving school, Sadie Jean Fowler married the brother of one of her classmates. She lives on a fine blue-grass farm near Cynthiana. According to her mother, "Daut is doin' frustrate, and holds her head as high as anybody."

When James Richard Fowler died some three years ago, Mrs. Fowler was inconsolable, and so violent in her grief that when the remains of her husband were consigned to mother earth, her friends with difficulty restrained her from precipitating herself into his grave. Six months after this heartrending scene, Mrs. Julia Fowler became Mrs. Samuel Keene, No. 3. She gave as her reason for this step: "Jim Dick is as dead as he'll ever be; Sam Keene needs a wife; and now that Tommy" (her oldest son) "has got married and has brung his stuck-up, citified wife to the old home, there hain't nothing left for me to do *but* to git married ag'in."

Miranda Hogg and Jane Burgess still keep "Ginseng Hotel—For Mer. Only." They continue to do a thriving business, having, at present, according to Miss Hogg's statement, "three steadies an' a whole lot uv comers an' goers."

During his last year at Ginseng, Philip Bryce labored to such good purpose that all misgivings as to his orthodoxy were banished from the minds of his brethren, and the church made wonderful growth in numbers and spirituality. Nor did he leave his post until an able man had been found to continue the work he had begun. The congregation at Ginseng is to-day widely known as a zealous, godly church, ever strengthening her influence and ever broadening her field of usefulness.

Before Philip left the village he succeeded in making his own peace with Sisters Miranda and Jane, and also in

effecting a reconciliation between them and Charity Bird. Consequently, that middle wall of partition, the high board fence, between hotel and adjoining cottage was removed, and those of Miss Bird's windows that faced the hotel grounds were unshuttered for the first time in many years. This reconciliation between hotel and cottage was the more easy to bring about from the fact that the prime cause or causes of the quarrel—Jakey and Sir Thomas—had departed to the "Happy Hunting-ground" of dogs and cats. So now, peace and goodwill reign in dear old Ginseng, and each one of her six hundred citizens can heartily echo the prayer of Tiny Tim, "God bless us every one!"

When, nine years ago, Philip and Katharine Bryce bade a long farewell to their loved friends in America, and embarked for their future home, Tom Carey and his bride, Ruth Vanarsdale, accompanied them, likewise to begin their life-work in Australia.

Shortly after the homecoming of her brother, Helen Bryce became the wife of David Jones, who had returned to South Australia immediately after completing his course of study at Lexington, and who, upon the death of the faithful old minister, William Hammond, had accepted the call to the church in the village of Merdin. David is well beloved by his congregation, and he ably carries forward the work of his predecessor.

Tom Carey is winning commendation and meeting with much success as state evangelist of the churches in South Australia. He and Ruth have their headquarters at Adelaide. Consequently, they are frequently with David and Helen, who, with their children, make their home with Silas and Mary Bryce at Undulata. The loving regard which has existed between Tom and David since their boyhood is now equaled by the friendship between Ruth and Helen.

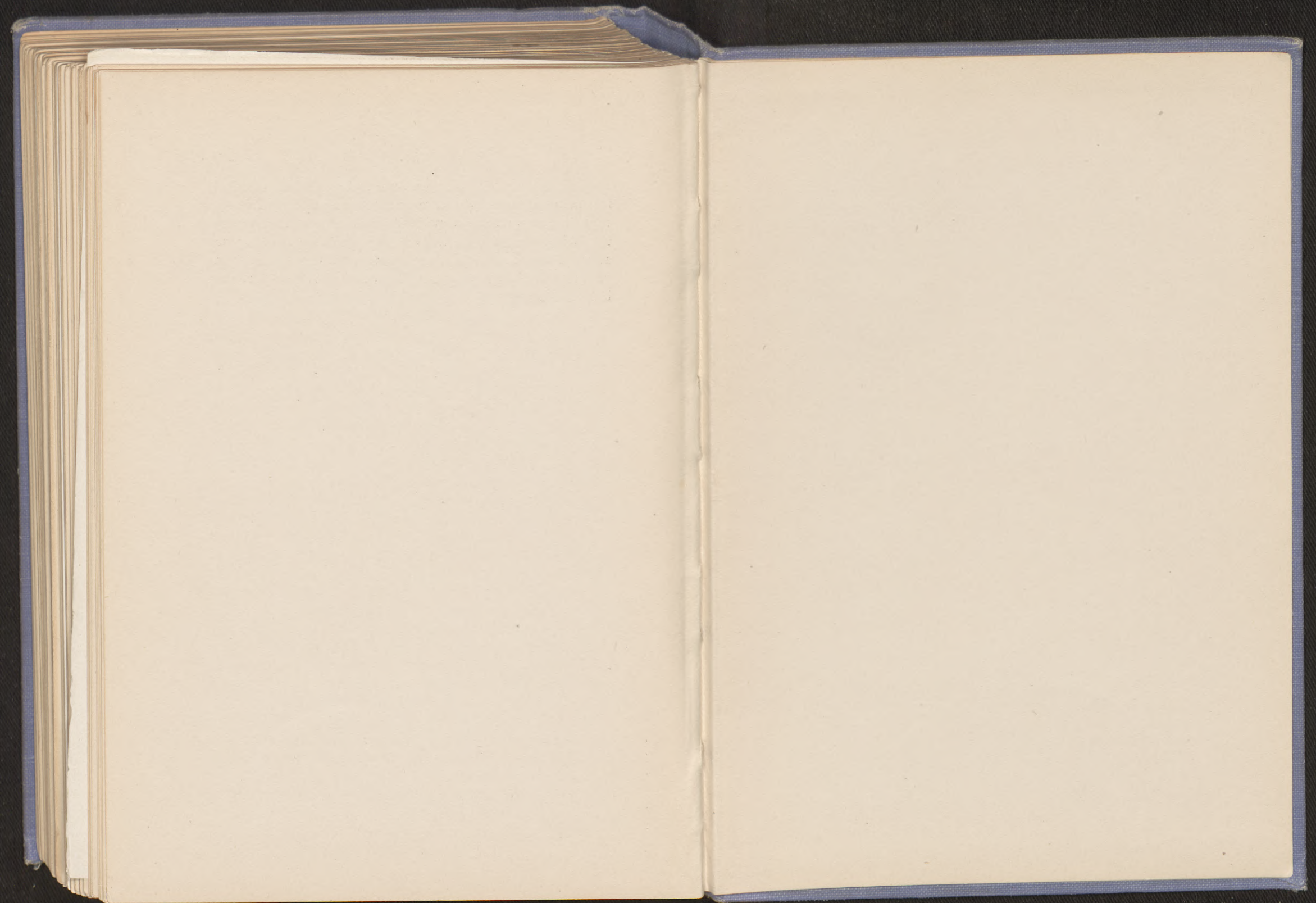
Philip and Katharine are five hundred miles from Undulata—at Melbourne. They are happy in their love for each other, in their two promising little children, in their home, their work, and in the high esteem of all who know them. Although Philip's duties are often arduous, he never wearies in well-doing; but, upheld by his unfaltering faith, and encouraged by the tactful wisdom and loving sympathy of his noble wife, he with indomitable enthusiasm presses forward. He is breaking down many of the high places of sin in Melbourne. He is ministering to the suffering and sorrowing about him; and he is bringing many of his fellow-men unto Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

In spite of the distance that intervenes between Melbourne and Undulata, and notwithstanding the many pressing demands on his time and energies, Philip, with his wife and children, never fails to return to South Australia at Christmas-time for the week's family reunion. At the close of one of these happy Christmas days in the beloved home of his childhood, Philip lies awake for hours, reviewing the seventeen years that have elapsed since that midsummer evening when he, a thoughtless boy of twenty, impulsively dedicated himself to the ministry; and his heart is filled with thankfulness, not only for many blessings of the present and the assured hope of his future, but also for the bitter but priceless experiences which humbled his pride of intellect, clarified his spiritual vision, taught him reverently to accept God's revealed word, and led him to wholly consecrate his life to Christ's service. Then sleep shuts for him the gates of memory. The quiet and peace of the summer night enfold Undulata. The moon bathes the walls of the old stone mansion and its parklike yard in a mellow, golden splendor, and smiles a benediction on the sleeping household.

Here in this beautiful southern land, far beyond our

feeble following, but watched over and guided by the God in whom they trust, we leave Philip and Katharine Bryce—confident, as we are, that whatever betide them in the future they with courageous hearts will ever work together for the accomplishment of that one great end of all Christian effort: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

THE END.



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